

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

July 23, 2013, 6:40 p.m.,

Legislative Chambers

**ORIGINAL**

Re: Application on Behalf of CGG Realty Partners, LLC, Owner of 15 and 17 North Main Street, Abutting Properties on the West Side of North Main Street and 15 North Main Associates, LLC, the intended developer ("Applicants") to remove the two office buildings located on the properties to construct a single, mixed-use office building accommodating both general and professional office uses including medical and a possible bank on the combined properties. The Redevelopment Property will be known as 15 North Main Street. Request to rezone all of 17 North Main Street and most of 15 North Main Street from the current Residence-Office (RO) designation to Central Business District (BC) and then to designate the rezoned area a special development district, in order to proceed.

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West Hartford, CT

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

2 Town Council Members Present

3 MAYOR SCOTT SLIFKA

4 DENISE B. HALL

5 STEVEN I. ADLER

6 SHARI CANTOR

7 LEON DAVIDOFF

8 HARRY CAPTAIN

9 JUDY CASPERSON

10 BURKE DOAR

11 CLAIRE KINDALL

12

13 RONALD VAN WINKLE

14 Town Manager

15

16 JOSEPH A. O'BRIEN, ESQ.

17 Corporation Counsel

18

19 PATRICK ALAIR, ESQ.

20 Deputy Corporation Counsel

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22 ESSIE S. LABROT

23 Town Clerk/Council Clerk

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

For the Applicant:

ALTER & PEARSON, LLC

701 Hebron Avenue

Glastonbury, CT 06033

(860) 652-4020

BY: ROBIN PEARSON, ESQ.

1 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Okay.
2 We're going to call the 5:30 public hearing
3 to order. This is an application On behalf
4 of CG -- CGG Realty Partners, LLC, owner of
5 15 and 17 North Main Street, abutting
6 properties on the west side of North Main
7 Street and 15 North Main Associates, LLC, the
8 intended developer, known as "Applicants", to
9 remove the two office buildings located on
10 the properties to construct a single,
11 mixed-use office building accommodating both
12 general and professional office uses
13 including medical and a possible bank on the
14 combined properties. The redevelopment
15 property will be known as 15 North Main
16 Street. Request to rezone all of 17 North
17 Main Street and most of 15 North Main Street
18 from the current Residence-Office, RO,
19 designation to Central Business District, BC,
20 and then to designate the rezoned area a
21 special development district in order to
22 proceed.

23 Roll call, please, Ms. Labrot.

24 MS. LABROT: Mr. Adler.

25 COUNCILOR ADLER: Here.

1 MS. LABROT: Mrs. Cantor.

2 COUNCILOR CANTOR: Here.

3 MS. LABROT: Mr. Captain.

4 COUNCILOR CAPTAIN: Here.

5 MS. LABROT: Mrs. Casperson.

6 COUNCILOR CASPERSON: Here.

7 MS. LABROT: Mr. Davidoff.

8 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Here.

9 MS. LABROT: Mr. Doar.

10 COUNCILOR DOAR: Here.

11 MS. LABROT: Mrs. Hall.

12 COUNCILOR HALL: Here.

13 MS. LABROT: Ms. Kindall.

14 COUNCILOR KINDALL: Here.

15 MS. LABROT: Mr. Slifka.

16 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Here.

17 Okay. We will begin with a
18 presentation from the Applicant, and I just
19 want to thank everybody here for your -- for
20 your patience. When we schedule these things
21 weeks -- weeks out, we don't know how long
22 everything is going to be, so thank you for
23 your flexibility.

24 Ms. Pearson.

25 MS. PEARSON: Good evening,

1 Mr. Mayor, members of the Council. My name
2 is Robin Pearson. And I'm pleased to be here
3 this evening on behalf of the Applicants with
4 regard to this request for a underlying --
5 underlying zone change, an SDD application
6 for properties known as 15-17 North Main
7 Street in West Hartford.

8 The application is made by CGG
9 Realty Partners, LLC, which is the owner of
10 the two properties in question, and by North
11 Main -- 15 North Main Associates, LLC, which
12 is the development entity. Both request the
13 change of zone -- or initially requested the
14 change of zone from RO, which is the
15 underlying zoning for the property, to BC,
16 which is a commercial business district, and
17 then requested the imposition of a special
18 development district to allow for development
19 on the site.

20 As the notice indicated, the
21 application requests permission to remove the
22 two existing structures on the sites and also
23 then to construct a single office building on
24 the combined sites, which would then be known
25 as 15 North Main Street.

1 I have left with your Council
2 Clerk the sign notice certification
3 indicating the requisite zoning signs have
4 been up, as required by your regulations.

5 Let me begin by explaining why
6 the Applicant proposes, at least initially
7 with the application when it was submitted to
8 change the underlying zoning of 15-17 North
9 Main Street to the BC zone. It was for one
10 simple reason, and that reason is because the
11 BC zone allows a bank use and the existing RO
12 zone does not.

13 The Applicants have been in
14 discussions with two community banks and were
15 very interested in securing a bank use for
16 this new office building. The reasons are
17 really quite plain to anybody who does
18 development work of this type. A bank is a
19 wonderful tenant. They pay well. They're
20 quiet. They also serve the community, and
21 they also serve tenants in the existing
22 building. It's a very good tenant for the
23 future leasability of the building and the
24 success, the commercial success, of the
25 building itself. The -- and, again, that was

1 the sole reason for the underlying BC zone
2 change request, no other.

3 An SDD, or special development
4 district designation was also, requested as
5 part of the application to restrict the uses
6 that could then be used or located in that
7 building once the underlying zone had been
8 changed to BC from RO. And that is because
9 there are other uses that are allowed in a BC
10 zone that are not allowed in a RO zone, but
11 those were not uses that the Applicant was
12 interested in pursuing and locating --
13 locating on the -- the site in any way. But,
14 again, the BC zone is necessary for a bank
15 use at the location.

16 The Applicant had no intention
17 of allowing restaurant uses or retail uses.
18 And I know there have been some concerns
19 expressed, both TP and Z and by members of
20 the community, that that is the ultimate
21 goal -- or was the ultimate goal behind the
22 application when it was submitted, and that
23 is simply not so. Again, the reason for the
24 BC zone was to allow a bank use.

25 The SDD designation was also

1 requested for another reason, a typical
2 reason that you find with many applications
3 that come before you, and that is to allow
4 design flexibility in order to achieve a
5 higher design level with regard to a
6 particular application, which may require
7 some waiving, if you will, of certain
8 standards within the zoning code. And that
9 is true in this particular application.

10 The SDD's designation was
11 requested for flexibility with regard to,
12 first, positioning the building in front of
13 the building line. That's something your
14 code does not allow now, but it's something
15 the Plan of Conservation and Development
16 advocates for with regard to creating
17 buildings that relate to the streetscape, are
18 pedestrian friendly in terms of access. But
19 the way for us to achieve that is to ask you
20 for the ability to put the building in front
21 of the building line through the use of the
22 special development district, a flexible
23 approach to zoning compliance. So that was
24 one reason for the SDD.

25 Another reason for the SDD

1 request was to continue to use the parking
2 sizes, space sizing that has been in place on
3 those office sites now for -- I don't know --
4 at least 26 years for one of -- for one of
5 the properties. It's worked. It allows the
6 building to be able to be used appropriately
7 and utilizing the SDD for parking
8 flexibility, in terms of compliance with your
9 standards, also allows sufficient parking to
10 be on the site and remove any possibility
11 that there would be a negative impact on
12 neighboring streets with regard to parking.
13 So that was the second reason for the SDD
14 request.

15 Third, the SDD would allow
16 flexibility with regard to signage
17 compliance. And this application proposes a
18 comprehensive signage plan for the building,
19 flexible in that it will depend on what
20 tenants actually go into the building to
21 determine exactly where signage will be
22 located, but the standards are written into
23 the design program that has been submitted as
24 part of this application.

25 And, indeed, the reason for

1 the SDD utilization with regard to signage is
2 to be able to have signage on an upper level.
3 The intent is to be able to, if there is a
4 major tenant in the building, to be able to
5 put signage on a higher level and advertise
6 for that significant tenant, both as a
7 benefit to leasing the building and for the
8 tenant, but also, in terms of way-finding, if
9 you will, for members of the community who
10 would be going to that tenant.

11 There was a fourth reason and
12 that had to do with -- no. That's it. The
13 fourth one comes up later, and I'll describe
14 that to you as we get a little bit further.

15 So those were reasons for both
16 requesting the underlying BC Zone, bank use,
17 and the reason for requesting imposition of a
18 special development district over the site in
19 question once that underlying zone had been
20 changed.

21 You should know also -- and
22 this is almost a minor point, but you should
23 be aware of it as you consider this
24 application -- that the rezoning and
25 imposition of the SDD are proposed for only a

1 portion of the site, that portion of the site
2 that we are calling for development for both
3 the parking and the building.

4 There's a small strip at the
5 back of 15 North Main Street where,
6 currently, the office building to the rear of
7 the existing office building at 15 North Main
8 encroaches onto the Applicant's property,
9 some of the parking, a little bit, but
10 encroaches onto the property.

11 Therefore, one of the elements
12 with regard to this application and a
13 benefit, both to the abutting property owner
14 and to us to clean up a situation, would be
15 to seek approval only for that part of the
16 site that we propose for our parking and our
17 building and to then be able to seek a
18 lot-line revision -- should this application
19 be approved -- seek a lot-line revision from
20 the town which, once the two parcels, 15 and
21 17, have been merged through that lot-line
22 revision, also would allow us to modify the
23 rear lot line for 15 North Main Street and
24 convey that portion of the property that's
25 currently being used by the commercial

