

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

October 9, 2012, 6:38 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

Re: Application on behalf of the Town of West Hartford and Hayes-Village Post 96 American Legion, Incorporated, as co-applicants, for an Amendment to Special Development District Approvals in Connection with Blue Back Square Development for 20 South Main Street -- Amendment to SDD 114 (the Library). The Town, which Owns Portions of the Property, Proposes a Minor Modification to Install a Freestanding Sign on the Library Property.



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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 HARRY J. CAPTAIN

6 LEON DAVIDOFF

7 BURKE DOAR

8 DENISE B. HALL

9 STEVEN I. ADLER

10 CLARE KINDALL

11 JUDY L. CASPERSON

12

13 RONALD VAN WINKLE,

14 Town Manager

15

16 JOSEPH A. O'BRIEN,

17 Corporation Counsel

18

19 PATRICK ALAIR,

20 Deputy Corporation Counsel

21

22 ESSIE S. LABROT,

23 Town Clerk/Council Clerk

24

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

For the Applicant West Hartford Public  
Library:

PAT HOLLOWAY, Ex Officio Library  
Director

MAUREEN McCLAY, Chairperson,  
Board of Directors

BOOKER T. De VAUGHN,  
Board of Directors

JOEL ROY, Creative  
Dimensions

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PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Okay.  
We're going to call the 6:30 public hearing  
to order.

Application on behalf of the  
Town of West Hartford and Hayes-Village  
Post 96 American Legion, Incorporated, as  
Co-Applicants, for an Amendment to Special  
Development District Approvals in Connection  
with Blue Back Square Development for 20  
South Main Street, Amendment to SDD 114, The  
Library. The Town, Which Owns Portions of  
the Property, Proposes a Minor Modification  
to Install a Freestanding Sign on the Library  
Property.

Roll call please, Ms. Labrot?

MS. LABROT: Mr. Adler.

COUNCILOR ADLER: Here.

MS. LABROT: Mrs. Cantor.

COUNCILOR CANTOR: Here.

MS. LABROT: Mr. Captain.

COUNCILOR CAPTAIN: Here.

MS. LABROT: Ms. Casperson.

COUNCILOR CASPERSON: Here.

MS. LABROT: Mr. Davidoff.

COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Here.

1 MS. LABROT: Mr. Doar.

2 COUNCILOR DOAR: Here.

3 MS. LABROT: Mrs. Hall.

4 COUNCILOR HALL: Here.

5 MS. LABROT: Ms. Kindall.

6 COUNCILOR KINDALL: Here.

7 MS. LABROT: And Mr. Slifka.

8 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Here.

9 Seeing as this is a  
10 co-application, the Town and the --  
11 essentially the library, but I'm not sure  
12 who's presenting. I see our esteemed library  
13 director is here, our former colleague at  
14 this table, Ms. McClay is here. Welcome  
15 back. I hope it's not too frightening.

16 PAT HOLLOWAY: Is this where  
17 I'm supposed to --

18 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Yes, that  
19 is.

20 MR. O'BRIEN: You got to hit  
21 that button there.

22 PAT HOLLOWAY: Oh, press to  
23 talk.

24 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Hit that  
25 button. Go right ahead. There you go.

1 MS. HOLLOWAY: All right.  
2 Good evening, Mayor Slifka and Town  
3 Councilors. My name is Pat Holloway and I'm  
4 the director for the West Hartford Public  
5 Library. And I'm here today to present a  
6 proposed sign for the Noah Webster Library  
7 at 20 South Main Street.

8 The library is an important  
9 service that the Town makes available to  
10 residents at three different locations.  
11 About 1500 people use the libraries each day,  
12 making over a half million visits last year  
13 with a circulation of over 815,000 items.  
14 And people do not just borrow books and DVDs  
15 these days. They can consult online  
16 resources and borrow electronic books 24/7  
17 without even having to leave their homes.

18 Our services for the community  
19 are changing as rapidly as those of banks and  
20 newspapers. We're creating new ways to serve  
21 people and technology plays an extremely  
22 large role in how we work as well as in the  
23 services that we provide.

24 After we've finished  
25 renovations at the Webster -- Noah Webster

1 building in January of 2008, the library  
2 board set aside funding to pay for  
3 replacement of the kiosk sign that had been  
4 in front of the library. And they used funds  
5 from the public -- they were going to use  
6 funds that were raised from the public for  
7 the purpose of furnishing and equipping the  
8 library to do this. With the help of  
9 Creative Dimensions we began designing a new  
10 kiosk late in 2009 and brought this proposal  
11 to both -- I'm going to call it DRAC, I hope  
12 that's okay -- and TPZ in 2010 for approval.  
13 After making some design changes the sign was  
14 approved by DRAC, but was turned down by TPZ  
15 because they that felt it would be a hazard  
16 to drivers and it was not in keeping with  
17 design standards of surrounding public  
18 buildings.

19 So we spent the next year and  
20 a half working on how to redesign the sign.  
21 Newer technology provided the possibility of  
22 having a sign that identified the building  
23 and also reflected the up-to-date technology  
24 that is housed inside. The proposed monitors  
25 can provide information about programs, hours

1 and the resources that we have available.  
2 And this technology is pedestrian oriented.

3           Esthetically the sign ties in  
4 with the surrounding buildings, portrays the  
5 technological advances incorporated in  
6 today's library, and yet stands apart from  
7 the retail area that encircles it. Once Blue  
8 Back Square opened, people who knew where the  
9 library had been could not find it among the  
10 stores and restaurants in its very changed  
11 landscape. The need for a sign has  
12 repeatedly been brought to our attention.

13           The sign itself has been  
14 redesigned and tweaked over two years with  
15 the help of the DRAC Committee and especially  
16 with the help of Hugh Schweitzer who met  
17 several times with the library and the sign  
18 company to investigate ways to address the  
19 needs of the library and to comply with TPZ  
20 concerns, so that the new sign will tie in  
21 with the town campus, will appeal to  
22 pedestrian traffic around Blue Back Square  
23 and give drivers an easy name recognition on  
24 their way by, and use technology that  
25 reflects the library of the 21st century.

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1 I would like to introduce Joel  
2 Roy of Creative Dimensions who will give you  
3 a more detailed description of the sign that  
4 we're proposing and he will be followed by  
5 our Library Board Chair Maureen McClay and  
6 past Chair Booker De Vaughn. I hope that  
7 you'll feel free to ask questions at any time  
8 during our presentations.

9 And I'm going to give out a  
10 packet to everybody with more information.

11 Joel.

12 JOEL ROY: I'm Joel Roy,  
13 President of Creative Dimensions. We're a  
14 sign manufacturer and exhibit manufacturer in  
15 Cheshire, Connecticut.

16 Pat did most of the heavy  
17 lifting here as far as describing the  
18 project. So we just have some visuals here  
19 and we'll tell you some of the things that  
20 we've gone through with the Design Review  
21 Committee to explain where we started and  
22 where we've come to at this point.

23 This is a site plan showing  
24 the library right here (indicating). And  
25 this is the little colored section here in

1 the red; outlying thing is the indicator for  
2 the sign as it's proposed today.

3 One of the things that  
4 happened in the Review Committee was that we  
5 originally had this sign where it was  
6 V-shaped and it was the tip of the peak of  
7 the V was pointing towards the road. And in  
8 the sign, you can see what it looks like that  
9 little packet, the electronic portion of it  
10 was an LED reader board where all it was, was  
11 red amber letters that kind of would -- they  
12 weren't scrolling, but they would just  
13 display a word message on the sign. And  
14 again, the V-shaped sign was with the road  
15 where it was directed at driving traffic.

16 The DRAC committee -- or I  
17 think the TP and Z did not like that because  
18 they felt that it would be distracting to  
19 drivers who would want to look and read that  
20 particular sign. So in addressing that and  
21 in with the passing of time and with Hugh's  
22 recommendation, we came up with a full-color  
23 monitor that really didn't exist at the  
24 beginning of the process. So that LED reader  
25 board was kind of the top-of-the-line way to

1 get a message out there at that time. And it  
2 didn't necessarily go with the feeling of the  
3 Town, with West Hartford. It may have gone a  
4 little more with Blue Back Square, but we  
5 feel that this full-color monitor now  
6 addresses toning that down and becoming more  
7 of a graphic that can be read by pedestrian  
8 traffic.

9           One of the things that we did  
10 again is we changed the orientation of the  
11 sign where the sidewalk going up to the  
12 library and the sidewalk going down the main  
13 road are where this is viewed from. So you  
14 would walk up to either side of it and you  
15 could see that monitor and read it better.  
16 There's no way that the graphics on that can  
17 be read from a passing vehicle. They might  
18 see an image, but it wouldn't be read from a  
19 passing vehicle.

20           So what we did was we have  
21 proposed to put in a paver platform so that  
22 people could literally walk up to it, so that  
23 it's not a landscaping disaster where people  
24 out there have to go out and weed whack  
25 around the sign. So it's made sort of a nice

1 landscaped base for it. And that's pretty  
2 much why we've oriented it the way it is and  
3 why we put that paver base to it.

4           Here's what one side of the  
5 sign would look like straight on. You can  
6 see this is an eight-foot high sign in height  
7 and it's six-foot wide at the top of the  
8 peak. However the section that is the  
9 graphic portion of this is only 44 inches by  
10 roughly 41 inches. So it's really only  
11 four-foot by four-foot section that becomes  
12 your graphic section of the sign. Everything  
13 else is architectural; has been designed to  
14 sort of live with the building, the columns.  
15 Don't have a picture of the building here,  
16 but basically with DRAC's help we came up  
17 with ways to make the structure to hold this  
18 as you see here.

19           This shows the sign that  
20 existed years ago that was out by the road  
21 for the library. It was a big wedge. It was  
22 very heavy looking. It was manually changed  
23 with these little white letters that we all  
24 know throughout the years.

25           So this new sign, although it

1 is still that same size, eight-foot high,  
2 four-foot wide -- or six-foot wide at the  
3 top, it's half the weight and half of the  
4 mass of this old sign.

5 So, and what Pat was saying is  
6 that with the technology portion of this,  
7 showing that the library is up with the times  
8 and with the fact that people would be able  
9 to walk up and kind of -- I don't want to say  
10 interact with it, because you don't  
11 interact -- but it would be just a message  
12 that would change over time.

13 We feel that it, you know, the  
14 architectural elements and the way the  
15 graphics are displayed there is a massive  
16 improvement over this and over that  
17 originally proposed LED section of the sign.  
18 So that's the technical part of the sign.

19 Does anyone have any  
20 questions?

21 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: I'm sure we  
22 will. We may want you to --

23 MR. ROY: Okay.

24 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: -- go  
25 through the whole proposal or whole

