

ORIGINAL

VERBATIM PROCEEDINGS

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

RE: SCI CONNECTICUT FUNERAL SERVICES, INC.

JANUARY 12, 1999  
6:00 P.M.

WEST HARTFORD TOWN HALL  
50 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

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FORM LAMEREDDO A • PERICAD • 1-800-331-8888

RE: SCI CONNECTICUT FUNERAL SERVICES, INC. 2  
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1 . . . Verbatim Proceedings of the Town  
2 of West Hartford, Town Council meeting in the matter of  
3 SCI Connecticut Funeral Services, Incorporated held on  
4 January 12, 1999 at 6:00 p.m. at the West Hartford Town  
5 Hall, 50 South Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut.  
6 . . .  
7  
8  
9

10 CHAIRMAN MAYOR ROBERT BOUIER: I'd like  
11 to call the public hearing to order. Ms. Cronin, could  
12 you please call the roll?

13 MS. NORMA CRONIN: A petition on behalf  
14 of SCI Connecticut Funeral Services, Inc., (formerly  
15 known as Newkirk & Whitney Funeral Directors) and on  
16 behalf of 776 Farmington Realty, LLC for a zone change  
17 from R-6 to RP for property at 20 Walkley Road to  
18 convert the former funeral house at 776 Farmington  
19 Avenue to general office and permit existing parking  
20 lot to continue to be used by tenants of the building  
21 at 776 Farmington Avenue.

22 And correspondence from Gersling and  
23 Clifford, the application for the zone change dated  
24 November 13, 1998. Corresponding, correspondence from

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1 the Town Planning and Zoning Commission dated December  
2 22, 1998 recommending unanimous approval.

3 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: If the applicant would  
4 like to come forward.

5 MR. ELIOT GERSTEIN: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Mayor. My name is Eliot Gerstein. I'm here with one of  
7 the owners, Philip Wertheim, and we speak on behalf of  
8 the applicant in hopes that you'll approve of the  
9 application. We have gone through all the necessary  
10 hurdles in terms of getting approval from P&Z and as  
11 well as the Design Committee gave us, from what I'm  
12 informed of, approval yesterday. We haven't received  
13 formal notification of that.

14 And having said all that, I also want to  
15 indicate that I believe, Mr. Mayor, you have a copy of  
16 a letter dated December 30th from the Farmington Avenue  
17 east task force, which has also indicated their  
18 approval for this application. And unless there is any  
19 questions, we'd ask that you consider this to be our  
20 presentation.

21 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: Thank you. Is there  
22 any questions from the Council? Ms. Guillette?

23 MS. LIZ GUILLETTE: Would you briefly  
24 describe what you're doing?

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1 MR. WERTHEIM: Yes, I don't know if  
 2 you're familiar with the existing building or not but  
 3 it's been a funeral home for I think close to 40 years.  
 4 We're going to be converting the structure to a office  
 5 facility with a mixture of tenants throughout the  
 6 building. The first and second floors for general  
 7 office use.

8 MS. GUILLETTE: Do you have, what kind  
 9 of tenants do you anticipate having?

10 MR. WERTHEIM: We're currently  
 11 negotiating with a few different tenants. We have one  
 12 tenant on the second floor that will be a women's  
 13 psychotherapy group that will be relocating to the  
 14 property. The first floor we're negotiating with a,  
 15 with also a psychiatric group from the, from Hartford,  
 16 as well as a dentist that would possibly take some  
 17 space down there as well.

18 MS. GUILLETTE: So it's primarily  
 19 medical and medical related?

20 MR. WERTHEIM: Primarily, yes, mental  
 21 health and dentistry.

22 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: Any other questions  
 23 from the Council? If not, on the sign up sheet, Robert  
 24 Radin is next. Mr. Radin.

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1 MR. ROBERT RADIN: Right. Stand here I  
2 guess.

3 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: Yes. Please give your  
4 name and address for the record.

5 MR. RADIN: Right. It's Robert Radin,  
6 R-A-D-I-N. I live at 781 Farmington Avenue, which is  
7 essentially across the street, it's a little kitty  
8 corner. My parents have owned that home since about  
9 1946. My mother is elderly. She still lives there. I  
10 know the property well. I was friends with the Newkirk  
11 family and I know Newkirk & Whitney owned the funeral  
12 home. Howard Newkirk, the young son, was my boyhood  
13 friend. We used to play hide and seek in the  
14 casketroom. So it goes back before my time.

15 I would personally like to see it change  
16 from a funeral home to something else just for  
17 aesthetic reasons. And I'm just here really to  
18 support, kidding aside, I don't see any reason to  
19 obstruct this. They have a parking lot for  
20 professional people or whatever is in there is fine  
21 with me. And that's really, I just came here,  
22 unsolicited I want to say, just to support this.

23 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: Thank you, Mr. Radin.  
24 Ms. Guillette?

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1 MS. GUILLETTE: I have some questions  
2 for Don Foster.

3 MR. DON FOSTER: Okay.

4 MS. GUILLETTE: In terms of the intended  
5 usage and a zone change, it's not, they aren't changing  
6 to a SDD, is that correct?

7 MR. FOSTER: No, they are not.

8 MS. GUILLETTE: They are looking for a  
9 straight zone change.

10 MR. FOSTER: It's a straight zoning as  
11 of right under the RP zone. Several of you have the  
12 exhibit in front of you and it shows the zone  
13 situation. The building itself is in a neighborhood,  
14 commercial zone so it has the commercial zoning range,  
15 a wide range of office type activity would be permitted  
16 in that building subject to site plan approval. The  
17 zoning application deals with the area to the rear  
18 where there is an R-6 zone on a part of a former lot  
19 where they're asking for RP zoning.

20 The reason they're before you, the  
21 original parking lot conversion back here was  
22 established by the Board of Zoning Appeals in a use  
23 variance back about the time the funeral home started  
24 up here. That probably wouldn't happen anymore today

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1 but it was, that use variance was specifically  
 2 conditioned to be allowed to be used for parking for a  
 3 funeral home, mortuary only. So hence, there is no  
 4 parking allotted, at this point, to any site plan we  
 5 might try to approve on the front being zoned unless  
 6 the Council acts to approve that RP zone at the rear.  
 7 Then there is a site plan approval aspect and what  
 8 would be permissible by ordinance we would allow inside  
 9 the funeral home building.

10 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: Ms. Guillette.

11 MS. GUILLETTE: Is the parking  
 12 sufficient for three offices?

13 MR. FOSTER: I don't really know at this  
 14 point with assurance because we haven't seen a detailed  
 15 floor plan of the inside of the building to be able to  
 16 determine what the absolute gross areas. There are  
 17 general indications that we're going to be looking at  
 18 an approximately 5,000 square foot area. Where we would  
 19 have 20 parking spaces required, that's what we have on  
 20 site. We're right on the button. So it would appear,  
 21 at this point, that there is adequate parking for  
 22 general office use if the calculations we have now.

23 Now, tonight we heard a little bit about  
 24 some medical kinds of uses. That has a different

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1 parking requirement and I haven't seen, for that I do  
2 have to see a floor plan to be able to tell you.

3 MS. GUILLETTE: But all that would fall  
4 under the ordinances and the use of that building under  
5 its zone would be restricted under the ordinances to  
6 the extent that it would be office and office space and  
7 could not be turned into like a coffee shop or a bagel  
8 store.

9 MR. FOSTER: The zone that now exists on  
10 the building would allow any use allowable in the  
11 zoning regulation for a neighborhood commercial zone.  
12 A coffee house would be a permissible use.

13 MS. GUILLETTE: As long as the parking -  
14 -

15 MR. FOSTER: As long as the parking is  
16 adequate.

17 MS. GUILLETTE: Is adequate, okay, all  
18 right. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: Any other questions  
20 from the Council? Okay. Would you like some closing  
21 remarks? If not, we'll go to the public hearing.

22 MR. GERSTEIN: No, the less that's said  
23 the better, Mayor, thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN BOUIER: Thank you.

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(Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Paul Landman, a Notary Public in and for the State of Connecticut, and President of Post Reporting Service, Inc., do hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing record is a correct and verbatim transcription of the audio recording made of the proceeding hereinbefore set forth.

I further certify that neither the audio operator nor I are attorney or counsel for, nor directly related to or employed by any of the parties to the action and/or proceeding in which this action is taken; and further, that neither the audio operator nor I are a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties thereto, or financially interested in any way in the outcome of this action or proceeding.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and do so attest to the above, this 21st day of January 1999.

*Paul Landman*  
Paul Landman,

President

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