

**In The Matter Of:**  
*TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD*  
*TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING*

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*Legislative Chambers*  
*November 13, 2018*

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TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

November 13, 2018, 7:00 p.m.,

Legislative Chambers

Re: Application by JDC Farmington LLC,  
Contract Purchaser of 1027 Farmington Avenue,  
Requesting a Change of the Underlying Zone  
for 0.3 acres at the Southwest Corner of the  
Intersection of Woodrow Street and Farmington  
Avenue from RM-3R (Multifamily Restricted  
Residential) to RO (Residential Office), and  
Special Development District (SDD)  
Designation to Reuse the Existing Building  
for Professional Office Use.

1    A p p e a r a n c e s :

2            T o w n   C o u n c i l   M e m b e r s   P r e s e n t :

3                    M A Y O R   S H A R I   C A N T O R

4                    L I A M   S W E E N E Y

5                    L E O N   D A V I D O F F

6                    C H R I S   B A R N E S

7                    M A R Y   F A Y

8                    B E T H   K E R R I G A N

9                    B E N   W E N O G R A D

10                  D A L L A S   D O D G E

11                  C H R I S T O P H E R   W I L L I A M S

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13                  G A R M O N   N E W S O M   I I ,   E S Q . ,

14                  D e p .   C o r p o r a t i o n   C o u n s e l

15

16                  M A T T   H A R T ,

17                  T o w n   M a n a g e r

18

19                  E S S I E   L A B R O T ,

20                  T o w n   C l e r k

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1    A p p e a r a n c e s:(cont'd)

2            KROLL, MCNAMARA, EVANS & DELEHANTY

3            65 Memorial Road, Suite 300

4            West Hartford, CT 06107

5                    By: GREGORY W. PIECUCH, ESQ.

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7                            860.561.7070

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1           PRESIDENT CANTOR: I'd like to call  
2 the 7 p.m. public hearing to order. This is  
3 an Application for 1027 Farmington Avenue, an  
4 application by JDC Farmington, LLC, contract  
5 purchaser of 1027 Farmington Avenue  
6 requesting a change of the underlying zone  
7 for .3 acres at the southwest corner of the  
8 intersection of Woodrow Street and Farmington  
9 Avenue, from RM-3R multi-residential,  
10 restricted residential; to RO, residential  
11 office and special development district SDD  
12 designation to reuse the existing building  
13 for professional office use.

14           Rollcall, Ms. Labrot.

15           MS. LABROT: Mr. Barnes.

16           COUNCILOR BARNES: Present.

17           MS. LABROT: Ms. Cantor.

18           PRESIDENT CANTOR: Here.

19           MS. LABROT: Mr. Davidoff.

20           COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Here.

21           MS. LABROT: Mr. Dodge.

22           COUNCILOR DODGE: Here.

23           MS. LABROT: Ms. Fay.

24           COUNCILOR FAY: Here.

25           MS. LABROT: Ms. Kerrigan.

1 COUNCILOR KERRIGAN: Here.

2 MS. LABROT: Mr. Sweeney.

3 COUNCILOR SWEENEY: Here.

4 MS. LABROT: Mr. Wenograd.

5 COUNCILOR WENOGRAD: Here.

6 MS. LABROT: And Mr. Williams.

7 COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Here.

8 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you very  
9 much. I would also like you to note that our  
10 Corporation Counsel Pat Alair is out of town.  
11 And we have the honor of having Attorney  
12 Newsom here with us, to join us and help us  
13 out.

14 So we will start with a  
15 presentation from the applicant.

16 MR. PIECUCH: Good evening, Mayor  
17 and members of the Council. It's a pleasure  
18 to be here with you tonight. My name is Greg  
19 Piecuch. I'm a partner at Kroll, McNamara,  
20 Evans & Delehanty. We're a local law firm  
21 with our offices in Blue Back Square.

22 The first that I would like to  
23 do -- if I could hand Mr. Newsom my signed  
24 affidavit. We're very excited tonight to  
25 present your our plans to refurbish, enhance

1 and preserve the historic home that's located  
2 at 1027 Farmington Avenue. As noted, our  
3 application seeks to change the zone of this  
4 property from RM-3R to RO with an SDD  
5 overlay.

6 We're seeking a zone change to  
7 allow the property to be adaptively reused as  
8 my client, Mr. Witt's law office. Our  
9 proposal has been designed to maintain the  
10 residential character of this site, to  
11 restore the historic features of the home,  
12 and to preserve the existing gateway to the  
13 Woodrow Street neighborhood.

14 Also presenting tonight will be  
15 Mr. Witt, who's my client, which is a local  
16 attorney. His office is currently on North  
17 Main Street. He and Beth reside in this  
18 neighborhood. They own their home at 92 Four  
19 Mile Road. Mr. Witt is the sole owner of the  
20 applicant JDC Farmington, LLC, which is a  
21 single-purpose entity which was formed --  
22 it's the contract purchaser of the property  
23 for Mr. Blanchfield.

24 Rich will cover the architectural  
25 restoration work and the landscaping

1 improvements that he's proposing. Also here  
2 tonight is Andrew Quirk. He is a  
3 professional engineer from Kratzert Jones.  
4 He will give you an overview of this site  
5 plan and the engineering work, storm water  
6 management and the like.

7 I also want to recognize Coach  
8 Blanchfield who is here tonight. He just got  
9 off the football field -- he tells me. His  
10 property has been in his family for 72 years.  
11 He will continue to reside on the second  
12 floor if our application is successful.

13 What you're seeing before you are  
14 some photos of the existing home. As we'll  
15 talk about, our overriding goal is to  
16 maintain this structure -- enhanced, but  
17 maintain the architectural value of the home  
18 so that everybody feels as though,  
19 notwithstanding the fact that there's a law  
20 firm there, that it continues to look like a  
21 home.

22 One of the first things that I want  
23 to do, though, is going over the existing  
24 conditions of the site as well as the  
25 surrounding zoning. Just to orient you on



1 this map, this is a GIS map that we printed  
2 out just with the zones overlaid on it.

3 Farmington Avenue runs generally in  
4 this direction. This is the subject  
5 property. So Woodrow Street runs down here.  
6 Arapahoe over here, and LaSalle is off of  
7 this side of the map. What we can see from  
8 this map is that the property is at the  
9 southwest corner of Farmington Avenue and  
10 Woodrow. We're just to the west of the BC  
11 zone.

12 What you can see from this is  
13 there's actually eight other different  
14 properties in this area that have been  
15 rezoned to the RO-SDD. So we're certainly  
16 not the first in this area. This has been an  
17 area of transition that the RO has proved  
18 useful, particularly with the SDD overlay to  
19 protect the character of the neighborhood.

20 In addition, there are some -- you  
21 will note some additional RMO and RO on  
22 Arapahoe. While this presents an  
23 opportunity, certainly care is warranted any  
24 time you're proposing a change of views. And  
25 Mr. Witt as a neighbor of this property is

1 very cognizant of that.

2           The home -- just to go back to  
3 that -- was constructed in 1911. It's a  
4 Greek revival. It was purchased by May  
5 Blackall in 1946. It has been in her family  
6 ever since.

7           There is an historic use of this  
8 property for commercial purposes. Starting  
9 in the 1950s the first floor was converted  
10 for a professional office. There was a  
11 doctor's office there for about -- over 20  
12 years. Dr. Jack Baine used the first floor  
13 for his dentistry practice up until the mid  
14 1970s. After that a woman by the name of  
15 Susan Hennepin had an electrolysis business  
16 on the first floor. This was in the 1980s.  
17 All throughout that period Ms. Blackwell  
18 lived up on the second floor.

19           After she passed, her two sons  
20 Father Randall Blackwell and Father John  
21 Blackwell moved into the home. It's at that  
22 point that the commercial use stopped and  
23 both floors were used for residential.

24           Mr. Blanchfield who is  
25 Ms. Blackwell's grandson purchased the

1 home in 2014 from the estate. The first  
2 floor is currently vacant. He's living on  
3 the second floor. If our application is  
4 approved and we close on the property he'll  
5 continue to live on the second floor as a  
6 tenant.

7           As the photos show, there's been a  
8 lot of deferred maintenance to the home. The  
9 landscaping is overgrown. It needs some  
10 tender loving care, and that's what we are  
11 looking to show. Rich is going to go over  
12 that in detail in a minute when I turn it  
13 over to him.

14           But before we go to that, I just  
15 want to go procedurally where we've come thus  
16 far. The application was sent out for staff  
17 review. The substantive comments that we  
18 received were from the engineering department  
19 and planning department. We address all  
20 those concerns.

21           We filed the revised plan set on  
22 November 5th that addressed their concerns as  
23 well as some feedback that we got from the  
24 Design Review Advisory board -- or Committee,  
25 back in October.

1           We received final staff memos from  
2 Mr. Dumais and Mr. Guarino last week  
3 indicating that we have fully addressed all  
4 of their comments. So we are happy to have  
5 that.

6           That application was also referred  
7 to TPZ and DRAC. We met with DRAC twice.  
8 Last Thursday they voted unanimously to  
9 recommend approval of the application. Also  
10 TPZ met last Wednesday. They also voted  
11 unanimously to recommend approval.

12           So we feel that leading up to today  
13 we've done a lot of work on the application.  
14 It's gotten better as we've gone through the  
15 process, but we're very happy with what we  
16 have to present.

17           So with that, I'm going to turn it  
18 over to Mr. Witt who's to orient you on some  
19 of the architectural and landscaping  
20 enhancements that he has planned for this  
21 property.

22           RICHARD WITT: Good evening,  
23 everybody. My name is Richard Witt. I'm a  
24 local attorney with my office at 35 North  
25 Main Street. I've been in West Hartford as a

1 practicing attorney -- and I'm going on my  
2 14th year.

3 My wife and I lived previously on  
4 Woodrow Street, and when we needed a bigger  
5 home we moved five houses away to Four Mile.  
6 So we love it and we're very excited about  
7 this project. We feel it's definitely a  
8 gateway project to the neighborhood we live  
9 in. We walk by it every night, this whole  
10 area, and most of the people all surrounding  
11 are all our friends.

12 Some of the things we're planning  
13 on doing is there was an addition here where  
14 it was just an addition with no architectural  
15 elements from the previous host added in. So  
16 we're going to be adding in Greek revival  
17 corner posts that are going to go along each  
18 corner on the addition.

19 Over here there were two columns  
20 that were found in the basement that were  
21 original to the house. They're Corinthian  
22 columns. They're in great shape. We're  
23 going to restore them and we're going to add  
24 them back to the front awning in the home  
25 right there. So those will be added as

1 design elements, and they were original to  
2 the home.

3           It's a little hard to see, but  
4 there's an intended porch here that leads off  
5 of this front staircase, and it's got a  
6 beautiful bead board ceiling that's right  
7 now -- it used to be, like, a teak color.  
8 We're going to restore the teak, stain it and  
9 urethane it so it will give, like, a classic  
10 boat-like finish on the ceiling.

11           So when you walk into that porch  
12 all the railings that are original to the  
13 home, that will be staying as well. That was  
14 something the design committee wanted to make  
15 sure of, and we've added to the plans. That  
16 was omitted incorrectly, but those are all  
17 staying, all the railings and all the design  
18 elements.

19           We are going to be restoring the  
20 home with all the historic colors, which will  
21 all be Benjamin Moore historic colors, which  
22 we have identified already. The picture  
23 shows the colors a little bit darker than  
24 it's actually going to be. This is  
25 actually -- it's a much softer color.

1           This is the home my wife and I  
2 restored in Rhode Island, and it's the exact  
3 color. And as you can see, it's much more of  
4 a softer yellow cream with the Benjamin Moore  
5 White. And that's a Benjamin Moore color. I  
6 just wanted to show that to you because the  
7 architectural color comes up a little gold.

8           All the windows in the home -- it  
9 was important to the design committee as well  
10 as us -- are all going to be matching at this  
11 point. So in the rear of the property, right  
12 over here there's large casement windows,  
13 solid casements. Those are all going to be  
14 double-hung windows that are going to match  
15 the rest of the home.

16           Also at some point these half-moon  
17 windows were removed from the front and back  
18 of the home. If you walk to the home to this  
19 day you can still see the beautiful outline  
20 of these half-moon windows, but currently  
21 there's just a small double-hung window  
22 there. That's going to be removed. We're  
23 going to add architectural windows, half-moon  
24 windows there from Anderson, and the look is  
25 going to be restored to where it is.

1           Also not really noted is the garage  
2 that's historic to this home -- is also going  
3 to be fully restored with the same matching  
4 color, the same matching and same matching  
5 double-hung windows in the back.

6           All the bushes that are currently  
7 around the building are going to be pulled  
8 out, and we're going to have northeastern  
9 perennials placed all around per the design  
10 committee's recommendation. And that's going  
11 to surround the entire side of the house on  
12 Woodrow. I'll let Andrew from Kratzert and  
13 Jones go into greater detail on that.

14           We're also going to be adding, like  
15 I said, new architectural shingles to the  
16 entire roof. Currently the addition has a  
17 flat roof that is failing and is currently  
18 leaking. There is a plastic covering over  
19 there for the last couple of months.

20           We're going to do a three-way hip  
21 roof similar to a home a couple houses down,  
22 down on Woodrow. And we're going to get a  
23 slight pitch, and we're going to be able to  
24 do a shingled roof on that addition as well.

25           All the architectural doors that



1 are existing on the exterior that we are  
2 going to currently use are going to stay  
3 original to the home.

4           And I think at this point that's  
5 about it for the architectural designs that  
6 we're going to be adding, but again we're  
7 going to be adding. We feel this is an  
8 important project. It's going to be a  
9 showpiece.

10           We feel that with the lighting  
11 that's going to go against the house that the  
12 design committee recommended, it's really  
13 going to be a nice gateway as many of our  
14 neighbors that we've petitioned with and  
15 visited with, they were very, very worried  
16 that this house was going to be torn down.

17           And we've assured them that, if  
18 anything it's going to go back to its  
19 original glory and anybody entering that  
20 neighborhood is going to see this house  
21 first, and we're very proud of this project.

22           Andrew?

23           ANDREW QUIRK: Good evening, Mayor,  
24 Councilmembers. My name is Andrew Quirk,  
25 Professional Engineer and Principal with

1 Kratzert, Jones & Associates, with offices in  
2 Southington, Connecticut.

3 We performed all of the land  
4 survey, site planning and engineering for the  
5 project. We began the project with the  
6 survey that's included in your package as  
7 B-1. And I'll just go over this briefly to  
8 show the existing conditions on the site.

9 So presently this is the house  
10 that's been described, Farmington Avenue  
11 along the North. And this is that side porch  
12 entrance on Woodrow.

13 There's presently a fairly large  
14 paved area in the back up against a two-car  
15 garage, and there's two walkways to the  
16 entrance on the back as well as a walkway to  
17 a second-floor deck.

18 The proposed site layout is to  
19 maintain the house. There's a rear porch in  
20 the back left corner that's going to be  
21 enclosed as part of the office floorplan  
22 layout. The existing deck in this area here  
23 that kind of protrudes out further into the  
24 parking area is going to be removed, and a  
25 much smaller staircase and access to the

1 second floor will be installed. There will  
2 also be a second entrance here.

3 There will be a full ADA-accessible  
4 ramp and main entrance off the parking lot to  
5 the rear of the building, and the main, more  
6 aesthetic main entrance to the building will  
7 remain.

8 There's an alternate entrance on  
9 Woodrow that's going to be closed as part of  
10 the completion of the office floorplan layout  
11 on the first floor.

12 We're proposing a new parking lot  
13 area for eight parking spaces plus the two  
14 parking spaces that will remain within the  
15 garage. There will be an ADA space to the  
16 northwest part of the parking lot with an  
17 entrance to a walkway system here, a ramp  
18 into the main entrance. There will also be a  
19 walkway with the steps into the back entrance  
20 as well.

21 We performed all the site plan  
22 layout, grading, and storm water management,  
23 including the storm water management plan and  
24 modeling using the rational method for all  
25 the stormwater calculations. The stormwater

1 is managed to have zero increase in peak  
2 discharge rates through the hundred-year  
3 storm event.

4 The engineering department has  
5 reviewed, and we satisfied all their comments  
6 related to storm water.

7 Just briefly, there's two systems.  
8 There's the parking lot area which will flow  
9 to a landscaped area along the edge, the  
10 northern edge of the parking lot for an  
11 infiltration trench.

12 And then we're taking the roof  
13 leaders off the north portion of the building  
14 that presently discharged to the lawn area,  
15 and promoting groundwater recharge by two  
16 underground systems that will be out of  
17 sight, but will promote a reduction in runoff  
18 from the site towards both Farmington Avenue  
19 and Woodrow Street. There will be no  
20 increase in any discharge to the west of the  
21 abutting property.

22 One of the comments from  
23 engineering was to install curbing along this  
24 edge, which we've done to further ensure that  
25 there will be no discharge into abutting

1 property owners.

2 We also performed a full lighting  
3 plan in compliance with the dark skies plan  
4 of the zoning regulations. All the  
5 structures are full cutoff fixtures.

6 There will be fixtures -- there's a  
7 lighting thing in the package, but there will  
8 be two fixtures on the garage area, one off  
9 the back of the building to light the parking  
10 lot area. Those are cutoffs, so they will  
11 not shed light beyond the area, that it's  
12 intended to be directed down onto the  
13 pavement, and there will be timers.

14 There's also some landscape  
15 lighting, really more just decorative with  
16 the wonderful facade improvements that are  
17 being done to have some facade lighting along  
18 the front. And the same lights will be used  
19 along the side to just shine upon the two  
20 faces of the sign along Farmington Avenue.

21 I think with that, I'll turn it  
22 back to Attorney Piecuch.

23 MR. PIECUCH: Just briefly to add  
24 on to that, we did show in our detail of the  
25 architectural, this is the proposed sign that

1 we're planning. It's going to be blue. It's  
2 going to be the same blue that the front door  
3 will be. So that will match and will tie in.  
4 We have designed that so that the square  
5 footage is within the regulation. It will be  
6 a two-sided side. We're allowed up to, I  
7 believe, 24 square feet it total. So it will  
8 be just under 12 square feet of text area on  
9 either side. So that's the situation with  
10 that.

11           And I just wanted to point out in  
12 addition to what Andrew mentioned, is that  
13 DRAC did suggest replacing all of the  
14 plantings along the north and the west of the  
15 house. So this is where all of the -- that's  
16 where plantings will be. The AC outside  
17 systems will be right here, and we are adding  
18 one additional planting at the recommendation  
19 of design review to better shield that.

20           So that is, in a nutshell, the plan  
21 as it is. We welcome questions before we go  
22 to public audience.

23           I would want, at the appropriate  
24 time, just to update the Council on our  
25 community outreach efforts, but before I do

1 that perhaps if there are questions about  
2 architectural or engineering we can cover  
3 those, and then I'll continue from there.

4 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,  
5 Attorney Piecuch. I hope I said that right.

6 So are there questions from the  
7 Council on anything? I actually have a  
8 couple. One is snow storage, and where would  
9 that be? Because it looks like, you know, it  
10 is fairly tight.

11 MR. PIECUCH: It is tight. That  
12 was a comment that came up from Mr. Dumais as  
13 well as from design review. One of the  
14 things that we're looking to do is that under  
15 strict application of the regulations the  
16 depth of the parking stalls has to be  
17 20 feet. Upon the recommendation we have  
18 redesigned it to have 18 feet.

19 We have a ten-foot long storage  
20 area on the westerly side of the property  
21 that they felt would be sufficient for snow  
22 storage.

23 As we indicated in our memo in  
24 reply to Mr. Dumais' staff comments, gosh, if  
25 we had to get one of those

1 two-and-a-half-foot storms again, if need be  
2 we can haul the snow off site. We don't want  
3 to have to, but worst-case scenario we can do  
4 that.

5 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.

6 And the other thing was trash. Are  
7 you going to use traditional cans, or are you  
8 going to have a little dumpster? Do you have  
9 a plan for that?

10 MR. PIECUCH: We do, and there is a  
11 notation down here on part of the plan.  
12 Mr. Witt's law office is mostly digital at  
13 this point, so very little trash. He  
14 estimates one or two bags per week of  
15 recyclables and garbage.

16 So that along with the resident on  
17 the second-floor -- we're just going to have  
18 customary bins and they're going to be stored  
19 in the garage. So it's not going to be  
20 unsightly at all.

21 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.

22 Any other questions?

23 Mr. Davidoff.

24 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Thank you,  
25 Madam Mayor. Can we just talk about the



1 parking lot?

2 MR. PIECUCH: Sure.

3 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: So for the  
4 use, what's the required number of spaces for  
5 a law office, professional law office?

6 MR. PIECUCH: Because we're  
7 proposing RO we are leaving open the  
8 flexibility to perhaps use the second floor  
9 as an office in the future.

10 We've run the calculations. Andrew  
11 will address that, but we do meet the  
12 criteria in terms of the square footage of  
13 the office use. So it would require ten  
14 spaces. The garage is included in that, so  
15 we have eight spaces plus two.

16 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: And that's  
17 based on the current for just the  
18 professional office?

19 MR. PIECUCH: That would -- yes,  
20 that would be --

21 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Does that also  
22 include the tenancy on the second-floor?

23 MR. PIECUCH: It does. So if you  
24 use the second floor as a residence it's two  
25 spaces. If you use the second-floor for a

1 professional office it's a couple more than  
2 that. So the ten covers if both floors are  
3 used as a professional office.

4 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: And who is  
5 going to be parking in the garage?

6 MR. PIECUCH: The residents could  
7 be, or if it's professional use on both  
8 floors one of the attorneys could park there.

9 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Okay. And do  
10 you know how many people currently are  
11 employed in the law firm?

12 MR. PIECUCH: Mr. Witt claims on  
13 having himself and one or two paralegals.

14 RICHARD WITT: I have 2 paralegals  
15 for the last 14 years in my West Hartford  
16 office. So that's --

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: We need you to  
18 go the mic.

19 RICHARD WITT: Yeah. For 14 years  
20 I've only maintained 2 paralegals in my West  
21 Hartford office, and just myself and that's  
22 what we plan on doing in the future. So  
23 that's it.

24 And the office, if you look at the  
25 first floor layout, is based on a design for

1 one lawyer with one office with two  
2 paralegals.

3 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: And then with  
4 respect to the signage it said, future  
5 tenant. How would that change?

6 RICHARD WITT: Well, we do reserve  
7 the option, you know. Right now we have the  
8 three-year lease with the Blanchfield family  
9 which may be extended, but at some point if  
10 there's a tenant that wants to go on the  
11 second floor they would want some signage at  
12 that point.

13 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: And so how  
14 would that alter the parking requirements?

15 MR. PIECUCH: So that additional,  
16 where it says, future tenant, that's included  
17 in the square footage calculations. And I  
18 believe we would come in for an  
19 administrative approval through the planning  
20 office if we wanted to add signage there.  
21 Currently it would be blank.

22 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: All right. So  
23 I just to be very clear. So you're telling  
24 me the max amount of parking required, if  
25 that was to be a professional office would be

1 no more than ten spaces. And this is able to  
2 accommodate that all on site?

3 MR. PIECUCH: Correct. That was  
4 our goal. We know that on-street parking is  
5 an issue in this neighborhood. He wanted to  
6 be sure that we could accommodate the present  
7 and the possible future use of all  
8 off-street, which we do.

9 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Well, that's  
10 where I was going with this whole thing,  
11 because obviously it's a key street, Woodrow,  
12 in terms of our Center and center development  
13 along Farmington Avenue.

14 And we're uncertain as to what the  
15 abutters' property would look like with  
16 respect to future development there -- so  
17 competition for parking spaces. So for those  
18 uses that could accommodate parking on the  
19 site, I think the Council probably looks more  
20 favorably towards that. So that's why my  
21 question was aimed for that.

22 MR. PIECUCH: Yeah. Yes, sir. If  
23 you look at sheet S-2 there is a zoning table  
24 and it includes all the calculations on how  
25 we arrived at ten spots. So if those floors

1 were used for professional office, the square  
2 footage, I think it's one space for every 250  
3 square feet, and that's what the number is.  
4 So we are proposing to accommodate all the  
5 parking off street.

6 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Thank you.

7 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you. Any  
8 other questions?

9

10 (No response.)

11

12 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Why don't you  
13 proceed with the other elements of that, and  
14 then we'll go for public comment. Are you  
15 done with the presentation? Should we go to  
16 the sign-up sheet? Or did you want to --

17 MR. PIECUCH: I just briefly want  
18 to take one minute and just let you know what  
19 Rich and Beth did in terms of community  
20 outreach.

21 Even before the application was  
22 filed we met with town staff. Rich met with  
23 some of the members from the working group  
24 that was set up in response to a lot of the  
25 comments in the neighborhood.

1           Rich and Beth went door to door all  
2 throughout the neighborhood, knocked on the  
3 doors, had plans, met with neighbors. They  
4 also did a mailing to 45 property owners, not  
5 just the abutters, but 45 different property  
6 owners. We included a copy of the site plan.  
7 We included a copy of the elevations in that  
8 letter. Rich included his personal e-mail  
9 address, his personal cellphone. He said,  
10 please, you know, call with questions.

11           Rich and Beth had an open house at  
12 their home that we invited everybody in the  
13 neighborhood to, and we had a couple folks  
14 show up at that -- which was good.

15           One of the things that we filed was  
16 a community of each memorandum that's dated  
17 November 5th. Twenty-three of the neighbors  
18 addressed and signed letters in support of  
19 that.

20           In addition, Mr. Dumais received an  
21 e-mail from Scott and Anna Fault in support  
22 of the application, which is part of that  
23 outreach memorandum. We also received today  
24 a letter of support from Attorney Owen Eagan  
25 in support of the application as well.

1           So we did a lot knowing the  
2 sensitivity of the neighborhood to reach out  
3 early and often on this application, and  
4 we've received I don't think anything but  
5 positive reaction for it.

6           PRESIDENT CANTOR: That's amazing.  
7 Okay. And now -- so can we have the public  
8 comments?

9           Thank you. You have three minutes  
10 to speak to this application, unless you are  
11 a representative group. Then you can speak  
12 for five. And we will start with Robert  
13 Haber.

14           Please state your name and address  
15 for the record. You have to speak into the  
16 mic for the record.

17           ROBERT HABER: Good evening, ladies  
18 and gentlemen, members of the Town Council.  
19 Thank you. I'll be very brief. My name is  
20 Robert Haber. My wife and I reside at 1028  
21 Farmington Avenue.

22           I have been a resident of West  
23 Hartford for 64 years. I've been a  
24 residential real estate appraiser for in  
25 excess of 30 years, having done well over

1 10,000 appraisals, residential appraisals --  
2 and actually several hundred in West  
3 Hartford.

4           The reason I'm here tonight is we  
5 firmly support what Attorney Witt is  
6 intending on doing with the property. We  
7 think it will be nothing but excellent things  
8 for the neighborhood.

9           We had a board meeting at our condo  
10 about a month ago. We spoke about this  
11 project and everyone that was there was in  
12 agreement.

13           There's 21 units in our building.  
14 We live at 1028, which is center west. I  
15 have known Mr. Blanchfield and Mr. Witt for  
16 in excess of ten years and I just -- we just  
17 think it's going to be an excellent thing for  
18 the neighborhood.

19           So that's basically it.

20           PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you so  
21 much, Mr. Haber.

22           The next person that signed up is  
23 Benjamin Albert. And the person after that,  
24 just so you're ready, is Lisa Campo.

25           BENJAMIN ALBERT: I brought



1 security with me. Good evening mayor and  
2 council members. My name is Benjamin Albert  
3 and I live at 38 Ellsworth Road. What struck  
4 me as I was walking up here is there's  
5 probably not too many people and probably not  
6 too many projects in our sensitive  
7 neighborhood that I would drag them out  
8 tonight for having only showered one and not  
9 the other.

10 I truly can think of no better  
11 reason to talk for my first public comments  
12 at a town Council meeting than to support  
13 both a project under consideration at 1027  
14 Farmington Avenue and great neighbors like  
15 Rich and Beth Witt.

16 While the address 1027 Farmington  
17 Avenue sounds farther away, the property site  
18 predominantly is in my backyard on Woodrow  
19 Street. It is with that in mind that I can  
20 tell you that I genuinely care about  
21 development in my neighborhood, and more  
22 importantly I know that Beth and Rich who  
23 live around the corner from me on Four Mile  
24 Road do also.

25 And while I know Beth and Rich, I

1 can attest to the fact that they have come to  
2 this place in a very meaningful way,  
3 including going, as you just heard, door to  
4 door on a couple of occasions to, in the  
5 first instance, highlight their intentions.  
6 In another instance they answered questions  
7 and heard concerns, and in the final instance  
8 to share renderings of the work and  
9 investment they were going to undertake to  
10 beautify a property in our neighborhood.

11 In addition, I know that the Witts  
12 have mailed notices and information in an  
13 effort to be transparent about their project,  
14 to be as transparent about their project and  
15 inclusive of our thoughts as possible.

16 I will confess that when a property  
17 like this one versus a single-family home  
18 goes on the market our close-knit group of  
19 neighbors gets concerned. I think the Mayor  
20 alluded to that. After all, the building  
21 serves as a sentry of sorts to our  
22 residential area.

23 When it was on the market I think  
24 about a year ago or so we were all worried  
25 about what would happen to it, specifically

1 we were stressed over it being torn down,  
2 enlarged in a commercial way, or some  
3 intrusive use would come of it.

4           With equal energy, but this time  
5 positive, our neighbors breathed a collective  
6 sigh of relief when we learned that our  
7 neighbor who used to live directly across  
8 from me before my kids chased them away from  
9 the corner of Woodrow and Ellsworth, would be  
10 the new owner.

11           Moreover, we were thrilled to hear  
12 about Rich's plans. Instead of tearing down  
13 this historic 1911 structure, Rich will be  
14 enhancing it. Instead of an unsightly  
15 commercial building welcoming you to our  
16 little piece of West Hartford, his project  
17 will serve as a welcome addition consistent  
18 with the character of our family-friendly  
19 enclave.

20           This project represents a win for  
21 everyone in the growth debate. We get a  
22 family man who has proven in his Four Mile  
23 Road home that he will invest to make it  
24 great. We get an increase in professional  
25 jobs and ones that are not dependent on the

1 food industry.

2 We get the type of business that  
3 draws very little traffic. We get a building  
4 that has adequate on-site parking. We get a  
5 building that enhances our neighborhood  
6 without detracting from it. Ultimately we  
7 get a win with development and support of our  
8 residential neighborhoods near our beloved  
9 center.

10 I have absolutely zero  
11 reservations, and I should note that I have  
12 learned of none from the various neighbors  
13 and friends that I've discussed this with,  
14 with the project, with the project documents,  
15 the proposed plans or the drivers behind the  
16 project -- my wonderful neighbors, as Rich.

17 As a project neighbor I ask that  
18 you fully support this proposal before you,  
19 and I appreciate all the time and all the  
20 efforts you guys are undertaking.

21 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.  
22 Albert. Your security looks a little tired.

23 Lisa Campo is next, and then I have  
24 to say Coach Blanchfield.

25 LISA CAMPO: Thank you. So my name

1 is Lisa Campo and I'm a resident of 161 Four  
2 Mile Road in West Hartford.

3 I've been a real estate agent in  
4 West Hartford for 25 years, and specifically  
5 my area of expertise is homes that are  
6 walking distance to the town center. So I  
7 paid a lot of attention to what's happening  
8 there and I was part of the working committee  
9 concerned about issues that seem to occur in  
10 the business district coming into  
11 residential.

12 I can't say enough about this  
13 project. I'm thrilled with it. I really was  
14 worried that the house was going to be torn  
15 down and then, you know, a very inappropriate  
16 condo building might be developed that you're  
17 starting -- that we've been seeing come up  
18 around some of the corners in West Hartford.  
19 It happened just across the street a little  
20 ways up.

21 And you know, so Richard and Beth,  
22 they come from such a place of heart. I've  
23 known Richard -- he's been an attorney for my  
24 clients for many years, and he goes above and  
25 beyond in every area of customer service,

1 giving his, you know, cellphone to everyone.

2           And I know that in this project --  
3 and hopefully you guys can see the care that  
4 he took in approaching all of this -- that  
5 he's really gone above and beyond what I  
6 think most people would expect. And I'm so  
7 looking forward to this project.

8           I know that he's going to do  
9 everything possible to make this building fit  
10 into our community and have it be -- I think  
11 he used the phrase, a cornerstone and a  
12 gateway into our neighborhood. So I hope you  
13 can give it the utmost consideration.

14           Thank you.

15           PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,  
16 Ms. Campo. And hey, Mr. Blanchfield.

17           STEPHEN BLANCHFIELD: Mayor Cantor,  
18 Councilors, Town Manager Matt, thank you for  
19 letting me have the opportunity to talk.

20           Since it has been brought up about  
21 coaching football, it would be a miss for me  
22 not to say very few things would get me off  
23 the hall football practice field this week,  
24 Conard week, except for something as  
25 important as this. Okay? So thank you for

1 having me tonight.

2 My grandmother bought this house in  
3 1946. It's been in the family 72 years.  
4 It's very, very hard for me to sell it. It  
5 holds very, very many happy memories over  
6 many years of family holidays and parties and  
7 everything else.

8 She passed away in 1987. I bought  
9 the house for my uncle in 2014. All right.  
10 It was too nice a house to let out of the  
11 family. But as time has gone by and, you  
12 know, West Hartford as evolved, you know, it  
13 became apparent to me and quite obvious that  
14 this house deserved a professional spot being  
15 one block away from the Center, especially in  
16 lieu of the way the Center is growing and  
17 what is happening. Okay?

18 So I put out a few feelers, and  
19 Richard Witt called me about the possibility  
20 of buying the house. And as hard as it is  
21 for me to sell this house, if I'm going to  
22 sell it to anybody I prefer that I sell it to  
23 Richard Witt, and this -- what he wants to do  
24 with it.

25 The house will look absolutely

1 beautiful. It's going to be a beautiful  
2 segue from the Center to the rest of the  
3 residential, and I thank you in advance for  
4 all consideration you give for this. And I  
5 will be staying in the house for the near  
6 future, certainly. So I love being near the  
7 Center.

8           So thank you very much for your  
9 consideration, and I appreciate all you do.  
10 Thank you.

11           PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,  
12 Coach. Okay.

13           Is there anybody else that would  
14 like to speak to this public hearing that did  
15 not sign up?

16  
17   (No response.)

18  
19           PRESIDENT CANTOR: All right. With  
20 we'll read into the record a letter dated  
21 November 8, 2018, from TPZ recommending  
22 approval, as the attorney said; and a letter  
23 dated November 9, 2018, from DRAC also  
24 recommending approval.

25           Any other comments from the



1 Council?

2

3

(No response.)

4

5

6

PRESIDENT CANTOR: Any closing  
comments, Attorney?

7

8

9

MR. PIECUCH: I just wanted to  
thank the Council for your consideration, and  
we respectfully ask for your support tonight.

10

Thank you very much.

11

12

PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, and  
with that we will close the public hearing.

13

14

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(Whereupon, the above proceedings  
were concluded at 7:37 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 40 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Public Hearing in RE: APPLICATION BY JDC FARMINGTON LLC, CONTRACT PURCHASER OF 1027 FARMINGTON AVENUE, REQUESTING A CHANGE OF THE UNDERLYING ZONE FOR 0.3 ACRES AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE INTERSECTION OF WOODROW STREET AND FARMINGTON AVENUE FROM RM-3R (MULTIFAMILY RESTRICTED RESIDENTIAL) TO RO (RESIDENTIAL OFFICE), AND SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (SDD) DESIGNATION TO REUSE THE EXISTING BUILDING FOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICE USE., held before the West Hartford Town Council, at Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Room 314, West Hartford, Connecticut, on November 13, 2018.



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Robert G. Dixon, CVR-M 857  
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55 Whiting Street, Suite 1A  
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My Commission Expires: 6/30/2020