

1 TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

2
3 TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

4 January 23, 2018, 7 p.m.

5 Legislative Chambers

6
7 Re: Application on behalf of Sarjac Partners, LLC
8 requesting modifications to the existing
9 conditions of approval for Special Development
10 District #97, located at 21 Brace Road and known
11 as Fire House Square.
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1 A p p e a r a n c e s :

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3 Town Council Members Present:

4 MAYOR SHARI CANTOR

5 DEPUTY MAYOR BETH KERRIGAN

6 CHRIS BARNES

7 LEON DAVIDOFF

8 DALLAS DODGE

9 MARY FAY

10 LIAM SWEENEY (Present by telephone)

11 BEN WENOGRAD

12 CHRIS WILLIAMS

13
14 RICK LEDWITH

15 Executive Director of Human Resources

16
17 PATRICK ALAIR, ESQ.

18 Corporation Counsel

19
20 ESSIE S. LABROT

21 Town Clerk

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

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3 For the Applicant:

4 GREENE LAW, P.C.

5 11 Talcott Notch Road

6 Farmington, Connecticut 06032

7 BY: MICHAEL D. REINER, ESQ.

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1 PRESIDENT CANTOR: All right. We will
2 call this 7 p.m. public hearing to order. This is
3 an application on behalf of Sarjac Partners, LLC
4 requesting modifications to the existing
5 conditions of approval for Special Development
6 District #97, located at 21 Brace Road and known
7 as Fire House Square.

8 Roll call, Ms. Labrot.

9 MS. LABROT: Mr. Barnes.

10 COUNCILOR BARNES: Present.

11 MS. LABROT: Ms. Cantor.

12 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Here.

13 MS. LABROT: Mr. Davidoff.

14 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Here.

15 MS. LABROT: Mr. Dodge.

16 COUNCILOR DODGE: Here.

17 MS. LABROT: Ms. Fay.

18 COUNCILOR FAY: Here.

19 MS. LABROT: Ms. Kerrigan.

20 COUNCILOR KERRIGAN: Here.

21 MS. LABROT: Mr. Sweeney on the phone.

22 COUNCILOR SWEENEY: Here.

23 MS. LABROT: Mr. Wenograd.

24 COUNCILOR WENOGRAD: Here.

25 MS. LABROT: And Mr. Williams.

1 COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Here.

2 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Ms.

3 Labrot.

4 Presentation from the applicant.

5 MR. REINER: Good evening, everyone.

6 My name is Mike Reiner. I'm the attorney for
7 Sarjac Partners, the applicant. I know that you
8 all have a package that's dated December 1, 2017,
9 so I'll try to be brief and not be redundant from
10 that.

11 A little bit of history on 21 Brace
12 Road, which I'm sure you're all aware, 21 Brace
13 Road was the old firehouse. It was sold in 1997,
14 I believe, to Ted Carrier, who then developed it.
15 And between 1996 and 1997, there were special
16 development district applications filed, and the
17 end result of that was that the current basement,
18 which is the subject of tonight's application,
19 could be used for retail and office space for
20 antiques and not for personal services.

21 And what we're asking is to have the
22 basement space used for a yoga studio. A woman by
23 the name of Diane Couture, who is a West Hartford
24 center resident, is the proposed lessee. She has
25 numerous -- already signed up people who are from

1 the West Hartford center area, or are people who
2 work in West Hartford center, to come to her yoga
3 studio.

4 So we feel that the change that we're
5 asking for fits the needs of the business
6 community today, as opposed to what was decided in
7 1997. We also feel that the proposed use is in
8 harmony with the overall business plans and
9 strategies of West Hartford and the center in
10 particular.

11 The amount of space that she's taking,
12 about 50 people could come in. However, given the
13 mat size for the yoga studio, including the
14 instructor, she estimates that it would be
15 roughly -- not roughly, exactly, based on her
16 architect, 28 people could be the maximum number
17 of people.

18 The times that she would be proposing
19 to use the yoga studio are not completely known,
20 but these types of businesses, typically they're
21 before work, they're during lunch, and they're
22 after work. So I don't really anticipate there
23 being any load to any kind of parking use,
24 especially since it's expected that everyone is
25 going to either be a resident in that area within

1 walking distance or currently work there.

2 And we did send out letters, dated
3 December 16, 2017, to all of the area residents.
4 And we held an open house for questions on January
5 3, 2018, from 5 to 7. No one showed up. However,
6 in our letter we did state what the proposed use
7 was, so all the neighbors were fully aware of what
8 we were looking to do in the space.

9 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. Attorney
10 Reiner.

11 Any questions?

12 COUNCILOR BARNES: I do.

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. Mr. Barnes.

14 COUNCILOR BARNES: Thank you.

15 I just want to follow up. Is there a
16 written outreach report? I was just going
17 through. We get to our meeting and there are a
18 lot of papers on the table other than just your
19 file from December. Is there --

20 MR. REINER: An outreach to the
21 neighbors?

22 COUNCILOR BARNES: Yes.

23 MR. REINER: Yes, we sent a letter.
24 That's what I was describing. We sent a letter
25 December 16, 2017 to all the neighbors, explaining

1 what the use was going to be, and then also
2 inviting anyone who had further questions to
3 either contact us and/or to come to an open house
4 on January 3, 2018, from 5 to 7 p.m. And we
5 received no correspondence, we received no emails,
6 no calls, and no one showed up to the open house.

7 COUNCILOR BARNES: And in the December
8 material, December 1, 2017, was the proposed use
9 identified in the material?

10 MR. REINER: That it be a yoga studio?
11 Yes.

12 COUNCILOR BARNES: All right. Thank
13 you.

14 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
15 Mr. Barnes.

16 Ms. Kerrigan.

17 COUNCILOR KERRIGAN: Thank you, Madam
18 Mayor.

19 A quick question. Back in the late
20 nineties, is there any particular reason why they
21 said no personal services would be allowed in the
22 basement?

23 MR. REINER: I do not know. We tried
24 to look and see what the reasoning was. I do not
25 know. I do know that now when you look at West

1 Hartford center, it's personal services or
2 restaurants pretty much are the landscape at this
3 point. Why they even had the word "antiques" as a
4 use for the basement is something that obviously
5 we wouldn't expect to see in West Hartford center
6 in today's world.

7 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Ms.
8 Kerrigan.

9 Ms. Fay.

10 COUNCILOR FAY: Thank you.

11 Hi, Attorney Reiner. Just in general,
12 do you expect to have it occupied on the weekends,
13 or parking use when it's kind of busy in the
14 center?

15 MR. REINER: I would expect weekends,
16 again, typical of yoga studios, a late morning
17 type of thing. They're going to have classes when
18 there's a need for it. I think that, as I said,
19 the anticipated client base would be residents in
20 the neighborhood and people who work there. So I
21 would expect on Saturdays it would be residents
22 who want to come on a Saturday or Sunday. I would
23 expect it to be not as early morning as Monday
24 through Friday, but I do know that they anticipate
25 to have classes on the weekend, yes.

1 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Ms. Fay.
2 Mr. Davidoff.

3 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Thank you, Madam
4 Mayor.

5 Attorney Reiner, there was an email
6 from our building department on December 29th
7 talking about, first, the plumbing issue there has
8 been resolved, but there was another comment, and
9 I'll just read it so you can comment on it. "If
10 the SDD was submitted to allow the space to be
11 used as something else, (meaning the use changes
12 as defined by the building code), the facilities
13 found currently in the space and the accessibility
14 of the space may become an issue that would need
15 to be addressed."

16 MR. REINER: That's the number of 50,
17 if there was further discussion, and the number of
18 50 occupants would then become the issue. And
19 that's why I brought up the number 50, and that 28
20 was the maximum that would be at the facility at
21 any one time.

22 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Okay. With
23 respect to accessibility issues --

24 MR. REINER: That's already been
25 addressed. The fire marshal has been there. The

1 building department has looked at it. No one has
2 any issue with accessibility that I'm aware of.

3 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: I didn't see
4 anything in our materials.

5 MR. REINER: We did have the fire
6 marshal there, and it was approved. And the
7 building department has seen the plans, and it was
8 approved.

9 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
11 Davidoff.

12 Mr. Williams.

13 COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam
14 Mayor.

15 Counsel, is the space currently vacant?

16 MR. REINER: It is.

17 COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: And how long has
18 it been vacant, do you know, roughly?

19 MR. REINER: Yes. We had some plumbing
20 issues, as was mentioned back in June, July. The
21 prior tenant moved out, so it's been vacant since
22 then.

23 COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
25 Mr. Williams.

1 So are you doing renovation, or will
2 you be doing renovation soon, to convert it to a
3 studio? I mean, are there --

4 MR. REINER: Well, the first thing that
5 we had to do was take care of the plumbing issues,
6 which has been done. Then we would finish the
7 space, which at this point is really just the
8 floors and painting is pretty much what remains to
9 be done for any use at the premises. That would
10 be the first step.

11 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Are there restrooms
12 down there too?

13 MR. REINER: There are restrooms, yes.

14 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. Any other
15 questions?

16 (No response.)

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: We need to check the
18 sign-up sheet to see whether anyone has signed up.

19 It doesn't look like there's many
20 people there, but if there's anybody that would
21 like to come and speak to this application?

22 (No response.)

23 PRESIDENT CANTOR: It's empty?

24 MR. ALAIR: Yes.

25 PRESIDENT CANTOR: And there's nobody

1 in the audience that would like to speak. Okay.

2 With that, I will read into the record
3 a letter dated January 8, 2018 from TPZ
4 recommending approval; and a letter dated January
5 19, 2018 from DRAC, also recommending approval.

6 Are there any further questions for the
7 applicant?

8 (No response.)

9 PRESIDENT CANTOR: No. Okay. With
10 that, we'll close the public hearing, and we'll
11 see you soon.

12 (Whereupon, the above proceedings
13 concluded at 7:10 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 13 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original stenotype notes taken of the Public Hearing in Re: APPLICATION ON BEHALF OF SARJAC PARTNERS, LLC REQUESTING MODIFICATIONS TO THE EXISTING CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT #97, LOCATED AT 21 BRACE ROAD AND KNOWN AS FIRE HOUSE SQUARE, which was held before the West Hartford Town Council, at Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Room 314, West Hartford, Connecticut, on January 23, 2018.

Lisa L. Warner, L.S.R. 061
Court Reporter