

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL, PUBLIC HEARING

November 27, 2012, 9:19 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

Re: Application On Behalf of First World  
Mortgage Corporation, the Record Owner of the  
Premises Known as 2 Caya Avenue, for a Zone  
Change for a Portion of the Premises from  
RM-1 (Residential Multi-family) Zoning  
District to a BG (General Business) Zoning  
District.

DEC 12 2012

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD  
CONNECTICUT



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

Town Council Members Present:

MAYOR SCOTT SLIFKA

SHARI CANTOR

HARRY J. CAPTAIN

LEON DAVIDOFF

BURKE DOAR

DENISE B. HALL

STEVEN I. ADLER

CLARE KINDALL

JUDY L. CASPERSON

RONALD VAN WINKLE,

Town Manager

JOSEPH A. O'BRIEN,

Corporation Counsel

PATRICK ALAIR,

Deputy Corporation Counsel

ESSIE S. LABROT,

Town Clerk/Council Clerk

1 A p p e a r a n c e s:(continued)

2 For the Applicant:

3 SHIMKUS, MURPHY AND

4 ROSENBERGER, P.C.

5 382 New Britain Avenue

6 Hartford, Connecticut 06106-3899

7 (860) 249-1396

8 By: CHARLES J. SHIMKUS, JR., ESQ.

9 CShimkus@ShimkusandMurphy.com

10

11 PETER PARIZO

12 Parizo Surveying and Engineering

13

14 JOSEPH A. BUCHECK

15 AIA Architect, LLC

16

17 FRANK SIDOTI

18 First World Mortgage Corporation

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1                   PRESIDENT SLIFKA: I call the  
2 seven o'clock public hearing to order. This  
3 is an Application on behalf of First World  
4 Mortgage Corporation, the Record Owner of the  
5 Premises Known as 2 Caya Avenue for a Zone  
6 Change for a Portion of the Premises From  
7 RM-1, Residential Multifamily Zoning District  
8 to a BG, General Business Zoning District.

9                   May we have a roll call  
10 please, Ms. Labrot.

11                   MS. LABROT: Mr. Adler.

12                   COUNCILOR ADLER: Here.

13                   MS. LABROT: Mrs. Cantor.

14                   COUNCILOR CANTOR: Here.

15                   MS. LABROT: Mr. Captain.

16                   COUNCILOR CAPTAIN: Here.

17                   MS. LABROT: Ms. Casperson.

18                   COUNCILOR CASPERSON: Here.

19                   MS. LABROT: Mr. Davidoff.

20                   COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Here.

21                   MS. LABROT: Mr. Doar.

22                   COUNCILOR DOAR: Here.

23                   MS. LABROT: Mrs. Hall.

24                   COUNCILOR HALL: Here.

25                   MS. LABROT: Ms. Kindall.

1 COUNCILOR KINDALL: Here.

2 MS. LABROT: Mr. Slifka.

3 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Here.

4 Okay. Mr. Doar and I are  
5 really wiped from the prior presentation, so  
6 I'm hoping, Mr. Shimkus, this will be --

7 (Laughter.)

8 MR. SHIMKUS: We'll be less  
9 than two hours. So --

10 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Perfect.

11 MR. SHIMKUS: Good evening.

12 For the record, Charles  
13 Shimkus.

14 PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Just hit  
15 the button on the microphone.

16 MR. SHIMKUS: Oh, it's not  
17 even on yet.

18 MR. O'BRIEN: Wrong button.  
19 Yeah, there you go.

20 MR. SHIMKUS: For the record,  
21 Charles Shimkus. I'm with the law offices of  
22 Shimkus, Murphy and Rosenberger. We're  
23 located at 382 New Britain Avenue in  
24 Hartford. I am also a West Hartford  
25 resident.

1                   This evening I have with me  
2 Frank Sidoti who is the sole shareholder of  
3 First World Mortgage Corporation, also Pete  
4 Parizo who is the surveyor, and the Architect  
5 Joe Bucheck. And they'll be available this  
6 evening to answer any questions or concerns  
7 you might have in connection with our  
8 application.

9                   The application at hand is 2  
10 Caya Avenue. It's a parcel which is boarded  
11 by Caya Avenue, Prospect Avenue, I-84 and a  
12 residential piece of property to it's west.  
13 The property presently is zoned BG zone for  
14 approximately three quarters of the property.

15                   And you can see the line of  
16 demarcation right here in which the property  
17 becomes an RM-1 zone. And we're seeking this  
18 evening approval of this Council to change  
19 that to a BG zone to make the entire parcel a  
20 BG zone.

21                   The property was originally  
22 listed as 127-129 Prospect Avenue. And in  
23 1999 we changed the address actually to 2  
24 Caya Avenue because, the front door is  
25 actually right here and the building has on

1 it 2 Caya Avenue. So it seemed like a  
2 natural fit to change the address to 2 Caya.

3 The property was purchased by  
4 Caya Holdings, LLC, back in 1999. Frank  
5 Sidoti was a member of that LLC and he owned  
6 it with another individual back in 1999.

7 In 2010 Caya Holdings, LLC,  
8 then transferred the property to First World  
9 Mortgage Corporation. First World Mortgage  
10 Corporation, as I mentioned earlier, is  
11 solely owned by Frank Sidoti. He's the  
12 president and sole shareholder of that  
13 corporation.

14 As many of you probably  
15 already know this building was also remodeled  
16 substantially back in 1999 when Frank's  
17 entity purchased the property. It had been  
18 originally a can-and-bottle recycling, I  
19 guess depository, transfer station, whatever  
20 you want to call it. Bottom line, it was in  
21 severe decay and the property was in very  
22 tough shape. And Mr. Sidoti, along with his  
23 partner at that time, went ahead and rehabbed  
24 the building substantially. And effectively  
25 been using that property as their business

1 office for their mortgage business. It's a  
2 mortgage lender and mortgage brokerage  
3 business. First World Mortgage Corporation  
4 is the sole tenant at the property. There  
5 are no other tenants at the property.

6 As I mentioned to you earlier,  
7 three quarters of the property to this point  
8 here is already a BG zone. And what we're  
9 seeking is to have the RM zone changed to BG  
10 so that the entire parcel is one contiguous  
11 parcel with one zoning district.

12 The building itself right now  
13 is nonconforming. And obviously by changing  
14 this zoning, so the entire property is a BG,  
15 will make the building conforming.

16 What precipitated obviously  
17 our application here this evening is that  
18 First World Mortgage Corporation wants to go  
19 ahead and construct an addition to the  
20 building. This evening we have a little  
21 model here, and you can see it's on the desk  
22 right here showing the present building.

23 And if I can just step over  
24 there and hopefully you can still pick up,  
25 this obviously shows the present building.



1 And then, of course, the addition is this  
2 small little portion here which Joe Bucheck  
3 has gone ahead and made a model to give the  
4 Council a sense of the scale of the addition  
5 that they're looking to do.

6 The addition will not require  
7 any variances. It will require site plan  
8 approval, and that process has already begun  
9 with Mila's office. So if you do approve  
10 this application changing it to a BG zone it  
11 will allow First World to go ahead and  
12 construct that small addition to the  
13 building, and again, will be subject to site  
14 plan approval through Mila's office.

15 Just to give you some  
16 background, we've have out -- we've had an  
17 opportunity to meet with DRAC on a couple of  
18 different occasions. And it's my  
19 understanding that they've made a  
20 recommendation to this Council to, not only  
21 approve the zoning change, but also they've  
22 made a recommendation that the design and the  
23 building, the addition that is proposed is in  
24 keeping with the harmony of the neighborhood  
25 and with the building and is appropriate in

1 size and scale for the build, for the actual  
2 property itself.

3 We've also had an opportunity  
4 to meet with the neighborhood. As it turned  
5 out, our first meeting was scheduled for  
6 October 29th. And as you all probably  
7 remember that was the evening that we had  
8 storm Sandy hit. So needless to say, we had  
9 to cancel that meeting. We rescheduled it  
10 for two days later, which I guess we weren't  
11 the ones handing out the candy because we  
12 found out later, on my gosh, that's  
13 Halloween. And we didn't have much of a  
14 turnout except for the neighbor across the  
15 street. He did come, take a look at it. He  
16 was Ramesh Asudani. He's the neighbor that  
17 has the -- the liquor store; came and took a  
18 look of the plan and actually said to us that  
19 he was in favor of our application.

20 Because it was a night,  
21 Halloween night, in retrospect we thought,  
22 you know what? We better have another  
23 meeting. So we ended up having a subsequent  
24 meeting, neighborhood meeting on  
25 November 14th. Again, Frank Sidoti

1 distributed flyers to the neighborhood  
2 informing the neighborhood of the meeting.  
3 As it turned out nobody came to that  
4 November 14th meeting as well. So the two  
5 scheduled meetings we had one neighbor that  
6 appeared, and again, that neighbor was in  
7 favor of the application.

8 TP and Z has also had an  
9 opportunity to review this application and  
10 they have unanimously recommended that the  
11 Council approve the zoning change. In fact,  
12 it was Commissioner Daniels from the TP and Z  
13 that said to us that, you know, we probably  
14 should have another community outreach,  
15 another meeting with the neighborhood and  
16 that's what prompted effectively the  
17 November 14th neighborhood meeting.

18 In your packet you have the  
19 minutes, such as they are, from those two  
20 neighborhood meetings and is made part of the  
21 record.

22 We did have one other neighbor  
23 that contacted us. I spoke to a gentleman  
24 named Jon Schoenhorn a couple days ago. He  
25 called my office. He had seen the signage

1 that was posted outside the building. He is  
2 a landlord of one of the two-families down  
3 the street. He didn't identify which  
4 two-family, but he said it was at least 3, 4  
5 hundred feet down the street; had seen the  
6 sign and asked me a little bit about the  
7 application. I also sent to him, by  
8 electronic mail, I sent him a copy of the  
9 plans and so forth. So he saw it. He told  
10 me he would only call me back if he had any  
11 objection to our application. I did not hear  
12 back from him.

13 I think that the zone change  
14 that we're requesting has a minimal impact on  
15 the neighborhood. It really makes this whole  
16 property a conforming property. I think it  
17 makes more sense to have the property the  
18 same zoning district, as opposed to some  
19 bifurcated district between an RM and BG.  
20 There won't be any impact on the  
21 neighborhood.

22 The addition, the scale and  
23 size that First World is proposing is  
24 minimal. I think again, it's keeping in  
25 character with the neighborhood. I think it

1 will be a nice improvement to the site and  
2 certainly will allow First World to go ahead  
3 and have a few more offices in their  
4 building. They need some more room as their  
5 business continues to expand.

6           They've done a wonderful job  
7 with this property and keeping it, not only  
8 in good condition, but from the time that  
9 they rehabbed it this building, as many of  
10 may have remembered, was in severe disrepair.  
11 And they came in and did a beautiful job in  
12 trying to restore as much of it as possible  
13 to keep the original look, but also obviously  
14 make it functional and good to look at.

15           So I think they've done a nice  
16 job in all of that, and we're just asking  
17 that you will go ahead and approve this  
18 application for the zone change.

19           And I'm going to keep it short  
20 because obviously you've had a long evening  
21 already. And I applaud your stamina as it is  
22 already. But if there's any questions I'm  
23 here to answer them as well as my comrades in  
24 arms.

25           PRESIDENT SLIFKA: Okay.

