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TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE  
West Hartford, CT

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL, PUBLIC HEARING

March 28, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

Legislative Chambers

Re: Application on Behalf of West Farms Mall, LLC, an Owner of Property at 1500/1502 New Britain Avenue Known as West Farms Mall ("Premises"), to Amend Special Development District 12 Which Encumbers That Portion of the Premises Located in West Hartford in Order to Renovate the Mall Building Entrance "H" Located in West Hartford Between JC Penneys and the Macy's Men's Store and Install a Comprehensive, Coordinated Signage Program on the Premises, Including New "West Farms" Mall Identification Signs at Two Existing Driveway Entrances from New Britain Avenue Into the Site, a new Mall Identification sign at the corner of New Britain Avenue and South Road renovated vehicular directional/way-finding signs throughout the Premises.



**UNITED  
REPORTERS**

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## 1 A p p e a r a n c e s:

2 Town Council Members Present:

3 MAYOR SCOTT SLIFKA

4 SHARI CANTOR

5 STEVEN I ADLER

6 HARRY J. CAPTAIN

7 LEON DAVIDOFF

8 BURKE DOAR

9 DENISE B. HALL

10 Alternates:

11 JOHN TUCKER

12 BERNARD KAVALER

13

14 Also present:

15 RONALD VAN WINKLE,

16 Town Manager

17

18 JOSEPH A. O'BRIEN,

19 Corporation Counsel

20

21 PATRICK ALAIR,

22 Deputy Corporation Counsel

23

24 ESSIE L. LABROT,

25 Town Clerk/Council Clerk

1 A p p e a r a n c e s (Cont'd.):

2 For the Applicant:

3 ALTER & PEARSON, LLC

4 701 Hebron Avenue

5 P.O. Box 1530

6 Glastonbury, Connecticut 06033

7 By: ROBIN PEARSON, ESQ.

8

9 JOHN EGGERT,

10 LEN BRZOZOWSKI,

11 BILL ELLIOTT,

12 Taubman Company

13

14 BRIAN BAGNICK,

15 Hobbs & Black Architects, Inc.

16

17 KEVIN KEENAN,

18 General Manager

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1                   PRESIDENT SLIFKA:    Good  
2 evening.    We're going to call the seven  
3 o'clock public hearing to order.

4                   This is an Application on  
5 Behalf of West Farms Mall, LLC, an Owner of  
6 Property at 1500/1502 New Britain Avenue  
7 Known as West Farms Mall, (the "Premises"),  
8 to Amend Special Development District 12  
9 Which Encumbers That Portion of the Premises  
10 Located in West Hartford in Order to Renovate  
11 the Mall Building Entrance "H" Located in  
12 West Hartford Between JC Penneys and the  
13 Macy's Men's Store and Install a  
14 Comprehensive, Coordinated Signage Program on  
15 the Premises, Including New "Westfarms" Mall  
16 Identification Signs at Two Existing Driveway  
17 Entrances from New Britain Avenue Into the  
18 Site, a new Mall Identification sign at the  
19 corner of New Britain Avenue and South Road  
20 Renovated Vehicular Directional/Wayfinding  
21 Signs Throughout the Premises and Parking  
22 Area Identification Signs Throughout the  
23 Premises.

24                   Could we have a roll call,  
25 please, Ms. Labrot.

1 MS. LABROT: Mr. Adler.

2 COUNCILOR ADLER: Here.

3 MS. LABROT: Mrs. Cantor.

4 COUNCILOR CANTOR: Here.

5 MS. LABROT: Mr. Captain.

6 COUNCILOR CAPTAIN: Here.

7 MS. LABROT: Mr. Kavalier for

8 Mrs. Casperson.

9 MR. KAVALER: Yes.

10 MS. LABROT: Mr. Davidoff.

11 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Here.

12 MS. LABROT: Mr. Doar.

13 COUNCILOR DOAR: Here.

14 MS. LABROT: Mrs. Hall.

15 COUNCILOR HALL: Here.

16 MS. LABROT: Mr. Tucker in for

17 Ms. Kindall.

18 MR. TUCKER: Here.

19 MS. LABROT: And Mr. Slifka.

20 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Here.

21 Thank you. We'll begin with a

22 presentation from the applicant.

23 Ms. Pearson, welcome back.

24 MS. PEARSON: Good evening,

25 Mr. Mayor, Members of the Council. My name

1 is Robin Pearson. I'm an attorney with the  
2 firm of Alter and Pearson in Glastonbury,  
3 Connecticut. And I'm pleased to be here this  
4 evening on behalf of the applicant West Farms  
5 Mall, LLC. As noted in the reading of the  
6 notice for the meeting, it is an owner -- one  
7 of the owners of the properties that comprise  
8 West Farms Mall, part of which is located in  
9 Farmington, and part of which is located in  
10 West Hartford.

11 The purpose of the application  
12 this evening is to secure an amendment to the  
13 existing special development district number  
14 12 which authorized the development of the  
15 West Farms Mall in West Hartford, and any  
16 change to the exterior facade of that  
17 structure or other significant changes, for  
18 instance, to signage such as is proposed this  
19 evening necessitate an amendment to the  
20 existing SDD.

21 I've submitted the sign  
22 affidavit to the town clerk and the council  
23 clerk, which indicates the signed postings  
24 have been in place for the required seven  
25 days prior to the hearing.

1                   And at this point, I'm  
2 actually going to ask that we bring the  
3 screen down while I just describe for you  
4 what our presentation will be this evening.  
5 We think it'll be helpful for you to see the  
6 materials on the screen. But -- just let me  
7 know when you're ready.

8                   A VOICE: I'm ready.

9                   MS. PEARSON: You're ready.  
10 Okay.

11                   Our presentation tonight will  
12 begin with John Eggert, he is development  
13 director for the Taubman Company, and he is  
14 going to briefly tell you why Taubman Company  
15 is pursuing this application for an upgrade  
16 and clearly a reinvestment in its property in  
17 West Hartford.

18                   He's also going to you a  
19 little about the concurrent application that  
20 was processed in -- or, yes, it's been  
21 completed -- in Farmington. He'll be  
22 followed by Brian Bagnick. Brian is the  
23 senior vice president and the architect for  
24 the project of Hobbs & Black Associates, Inc.  
25 And Brian will present for you the entrance

1 renovation plan component of this particular  
2 application.

3 He'll be followed by Len  
4 Brzozowski. Len is a project manager for the  
5 Taubman Company, and Len is going to go  
6 through that part of the application that  
7 deals with wayfare signage and the new  
8 signage plans proposed for the street along  
9 the street for New Britain Avenue and South  
10 Road.

11 I will finish up. It should  
12 fairly brief presentation for you. I'll  
13 finish up with a summary of agency and staff  
14 findings and report on our outreach effort,  
15 and also just quickly go through for you  
16 again the Section 177-44(b) findings that you  
17 may -- must make in order to approve the  
18 application.

19 So, with that, I'd like John  
20 Eggert to come on up, introduce himself more  
21 fully if he chooses to do so, and being his  
22 presentation.

23 MR. EGGERT: Thank you, Robin.

24 I'm John Eggert, development  
25 director for the Taubman Company. We're the



1 parent company for West Farms Mall.

2 We appreciate you having us  
3 here tonight and hearing this application.  
4 We've had great cooperation with your staff  
5 and your P&Z as well as the DRAC crew, so I  
6 appreciate all their efforts on creating,  
7 hopefully, what's a great addition to the  
8 shopping center here.

9 West Farms was developed,  
10 initially opened in 1974. We're going to be  
11 celebrating our 40th year soon.

12 As a philosophy, our company,  
13 we develop, own, manage shopping centers  
14 across the country. We are not a slash and  
15 burn developer. We typically like to hold  
16 and maintain and long-term own the properties  
17 that we develop and this is a great example  
18 of one of those heading into our 40th year  
19 here.

20 To that end, we have an  
21 ongoing effort going on at all times to keep  
22 the centers that we own fresh and vibrant in  
23 the community. So this is really is a  
24 continuing endeavor in that effort. We had  
25 last done a major renovation project here in

1 2008 that you, those of you who were here at  
2 time are familiar with. We had renovated our  
3 main entry that is the mall entry facing New  
4 Britain, that is located between BRIO and  
5 P.F. Chang's. Part of that project was also  
6 the edition of the Brio and P.F. Chang's  
7 flanking either side of that entry. We  
8 thought that they were great additions from  
9 the standpoint of adding, you know, great  
10 restaurants and dining opportunities at the  
11 shopping center.

12 The entry we're proposing to  
13 renovate at this point is going to be very  
14 similar in style to that renovation that we  
15 did in 2008, so it's not a mirror image, but  
16 it's very much in keeping with the theme of  
17 that. It's something that's very much more  
18 current and updated than the quite obvious  
19 seventies look that's out there right now.

20 We're also doing, as Robin had  
21 eluded to, a renovation of the entry on the  
22 rear side of the shopping center in the  
23 Farmington side near California Pizza  
24 Kitchens entry. This entry will also be  
25 along the same theming; what we are proposing

1 to do now and what we did back in 2008 on the  
2 West Hartford side.

3 As Robin indicated, that's  
4 that entry approval was reviewed, you know,  
5 late last year and early this year by  
6 Farmington. We've received our approvals,  
7 and we do plan to actually start construction  
8 work on that within the next month or so, and  
9 implement that work and complete it this  
10 year.

11 In addition to that, we had  
12 gotten Farmington to approve similar signage  
13 refurbishment that we are requesting from  
14 West Hartford pertaining to our directional  
15 signage that exists at the shopping center.  
16 and also our parking lot identification  
17 signage, both of which are looking a little  
18 bit on the dated and tired side. So we're  
19 just trying to update those and create them  
20 fresh and really replace what is out there  
21 now with something that's more up to date.

22 One thing I did want to point  
23 out is that the entry work that we are  
24 seeking approval for this evening will not be  
25 undertaken until 2014. We are going to be

1 working on the Farmington entry, as I  
2 indicated. Our exiting requirements for  
3 life-safety purposes at the center are such  
4 that we cannot simultaneously have both of  
5 these entries, which are also exits, closed  
6 at the same time. And for that reason, we  
7 need to stagger the development of them and  
8 they're going to take, you know, the better  
9 part of, you know, 6 to 7 months to complete  
10 each one, therefore, we need to split them in  
11 terms of 13 and 14, so we're -- be doing  
12 Farmington this year. We'll doing West  
13 Hartford next year.

14 We do, however, intend to  
15 complete all of the signage components in  
16 both West Hartford and in Farmington in 2013.

17 The last part of the  
18 application that we'll discuss is the  
19 addition of some new signage that we think is  
20 appropriate to the center, and that is simply  
21 identification signage that indicates that  
22 would be in locations along New Britain  
23 Avenue as vehicles entering onto the  
24 property.

25 For those of you who shop the

1 mall and have lived here a long time, you  
2 know that it's West Farms. You don't need to  
3 have that explained to you but to a first  
4 time visitor or a -- you know, to someone who  
5 is new to the area or to a tourist, they know  
6 it's a mall, but they don't know what the  
7 name of the mall is. So we're just thing to,  
8 you know, make that apparent, and, you know,  
9 hopefully reinforce our brand in the  
10 community here with the addition of that  
11 signage.

12 And with that, I'm going to  
13 turn the presentation over to Brian and he  
14 will walk you through the entry and go from  
15 there.

16 Appreciate your time.

17 MR. BAGNICK: Good evening. I  
18 don't know if I should reintroduce myself.  
19 Brian Bagnick, with Hobbs and & Black  
20 Architects. We're at 100 North State Street,  
21 in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

22 The first -- what we're going  
23 to show you tonight is basically the packages  
24 that we had submitted to you on the 11-by-17,  
25 we had submitted to you some packages and

