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2 JOINT HEARING BETWEEN

3 WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

4 AND

5 WEST HARTFORD TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

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10 VOLUME 5

11 JUNE 21, 2004

12 West Hartford Town Hall

13 50 South Main Street

14 West Hartford, Connecticut

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23 Reporter: Sandra V. Semevolos, RMR, CRR, LSR #00074

24 Brandon Smith Reporting Service

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2 For Blue Back Square Development:

3 DAY, BERRY & HOWARD, LLP
4 CityPlace I
Hartford, Connecticut 06103-3499

5 BY: JOSEPH L. HAMMER, ESQ.
6 BETH BARTON, ESQ.
ROSEMARY AYERS, ESQ.

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For the Town:

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TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD
10 50 South Main Street
West Hartford, Connecticut 06107-2431
11 (860) 523-3171

12 BY: JOSEPH O' BRIEN, ESQ.
13 Corporation Counsel
PATRICK G. ALAIR, ESQ.
14 Deputy Corporation Counsel

15

Present for Town Council:

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Jonathan A. Harris, Mayor
17 Scott Slifka
Joseph Verrengia
18 Barbara Carpenter
Kevin M. Connors
19 Charles T. Coursey
Maureen K. McClay
20 Art Spada
Timothy Brennan
21 Carolyn Thornberry

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S (Continued)

2 Present for Town Plan and Zoning Commission:

04-06-21~1

3 Tanya Meck, Chairperson
David Brown
4 Leon Davidoff
John Begley
5 Booker T. DeVaughn
Theodore M. Doolittle
6 Jeffrey Daniels

7
Also Present:

8 Barry Feldman, Town Manager
9 Norma Cronin, Town Clerk
Mila Limson, Town Planner
10 Dave Kraus, Town Engineer
Ronald R. Van Winkle, Dir. of Community Services
11 Jim Francis, Finance Director
Richard Hughes, Chairman, DRAC

12 Richard Heapes, Partner
13 Street-Works, LLC
Development and Consulting Group
14 30 Glenn Street
White Plains, New York 10603

15 John D. Plante, PE
16 Eric Henry
Langan Engineering and Environmental Services
17 555 Long Wharf Drive
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

18 Norman Goldman, Principal
19 Desman Associates
80 Scott Swamp Road
20 Suite 201
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

21 Peter H. Guldberg, CCM
22 Tech Environmental, Inc.
Reservoir Place
23 1601 Trapelo Road
Walham, Massachusetts 02451

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S (Continued)

2 Bruce Hoben, AICP
Planimetrics, LLC
3 31 Ensign Drive
Avon, Connecticut 06001

4 Matt Lorenz

- 5 Atma Sockran
Urbi tran
- 6
- 7 Kenneth Narva
Bob Wi enner
Davi d Hi dal go
- 8 BBS Devel opment
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- 1 (Heari ng commenced at 6:30 p.m.)
- 2 MAYOR HARRIS: Good eveni ng, I'd l ike to
- 3 call the publi c heari ng to order. If we coul d ri se,
- 4 please, for pl edge of al l egi ance.
- 5 (Pause.)
- 6 MAYOR HARRIS: Wel come everybody, sorry

7 to drag you indoors on such a beautiful evening, the
8 first day of summer. Before we begin, I want to of
9 course welcome everyone to the Town Hall Auditorium,
10 but also I want to thank Channel 5 and everybody else
11 that's tuning in for tonight's proceedings.

12 Mrs. Cronin, could we have a roll call,
13 please.

14 MS. CRONIN: Yes. Mr. Verrengia sitting
15 for Mr. Bouvier.

16 MR. VERRENGIA: Here.

17 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. Carpenter.

18 MRS. CARPENTER: Here.

19 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Connors.

20 MR. CONNORS: Here.

21 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Coursey.

22 MR. COURSEY: Here.

23 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Harris.

24 MAYOR HARRIS: Here.

25 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. McClay.

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1 MS. McCLARY: Here.

2 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Slifka.

3 MR. SLIFKA: Here.

4 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Spada.

5 MR. SPADA: Here.

6 MS. CRONIN: Dr. Thornberry.

7 MS. THORBERRY: Here.

8 MS. CRONIN: And Council alternate,

9 Mr. Brennan.
10 MR. BRENNAN: Here.
11 MS. CRONIN: Thank you. Ms. Meck.
12 MS. MECK: Here.
13 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Brown, sitting for
14 Mr. Roach.
15 MR. BROWN: Here.
16 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Davidoff.
17 MR. DAVIDOFF: Here.
18 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Begley.
19 MR. BEGLEY: Here.
20 MS. CRONIN: Mr. DeVaughn.
21 MR. DEVAUGHN: Here.
22 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Daniels.
23 MR. DANIELS: Here.
24 MS. CRONIN: And Mr. Doolittle.
25 MR. DOOLITTLE: Here.

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1 MS. CRONIN: Thank you.
2 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin.
3 We're here tonight on the second night of the
4 questioning portion of this public proceeding, and that
5 is a part of the public hearing where the Town Plan and
6 Zoning Commission and the Town Council ask questions of
7 the applicant and of our Town administration. The
8 first night of the questioning, last Thursday night, we
9 handled three main issues, first the size, density and
10 design of the proposal, including, but not limited to

11 the height of buildings, facade, materials, elevation,
12 signage. We also addressed questions on the proposed
13 mix of uses, professional, residential, retail, the
14 public space and the municipal content of the
15 application. Finally, under the TPZ's jurisdiction,
16 questions were asked on the subdivision application.

17 Tonight we are going to start off and
18 follow the following order: First, we will have
19 questions, if any, on the SDD ordinance. That's the
20 ordinance for the Special Development District that
21 will create this project, if it is passed. This is an
22 area that is within the purview of the Council only so
23 that the councilors, if they have questions, may ask on
24 this issue area. Second, we will discuss the
25 environmental impact. This includes one area that is

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1 within the purview alone of the Town Plan and Zoning
2 Commission, that is the inland wetlands application.
3 Next we will have some questions about noise and light
4 pollution and issues surrounding those areas, and
5 environmental cleanup and any maintenance proposals,
6 how the property will be maintained in the event that
7 the application is adopted and the project is built.

8 Next we will go to the monument
9 relocation part of this proposal which, as you know, is
10 to move the Noah Webster statue from the corner of
11 Memorial and South Main Street to a place over closer
12 to the front of the library, and this is a zoning

13 question within the jurisdictional area of the Town
14 Council. After we finish with that, we will move on to
15 pedestrian impact and walkability issues, and finish up
16 the zoning portion of the questioning with traffic and
17 parking.

18 Now, we are not certain we are going to
19 get to this tonight, but you might recall if you had
20 tuned in the first night, and those of you that are
21 here again, that we divided up the areas of questioning
22 into the zoning areas and basically the financial, the
23 nonzoning items.

24 On the nonzoning menu, which if we get
25 to tonight or if we hang over till Wednesday night, we

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1 will talk about the proposed sale and purchase of land
2 by the Town, the bond ordinance and the public
3 financing piece, and that piece is within the
4 jurisdiction of the Council alone, and the Council will
5 ask questions on that area. And then finally, the tax
6 impact or other impacts of the project. Again, we had
7 scheduled at the beginning for two nights of
8 questioning by the two bodies. We will try to finish
9 up tonight and by the end of the night, you will know
10 whether we are going to start the public comment period
11 at 6:15 this Wednesday, June 23rd, or whether we think
12 we will get to it in the middle of that night or
13 whether it will be pushed off until Thursday, and we
14 will keep you updated on that.

15 Ms. Meck, do you have any comments?

16 MS. MECK: I do not, Mr. Mayor.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: This is my co-chair,

18 Tanya Meck.

19 Before we begin, there is one thing that
20 we are going to do that's a little bit different than
21 what I just described, and that is, Councilor
22 Thornberry was not available last Thursday night, and
23 although she did watch everything on television and has
24 reviewed the record, she had some questions that
25 weren't asked that night, so we are going to give her a

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1 few minutes to do those questions. Dr. Thornberry.

2 MS. THORNBERRY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

3 Mr. Mayor, as I begin my questioning, if you believe
4 that it belongs or part of it belongs to another area,
5 I'll stop and take it up, but having listened to the
6 hearing last Thursday, I believe that part of this --
7 the question had not been asked before, but some things
8 that were along the same lines had been asked, so let
9 me just start.

10 One of the things that I'm interested in
11 is what I would describe as an intra-West Hartford
12 Center transportation. I know that everybody wants to
13 see this as a walkable Center. However, that's not
14 always possible, and in my mind, I always remembered
15 some of the places that I had been to that had a
16 trolley system. Now, granted the trolleys were

17 primarily for tourism or for tourists who came into
18 Town. I understand that, but is there a possibility to
19 have some kind of internal transportation system so
20 that I don't feel that I have to make a choice of where
21 I go first. Do I go to one section of the Center
22 that's, let's say, closer to Chico's and LaSalle Road,
23 or do I make a choice to come down to the Blue Back
24 area? I would either be forced to get in my car and go
25 to another section or just go back. I think that an

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1 internal transportation system would prevent that kind
2 of get-in-my-car-and-go-to-another-section. It also
3 would hold down perhaps some of the perceived increase
4 in traffic.

5 The second area, which is related to
6 this in the way of disability or handicapped issues, is
7 the condominiums. We had discussed this at the Town
8 Council about really the large absence of housing that
9 is designed for people who are particularly wheelchair
10 bound. It's easy for developers to put in, you know,
11 wider doorways, some handles, larger bathrooms. It's
12 quite something else when you get into how a kitchen
13 functions with up and down stoves or things that -- you
14 know, lower cupboards and that kind of thing. You
15 certainly have more knowledge about this than I do, but
16 I note that there is usually some federal money in this
17 area, and I don't know whether the federal government
18 with their money works with municipalities or perhaps

19 works with developers in having part of a condo complex
20 be designed for handicapped residents.

21 So those are the two interrelated areas
22 that I wanted to talk about. I understand you may have
23 to go and do some research or whatever your response
24 and the Town's is fine.

25 MR. HEAPES: Let's talk first -- can you

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1 hear me? Let's talk first about the transit or
2 transportation or trolley service idea. I haven't been
3 involved in projects that have had much success with
4 that. We have tried it in -- I know they have it in
5 Boca Raton. I to this day have never seen anyone on
6 the trolley. We tried it in San Francisco, and I
7 understand that you've tried it here relative to
8 Christmas Thursday nights or whatever. I don't know
9 that for sure, but I heard some mention of it. I think
10 there is three issues there. Issue number 1 is when we
11 first open the project, in a certain sense there is
12 going to need to be some new training on -- you know,
13 people are going to become aware of the Memorial
14 extension, and they are not going to be sure where to
15 go. Walkability is going to need to be highly
16 supported and emphasized, and there might be some
17 interested in, I'm going to call it, transit
18 experiences or branded experiences that could be as
19 simple as rickshaws and horse carriages, they don't
20 have to be trolleys, that I think we would be very

21 interested in kind of constantly demonstrating the
22 message that you should go everywhere in the Center,
23 everywhere possible, et cetera.

24 A number of those things I've seen done
25 successfully as concessions, almost like the hot dog

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1 stand in the park, very similar to the valet situation
2 where maybe there Thursday, Friday, Saturday night.
3 That's one extreme. A full service trolley is probably
4 the other extreme. I've had this conversation with the
5 merchants because they are very concerned -- the
6 existing merchants, they are very concerned about the
7 interconnectivity and offered that we would work
8 together to at least explore, maybe fun to study,
9 really get down to the reality of it, could it work,
10 what are the possibilities and offer some kind of
11 looking at this issue.

12 I do think coming out of the box, when
13 we first open, we need to send every message possible
14 in fun ways, in unique West Hartford ways all the ways
15 there are to get around the Center. So we would
16 support kind of looking at that in more depth.

17 Relative to the condominium and
18 handicapped access, the buildings we are proposing are
19 extremely handicapped and disabled friendly. You will
20 park below the building on a flat. You will be able to
21 go out into an elevator that will take you directly to
22 your floor. We are not proposing any kind of units

23 such as lofts or villas or anything. We are proposing
24 pretty traditional flat apartment-like units. So I
25 believe you are right that it would be, never mind

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1 access to the wellness center, close access to other
2 things right in the neighborhood, including the senior
3 center. Literally you can go out your front door and
4 come into the senior center in a manner of steps. So
5 the structure is very friendly.

6 One of the advantages we have, because
7 we will need to prelease and do a number of sales
8 before it's built, I think there will be the
9 opportunity for anyone to come and effect the design of
10 the unit and the impact of the design in that very
11 early process, so if you were in that situation, we
12 certainly would engage that. It's very hard to
13 dedicate a number of specific units because they are
14 never the unit that that person may or may not want.
15 But we intend on being really flexible in allowing as
16 much detail input to the unit if someone has a contract
17 with us early, and I think that's an advantage of a
18 build-from-scratch product, where there is a lot of
19 interaction before it's even finished in its design. I
20 don't know if that answers your question.

21 MS. THORNBERRY: Mr. Mayor, may I follow
22 through -- follow-up with a quick question?

23 MAYOR HARRIS: Yes.

24 MS. THORNBERRY: Would you be willing to

25 put together just a list of those alternative

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1 transportations. I think you were talking about the
2 rickshaw. There are also the bike cabs.

3 MR. HEAPES: Bike cabs.

4 MS. THORNBERRY: Just a list would be
5 great.

6 MR. HEAPES: Absolutely.

7 MS. THORNBERRY: On the handicapped
8 accessible apartments, again if you could just put a
9 list together of what things a person could expect to
10 be able to ask for, if they wanted to go in at the
11 beginning and retrofit an apartment -- a condo for
12 them.

13 MR. HEAPES: That's a great idea.

14 MS. THORNBERRY: Thank you. Thank you,
15 Mr. Mayor.

16 MAYOR HARRIS: Anything else,
17 Dr. Thornberry? Thank you.

18 The next area of questioning is the
19 Special Development District ordinance, the SDD
20 ordinance, which is the Council alone. Do any
21 councilors have any questions on the ordinance? There
22 being none, we will move on.

23 MS. CARPENTER: I have a question.

24 MAYOR HARRIS: Mrs. Carpenter.

25 MS. CARPENTER: I'm sorry, I thought you

1 were going that way first, I was trying to keep track.

2 I think that the SDD really should
3 reflect the wishes of the residents and the character
4 of the Town. The selling of municipal property has
5 caused considerable concern among Town residents,
6 because once the property is sold, the property is
7 sold, and there is no way to recover this.

8 My question is: Once the municipal
9 property is sold, the Town green, the green space and
10 the Board of Education building, will West Hartford
11 have any control over municipal property and green
12 space once this transaction is made?

13 MAYOR HARRIS: Mrs. Carpenter, that is a
14 good question, but that involves the sale and purchase
15 of land. We are talking right now about the
16 technical -- the Special Development District, the
17 three, I believe, that were being created. Do you have
18 something on that? If not, I think we'd like to group
19 those with those nonzoning issues.

20 MS. CARPENTER: That's fine. I just
21 wanted to be sure that I understood the relationship
22 between the town and the private developer, and I'm
23 ready to ask those questions wherever you want them to
24 be. I just thought the SDD, Special Development
25 District, could be included in that category.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Very good question, but
2 the group of that, I think for coherency of people,
3 would be with the sale and purchase of land on the
4 nonzoning pieces.

5 MS. CARPENTER: Okay, thank you.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: You're welcome.

7 Any further questions on the actual
8 Special Development District proposal, the technical
9 proposal there?

10 MAYOR HARRIS: If not, we are making
11 good progress, we can move on to number 3, the monument
12 relocation issue, this is a zoning issue. Again
13 Council only on this one.

14 Dr. DeVaughn, not to put you on the
15 spot, even though you are not on the Council, you had a
16 very good question, if you recall it, on the movement
17 of the monument, if you would like to ask it at this
18 time.

19 MR. DEVAUGHN: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, I'd
20 be happy to. The question related to the placement of
21 the Noah Webster statue in relation to the library. I
22 believe the point I made was that walking up South Main
23 Street in a northerly direction one is drawn to the
24 statue of Noah Webster, and then one is drawn to the
25 public library. Now, I think that that makes a

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2 community and the value of the library, and my concern
3 was whether or not the library would continue to have a
4 place of prominence in the Center of Town, and as I
5 said, I've looked at the schematics, but sometimes it's
6 not always easy to visualize what something is going to
7 be once it's in place. So that was my basic concern.
8 Thank you.

9 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Dr. DeVaughn.
10 Mr. Feldman or Mr. Heapes, would you like to respond to
11 that?

12 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, if we could,
13 perhaps we can start and then they can follow up.

14 MR. VAN WINKLE: Through you, Mr. Mayor,
15 Ron Van Winkle, director of community services. The
16 statue is quite large, and in the position it's in, it
17 is sort of pushed back from the trees and amongst some
18 trees and some greenery, and it more or less
19 disappears, I think, on that corner.

20 Where the statue is being moved to,
21 which is right at the front of the Noah Webster
22 Library, Noah Webster will stand. It's quite a large
23 statue, so when you come down that street, you are
24 going to see this very prominent statue right out in
25 front of the library. It will draw your eye to the

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1 statue, and right behind the statue, off to the left,
2 the entrance to the library is also changing. The
3 library entrance is pulling out from the building. If

4 you look at the building today, it's hard to tell where
5 the front entrance is. The old front entrance with the
6 rotunda there looks like the entrance, but it's not.
7 The real front entrance is so underdone it's hard to
8 tell it's there. The entrance we pulled out, there
9 will be a little peaked roof in front of it, a pillar
10 that will say this is where you go in, and so I think
11 what we are doing is two things, one is that we are
12 emphasizing the library and the entrance to the library
13 so people will see it better, and also by bringing Noah
14 Webster to his library and placing it in front, I think
15 it will draw the attention to that building much more
16 than it does now.

17 We had a study done, the developer had a
18 study done to take a look at the statue, to see what
19 kind of condition it was in. One of the questions
20 would be is whether we should move that statue, is it
21 moveable, and the study recommends about 23,000 dollars
22 worth of work on the statue, mostly the kind of thing
23 that a statue of that age needs. It's minor hair
24 cracks on it that need to be repaired and a general
25 cleaning. But with that, that statue is in great shape

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1 and should be able to move to the location we are
2 talking about.

3 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Van
4 Winkle. Follow up, Dr. DeVaughn?

5 MR. DEVAUGHN: I'm satisfied with the
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6 explanation, knowing that the library will continue to
7 get prominence and not one of the other commercial
8 buildings in the area. Thank you.

9 MAYOR HARRIS: Any further questions on
10 the relocation of Noah Webster statue? Okay. We went
11 to that simple one first, now we will -- Mr. Spada.

12 MR. SPADA: I'm not sure if this is on
13 the relocation of the statue. It's more on the history
14 alley. Can I ask a question about that alley where the
15 monument, where the plaques are going up and the
16 history of Noah's walk? Is that different?

17 MAYOR HARRIS: That's actually more on
18 another topic. We really want to talk now, again this
19 might be the opposite of what we are trying to do here,
20 but we really want to stick to the particular topic
21 matter, so if you have a question on Noah Webster,
22 shoot, or the statue at least.

23 MR. SPADA: Nothing on the statue, thank
24 you.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: So we will move on now to

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1 the environmental impact. First of all, there is a
2 piece, as I said, at the beginning, that is under the
3 jurisdiction of TPZ, and that is the inland wetlands
4 application. Are there any questions from the TPZ on
5 inland wetlands? Mr. Davidoff?

6 MR. DAVIDOFF: Through you, Mr. Mayor,
7 to the Town Planner, the reason we are looking at the

8 inland wetlands application is because the proposed
9 park in the upland review area is 150 feet from the
10 buffer zone; is that correct?

11 MS. LIMSON: Through you, Mr. Mayor, Mr.
12 Davidoff, that is correct, the activity proposed is
13 within the 150-foot regulated area, a portion of it.

14 MR. DAVIDOFF: The application that's
15 before us entails the use of proper erosion and
16 sedimentation controls?

17 MS. LIMSON: That is correct, Mr.
18 Davidoff. There is, if I just may refer one moment
19 quickly, that there was a review of that application
20 completed by our engineering division. The applicant
21 did in fact submit revised plans addressing those
22 issues. That, in fact, was one of those issues, and at
23 this point, all of their concerns regarding erosion
24 controls have been addressed.

25 MR. DAVIDOFF: And my last question

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1 deals with the plantings that will be alongside the
2 proposed fence. Was there any additional staff
3 comments with respect to those?

4 MS. LIMSON: Mr. Davidoff, what I'm
5 going to do, I'm going to ask Mr. Kraus to assist me
6 with that question. I believe that there was a
7 planting scheme proposed for along the edge of the top
8 of the slope there. I don't believe that that planting
9 scheme has actually been defined, but certainly within

10 the scope of the work being proposed.

11 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, Town Engineer.

12 We have worked with the developer concerning the
13 planting at the top of the slope and a fence to add
14 some safety to that steep slope that goes down to the
15 brook. The exact planting plan I don't believe has
16 been finalized yet, but the commitment to the planting
17 and shield that fence and identify the top of the slope
18 certainly has been made.

19 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you, Mr. Mayor,
20 maybe my fellow member Mr. Begley would have some
21 further remarks on suggested plantings.

22 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Begley. Thank you,
23 Mr. Davidoff.

24 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I do
25 have one question in regards to the drainage on the

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1 site. First of all, who is actually going to be doing
2 the work? Is it the Town or the developer, and who
3 should I be addressing my questions to?

4 MAYOR HARRIS: I believe the indication
5 was the developer.

6 MR. HEAPES: Yes.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Heapes.

8 MR. BEGLEY: Mr. Heapes, in the note
9 that we've gotten from Dave Kraus, the Town Engineer,
10 it had said that the abandonment of the catch basin
11 will be using masonry plug. Am I under the

12 understanding we won't have any other drainage in the
13 park area, or is the water just going to sheet off of
14 it onto the brook below?

15 MR. HEAPES: I'm going to ask John
16 Plante to answer that for you.

17 MR. PLANTE: Thank you. John Plante,
18 Langan Engineering. There is -- can you hear me?
19 There is currently a couple of catch basins, three
20 catch basins on the site. One of them, which you are
21 referring to plugging, is going to be in a mounded area
22 that won't drain anything, so we are going to close
23 that out, seal that catch basin up so nothing will get
24 into it. There are two other catch basins remaining
25 on-site that we will adjust to grade as necessary and

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1 maintain them. So we will grade the site to drain to
2 those two remaining catch basins. That third one
3 doesn't receive any water in the current grading
4 configuration, so that will be sealed.

5 MR. BEGLEY: In the notes also, it was
6 mentioned that the grade is too severe for cutting with
7 moles. Have you corrected that?

8 MR. PLANTE: Yes. We have in the
9 revised plans submitted.

10 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Begley,
12 Mr. Plante. Any further questions on the inland
13 wetlands application? Mr. Brown.

14 MR. BROWN: This is for our Town Manager
15 and staff, a question regarding the stream or Trout
16 Brook. As it passes alongside the park, was there any
17 consideration to view it as an asset as opposed to a
18 hazard? It seems like everybody is trying to fence it
19 off with hedges and so forth. Was there any
20 consideration to open it up for access and even change
21 it from being a channel into more of a stream?

22 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Kraus.

23 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, Town Engineer.
24 It is very difficult. The site has very steep
25 topography down to the brook. It would be very

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1 desirable to open up the area to try to get down closer
2 to the water. The walkway that's on the other side of
3 the brook does that. As you get away from those
4 steeper slopes, you get to walk down closer to the
5 brook. But the topography there is really prohibitive
6 right at the park area to do that. I think the
7 connection to the path from the other side of the brook
8 and then being able to walk down toward the Boulevard
9 is pleasant and probably has the opportunity for
10 expansion in that direction, but I don't think the
11 topography lends itself in the park area to enjoy the
12 water closer.

13 MR. BROWN: And as far as converting it
14 from so much of a channel, again it's just too tight a
15 space?

16 MR. KRAUS: Yes, it is. In 1984 or so,
17 when the channel was reconstructed by the Soil
18 Conservation Service at the time, it was done really as
19 a model of sensitivity to plantings and the creation of
20 a low flow channel, so that it doesn't look as
21 engineered and as structured at watercourse.
22 Unfortunately in this one area, the topography just
23 didn't allow that to happen. The rest of the
24 watercourse is much more natural and pleasant, but this
25 topography is just too severe.

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1 Now, the structure and the construction
2 of that watercourse is such that it would be extremely
3 difficult to do with bulkhead.

4 MR. BROWN: Thanks.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Any further questions?

6 MR. BROWN: No.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Coursey.

8 MR. COURSEY: I just want to follow up
9 on your last comment, Mr. Kraus. The application as it
10 stands now though, there is a -- we are connecting the
11 sidewalk on Memorial bridge there to the path so that
12 there is a connection, so if I'm up in the east
13 district, pedestrians can walk from the east district
14 across Raymond Road down to the pass and then down
15 towards Boulevard; correct?

16 MR. KRAUS: Yes, that's correct.

17 MR. COURSEY: Thank you.

18 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Coursey.
19 Any further questions on the inland wetlands
20 application? Okay, there being none, we will move on
21 to some of the other environmental issues, questions on
22 noise and light pollution, environmental cleanup and
23 maintenance proposals. Do we have any questions on
24 those areas? Mr. Doolittle.

25 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

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1 This is a question for either, I guess I'd like to
2 direct it first to Town staff and then perhaps to Eric
3 Henry.

4 With regard to the soil cleanup, the
5 Town Plan and Zoning spent quite a bit of time
6 questioning the applicant in the Whole Foods
7 application about their remediation plan there.
8 They've adopted a very aggressive remediation policy
9 there that involves, as I understood it, complete
10 removal of any tainted soils. I wanted to get a
11 comment as to how this application's remediation plan
12 compares to that Whole Foods remediation plan.

13 MR. ALAIR: Through you, Mr. Mayor,
14 Mr. Henry could certainly comment better on the details
15 of the plan. The Master Agreement does call for the
16 remediation and removal of all of the contaminated soil
17 from the site, particularly of concern to the Town was
18 the area near the North Garage, which based on all of
19 the studies to date appears to be the most heavily

20 contaminated area. That portion of the site will, in
21 essence, have a two-phase remediation program. The
22 first, what we refer to as the active remediation
23 phase, is to be completed before the Town takes title
24 to the garage, which would involve removal of all
25 contaminated soil from the property, and in fact the

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1 Master Agreement includes in that definition Isham Road
2 itself to insure that we have access to the North
3 Garage, as well as just remediating the garage parcel.

4 This really has to be done early in the
5 process because as part of the overall plan, a series
6 of pipes will be placed underneath the foundation of
7 the garage which will be used over a longer term in
8 what is known as the passive remediation phase, and
9 they will vent through a blower system any remaining
10 hydrocarbons that might be in the soil in minute
11 quantities, I would assume, to complete the process
12 after the garage is completed.

13 All of that active remediation work must
14 be done before the garage is ours. It must be done
15 before the garage is built for all intents and
16 purposes, thereafter the passive remediation phase may
17 well go on for some indeterminate number of months,
18 possibly years, during which at the same time water
19 monitoring, water quality monitoring will also be
20 undertaken and the developer is responsible for the
21 construction and completion of all of the remediation

22 of that. Thank you.

23 MR. DOOLITTLE: My understanding is that
24 we are talking about the same type of very aggressive
25 remediation with no type of capping, no type of

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1 situation where contaminated soils are expected to be
2 contained as opposed to removed and properly disposed
3 of?

4 MR. ALAIR: To my knowledge, there is no
5 plan to contain anything on-site. Everything is to be
6 removed. We actually had a meeting at one point with
7 the staff down at DEP who referred to the plan proposed
8 by Mr. Henry as the Cadillac of fixes for this
9 property.

10 MR. DOOLITTLE: Just again, perhaps if
11 we could get Mr. Henry just to address that, and also
12 particularly address any ongoing monitoring that may be
13 necessary and that is planned by the developer.

14 MR. HENRY: Eric Henry. Hello. Mr.
15 Alair discussed it in very good detail. The plan here
16 is a large-scale excavation of the soils that are
17 on-site. That's what I discussed in my presentation.
18 The contaminants out there are commonly found in corner
19 gas-station-type scenarios, the remediation of those is
20 kind of tried and true. We've got a lot of experience
21 cleaning up those sorts of contaminants. The plan out
22 here is an extensive excavation followed by the
23 installation of a subslab ventilation system. That

24 system is another mitigation to stop any volatile
25 contaminants that could be in groundwater from getting

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1 into the garage.

2 Beyond that, we plan to do a long-term
3 groundwater monitoring program to demonstrate
4 compliance with the applicable regulations in the state
5 of Connecticut. So it's probably best to think of it
6 in three phases, large-scale remediation where we are
7 removing the soil contamination actually below the
8 water table. We are going to be digging -- chasing any
9 contamination that's in soil even below the water
10 table, which is actually above and beyond what's
11 required in the regulations of the state of
12 Connecticut. And then we are going to be installing
13 this ventilation system as another safety measure, and
14 then we are going to be going into a long-term
15 groundwater monitoring program where we will be
16 demonstrating compliance with the groundwater criteria
17 for the state of Connecticut.

18 MR. ALAIR: Mr. Mayor, if I could, I was
19 reminded after I finished my answer, that I should
20 point out for the record that the Town also hired an
21 independent environmental consultant, ECS/Marin
22 Corporation, which reviewed on our behalf the plan
23 proposed by the developer, and using a gentleman there
24 who was also, as is Mr. Henry, a licensed environmental
25 professional, they have reviewed and commented upon the

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1 application and are satisfied with the proposal.

2 MR. DOOLITTLE: If I may, Mr. Mayor,
3 just one very brief follow-up, the long-term follow-up,
4 is that -- could you quantify that in years or is that
5 simply an indefinite ongoing process?

6 MR. HENRY: At this point, we can't
7 quantify it in years. With the types of contaminants
8 that we have out there and the type of lithology that
9 you have at the site, if you are familiar with these
10 West Hartford silts and clays, it's a very dense
11 formation. It's our plan to remove all those soils
12 that are contaminated into the water table, even diving
13 down into the water table under the saturated zone as
14 far as we need to go to chase them out and backfilling.
15 So we are fairly confident that groundwater is going to
16 naturally attenuate in a number of years. We haven't
17 put a timetable on that. That's difficult to do
18 because we haven't, you know, opened up the ground and
19 done the excavation that we need to do. We have a good
20 plan in place. We are planning to also excavate
21 laterally as we need to, to chase all this
22 contamination out and remove all of it from the site,
23 so we are very confident that with all those excavation
24 measures that the groundwater is going to clean up in
25 some short-term number of years. We haven't defined

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1 that yet. Once we get the excavation completed and we
2 are able to install some monitoring wells and look at
3 the results that we have, we will be able to have a
4 better understanding of what the timeline for the
5 monitoring might be.

6 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you everybody, and
7 Mr. Mayor.

8 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Doolittle,
9 Mr. Henry. Any other questions? Mr. Verrengia?

10 MR. VERRENGIA: I just have a follow-up
11 question with respect to the gentleman that you said
12 reviewed the plans. As part of that review, was the
13 Town park included in that?

14 MR. ALAIR: The entire project was
15 reviewed. I can't tell you that he reviewed the Town
16 park with any specific detail, simply because we have
17 no evidence of any environmental condition on that
18 portion of the property. The area where the
19 remediation is being done is on the northern end of the
20 Grody property. To the best of our knowledge, there is
21 nothing to review on the Town park.

22 MR. VERRENGIA: The reason why I think
23 that's important is because in the Master Agreement, if
24 there is a problem there with hazardous material, there
25 is some liability or potential liability for the Town,

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1 so my question would be, it seems like all the other
2 sites have been studied. At what point are we going to
3 look at that site?

4 MR. ALAIR: The simple answer, and I
5 think you've heard it alluded to a number of times
6 through the presentation, is that what we are referring
7 to as the Town park piece, the east side of Raymond
8 Road, really came into the project quite late, long
9 after all of the other portions of the project had had
10 their environmental studies done, phase 1 and phase 2
11 environmental studies. We are unaware of any condition
12 that would even warrant the conduct of such a study at
13 this point.

14 So language was incorporated into the
15 agreement saying, if there turns out to be a problem,
16 which no one anticipates, it will have been a problem
17 of the Town's making, and at that point we would have
18 the option of either paying for work to be done or at
19 that point stopping the process, if I recall the
20 language in the agreement. But the rationale is that
21 we own the site now, we've owned it for many years, and
22 any condition on that site would have been one that we
23 created.

24 MR. VERRENGIA: Mr. Mayor, thank you.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you. Mr. Van

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2 MR. VAN WINKLE: Through you, Mr. Mayor,
3 the site is also filled substantially. We are not
4 excavating the site, but we are filling it. That site
5 will be brought more up to the road level, and so there
6 will be several feet of fill placed on top of it. If
7 there is some residue from some past operation there,
8 it will be deep underneath that park and not affect the
9 park or anyone on it, but we have no specific knowledge
10 and did not do any testing because we did not expect to
11 do any construction, any digging on the site.

12 MAYOR HARRIS: Anything else,
13 Mr. Verrengia?

14 MR. VERRENGIA: No, thank you.

15 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Begley.

16 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I
17 just have a couple of questions here. Other than the
18 oil and the gas, are there any other contaminants in
19 the soil that you found?

20 MR. HENRY: There is lead in the soil
21 related to the gasoline releases.

22 MR. BEGLEY: And that's it?

23 MR. HENRY: Well, fuel oil, hydraulic
24 oils, so in the general category of oils, some heavier
25 than others and gasoline.

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1 MR. BEGLEY: What do you estimate the
2 quantity to be removed and how much clean fill will be
3 brought in to replace the contaminated area?

4 MR. HENRY: Somewhere between 4,000 and
5 5,000 tons.

6 MR. BEGLEY: At what depth are you going
7 to hit water?

8 MR. HENRY: We are expecting to hit
9 water between 8 and 12 feet, and like I said, that's
10 not going to necessarily define the bottom of the
11 excavation. We are going to clays that are under the
12 water table if necessary and conduct dewatering
13 operations if required.

14 MR. BEGLEY: Is there any one part of
15 that site that has more contaminants than any other?

16 MR. HENRY: Yes. The front part of the
17 site that fronts Isham Road, that's where the majority
18 of the underground storage tanks were concentrated.
19 There were a number of gasoline fuel oil tanks. I
20 believe there was one waste oil tank at one time, but
21 primarily volatile organic-type compounds, towards that
22 Isham Road.

23 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you.

24 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Begley.
25 Mr. Davidoff.

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1 MR. DAVIDOFF: Through you, Mr. Mayor,
2 to Town staff, now that we have actual notice that the
3 two sites do have contaminants on them, one being the
4 Crowley-Grody site and the other being the Board of
5 Education parking lot, in the event that the parcel --

6 that this application is not approved, what steps would
7 the Town be required by state law to undertake to make
8 certain that those sites became clean sites?

9 MR. ALAIR: Well, the Town's obligation,
10 if any, would be to do some form of remediation at the
11 Board of Ed site. I think that the details of that,
12 under the circumstance, we haven't discussed simply
13 because it's our anticipation that the developer will
14 be taking the site and the developer would be
15 responsible for it. There might be some -- from what
16 we understand, there might be some relatively minor
17 remediation activities associated with what was a tank
18 there similar to what we just completed across the lawn
19 here at the police station within the last few weeks.

20 With respect to the Grody parcel, the
21 Crowley parcel, that would not be the Town's
22 responsibility. It would be the owner's
23 responsibility, whoever that was. I believe the other
24 night it was indicated that the developer in all
25 probability would acquire the site anyway. That

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1 transaction, the acquisition from the developer by
2 Grody would trigger what is known as a transfer act
3 filing and a remediation obligation at that point, but
4 it would be that of the developer, not the Town.

5 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Davidoff.
7 Any other questions on the environment? I have a

8 couple. First of all, just so people know, we had a
9 very detailed explanation on the light and noise
10 portion. That's probably why we don't have any
11 questions on that part, but I had a couple of sort of
12 more general kind of policy questions that I'd like to
13 pose. There is a movement now throughout the world, I
14 believe, known as green buildings, to promote energy
15 efficient buildings, to burn other types of fuels that
16 don't add to pollution in the environment. Have you
17 contemplated anything along those lines, and if so,
18 what?

19 MR. HEAPES: You know, it's a little
20 ahead of us in terms of constructibility and
21 construction types. I'd have to really get back to
22 you. We do not have a specific program, such as solar
23 panels or green roofs or some other traditional things
24 you would associate with that, so to be quite honest, I
25 would have to come back and describe the specific

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1 systems that are being produced. Obviously they will
2 be up to date with codes, energy usage and efficiency,
3 but we don't have any specific green building programs
4 that we are proposing.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: How are the buildings
6 going to be powered as far as, is it oil, gas?

7 MR. HEAPES: I guess they will be
8 powered by gas.

9 MAYOR HARRIS: Have you ever had an

10 experience with actually having a power unit within a
11 neighborhood such as this that you are building to
12 fully power everything within, basically your own
13 generation station, has that ever been done that you
14 know of?

15 MR. HEAPES: I've done it in California
16 where the State Energy Commission had a very aggressive
17 buy-back system. It's very costly, it's a district.
18 We have so many different kinds of uses, it's hard to
19 give a single answer. The way you handle a residential
20 building is fundamentally different than the way you do
21 an office building. For example, every residential
22 unit has its own unit for ownership reasons,
23 maintenance issues, et cetera. An office building will
24 have a power plant system for the whole building.
25 Retailers vary between the two so you almost have to

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1 think for this district there is four or five different
2 kinds of systems, depending on the ownership of the
3 building, the maintenance, et cetera. So there isn't
4 one really simple answer to that except that like in
5 the rest of the Center, these buildings are being done
6 separately as if they were under separate ownership.
7 There is no centralized power system or centralized
8 electrical system or separate emergency generators, et
9 cetera. They are all building by building in a
10 traditional format.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Heapes,

12 and finally with regards to the green aspect, one of
13 the things that I think people have noticed about this
14 project is your use of greenery, of trees, of keeping
15 trees that are there and also of planting new large
16 trees. One of the areas where there didn't seem to be
17 any from the drawings that we've observed was on the
18 parking garage roofs. Any chance that that could be
19 actually made a little bit more green? I guess there
20 is an aesthetic value to that, but also potentially
21 breaking up heat islands and things like that.

22 MR. HEAPES: We are aggressively working
23 with the edges of the buildings to green those up
24 versus other kinds of screening. The roofs of the
25 parking structures, of course, are parked on, so they

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1 are largely not greened up. Our experience has been
2 that it's very hard to maintain green that's not in the
3 ground, so to speak. You know, planters, you have to
4 water them; the planters tend to die, but I think it's
5 something we can look at.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Heapes.
7 Mr. Spada.

8 MR. SPADA: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, just a
9 two-part quick question. 4,000 tons, was that the
10 right -- that was the guesstimate?

11 MR. HENRY: Yes.

12 MR. SPADA: Now, I understand this is
13 risky, this is high-risk business I would assume for

14 the people engaged, but as you embark on this sort of a
15 project, is there any risk or do you take any
16 precautions to notify the public? I assume the area is
17 going to be cordoned off, but I mean, is there any risk
18 whatsoever to the general public in and around that
19 area?

20 MR. HENRY: There won't be, but we will
21 be doing air monitoring around the perimeter to verify
22 that the airborne concentrations are below the
23 criteria.

24 MR. SPADA: I guess the second question,
25 it's just a curiosity, where does one take 4,000 tons

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1 of contaminated dirt?

2 MR. HENRY: We are looking at options
3 right now. We haven't placed that out definitively.
4 We've gotten some ballpark numbers, but when the
5 project starts, we plan to go through a bidding
6 sequence with a number of different area vendors to see
7 what is available. It's likely that soils like this
8 would be recycled. One possibility is called asphalt
9 batch mixing. For petroleum products, there is also
10 some thermal desorption technologies, and there is also
11 the landfill options.

12 MR. SPADA: Thank you.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: Are you looking for some
14 fill, Mr. Spada?

15 MR. SPADA: I'm surprised people aren't

16 bidding on this.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: New plan for the back
18 yard? Mr. Slifka.

19 MR. SLIFKA: I don't know if this is
20 quite under this header, I think it more or less fits,
21 I'm not sure if it's Mr. Heapes or the Town.
22 Mr. Spada's question raised an issue for me which is
23 what exactly would we be doing with respect to the
24 neighborhood and street access issues actually during
25 the construction phase should this be approved? Would

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1 we have access on South Main; would the neighbors on
2 the main road still be able to get to their home the
3 way they do today, and how would you protect the
4 neighborhood and the district from the site?

5 MR. HEAPES: I think, first and
6 foremost, that it's important that we are going to
7 build it in one phase so that the construction is held
8 to as few months as possible. You are not going to be
9 living through ten years of phase by phase by phase a
10 la 84. The perimeter will be secure. This is not
11 going to be an open construction site. Security and
12 enclosing the perimeter is very important. Obviously
13 in raising the grade at Isham and Memorial, there will
14 be a period when Memorial necessarily is closed, which
15 is probably the biggest kind of conflicting or
16 impacting period. That's a period of about 15 months,
17 John? Where Memorial itself is closed.

18 As you could imagine, it's not just that
19 we start and do all of the foundations and then build
20 all the buildings at once. You kind of roll around the
21 site and try to organize and minimize the impacts on
22 where the Town employees park, where do construction
23 employees park, which way the trucks go. We have an
24 elaborate, concise construction plan involving truck
25 roads, which will primarily be out Trout Brook, not

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1 down Raymond Road and through the neighborhoods. Truck
2 wash, dust control, sound control, construction hours,
3 you name it, needs to be complete, and it is a
4 month-by-month process that changes during the
5 construction.

6 To give you an example, although we
7 don't turn the North Garage over to the Town for
8 several months, we will be building that first so that
9 we can house the construction vehicles on-site during
10 construction. A number of things like that. I don't
11 know if you want to add anything to that, John.

12 MR. PLANTE: I think, Richard, as you
13 said, the site will be completely enclosed, fenced,
14 tarped. All activity that happens on-site will take
15 place within that, with a few exceptions of entering
16 into the public way under police protection, but
17 certainly any environmental excavation, there will be a
18 health and safety plan implemented. All of the
19 appropriate Town officials will be made aware of where

20 we are in each step. We plan on sequencing meetings,
21 whether it's weekly, monthly, as necessary, with fire,
22 police, as to impacts. So a comprehensive plan on
23 mitigating the construction activity for the site.

24 MR. HEAPES: The largest impact will not
25 be access to neighborhoods or access to the Center, but

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1 if you wanted to cross from one side to the Center with
2 Memorial closed, we will put a little bit of pressure
3 on Burr Street and Farmington for a small period of
4 time, for construction vehicles, more access to
5 neighborhoods.

6 MR. SLIFKA: Thank you.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Slifka.

8 Any further questions on any environmental issues?

9 Okay, we will go to our next topic area then, and by
10 the way, we will have time either at the close before
11 the public comment period or perhaps at the end when
12 the applicant responds, so just because you might think
13 of something after the fact or as Mrs. Carpenter had a
14 question that was for a better section, you will always
15 have an opportunity to ask your questions.

16 The next piece is the pedestrian impact
17 walkability section. Do we have -- Madam Chair.

18 MS. MECK: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

19 Through you, Mr. Mayor, to Mr. Heapes, I do have a
20 question about walkability, and you had shown us some
21 slides in your initial presentation with a square, and

22 I think it was from LaSalle to Memorial to Raymond to
23 Farmington. And you had overlaid some distances, some
24 comparable differences for us to use as a way to gauge
25 this distance, is this distance walkable or not? And

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1 I'm very familiar with the area, it's within walking
2 distance from my house. I will say that in my past
3 life before children, I used to jog it quite often, and
4 although I don't necessarily want to make this comment
5 about my fitness level in public, I will tell you that
6 going up the hill there on Memorial and Farmington was
7 always quite difficult for me, and although I don't jog
8 it anymore, I do push a double stroller in that area
9 which is equally challenging on both of those roads for
10 me as well.

11 So what would be helpful for me, because
12 right now from my own experience, it doesn't feel
13 walkable to me from one end of the Center to the other
14 at all, you know, add baggage aside it's a little bit
15 of a strain.

16 The question is, you had given us some
17 distances I think, one was West Farms Mall, one was
18 Mizner Park, and Greenwich, downtown Greenwich, and I
19 like seeing things on maps. It's usually very helpful
20 to me, but what would be more helpful to me in this
21 instance, I think, would be to know the extra distance.
22 So even if you don't have them with you this evening,
23 I'd like to know the measurements, just not the map

24 overlay, how many feet is it, and I'd also like it to
25 be in walkable terms, via sidewalks, not just an

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1 overlay, where the buildings may or may not go, but
2 actually walk me from one end of that Center to the
3 other in a fashion that people will go and let me know
4 how far that is, and how far it is from J.C. Penney's
5 to Filene's would be helpful for me as I'm trying to
6 decide if it's walkable. I don't know if -- you've
7 gone into great depth or great detail about the
8 elevation difference, and I have no doubt that the
9 actual east side of the Center will be walkable because
10 of the raise in elevation. Am I missing something
11 about -- there is still going to be a fairly
12 significant incline on Memorial Road and Farmington.

13 MR. HEAPES: The incline from South Main
14 down Memorial, if you would, at the first part will
15 remain the same. We are not changing the incline or
16 making it steeper. We are kind of filling in the bowl,
17 so you are correct that from South Main to about
18 halfway to Isham now will be the same incline you have,
19 and then it will be flat. I don't know, John, I'm
20 guessing, we are raising Isham, depending on where you
21 look at it, 8, 9, 10 feet, and the difference in height
22 from South Main to Isham now pushes 20 feet, so we are
23 probably cutting that in half.

24 The walk between the library and the
25 Board of Education now, which is pretty much largely

1 taken up by the parking lot and then ramps up, the
2 grade on the ramp part between the library is probably
3 pretty typical to what it is today. To give you some
4 sense on numbers, really broad numbers, and I haven't
5 gone and paced it, and now you are going to force me to
6 go into the mall, and so I'll get dressed and go up
7 over there. It's about 900 feet in the mall. Mizner
8 Park I mentioned is about 1500 feet. We usually talk
9 in walkability in terms of a five-minute walk, not a
10 jog or a stroll, just a regular kind of five-minute
11 walk on a sidewalk which most people put at about a
12 quarter of a mile to 1250 feet, all things being equal.

13 As you can imagine, walkability is
14 entirely different when you are walking from the edge
15 of the parking lot at West Farms to the entrance to
16 J.C. Penney's than it is from J.C. Penney's to
17 Filene's. The quality of the environment you are in is
18 a huge impact on whether you feel very walkable. I
19 think most retailers would tell you your parking had
20 better be 200 to 250 feet to the front door of that
21 anchor because those environments are so God awful.
22 They are hot, the bright lights, you are amongst cars,
23 so walkability is a bit of a qualitative description.
24 I think one of the problems with the walkability of the
25 east side now is there is no reason to. So not unlike

1 a parking lot, you kind of feel like you are going
2 through the goulog, so to speak, in terms of
3 walkability. So the nicer it is, the better it is to
4 walk. The best example I have is compare walking on
5 Farmington from Main Street to LaSalle, compare that
6 walking experience with the exact same experience from
7 South Main Street to LaSalle in the Memorial extension
8 area, which is parking garage, dumpsters, no sidewalk.
9 That's actually a little shorter on the Memorial side
10 because of the geometry. It feels a lot longer, from
11 my perspective. So walkability isn't just about
12 length. It's pleasantness; it's what you are looking
13 at; it's how you feel while you are walking, but grade
14 is an important issue. I will get you those numbers,
15 but I view it really as qualitative, not so much as
16 quantitative as what is your walk like.

17 MS. MECK: Just a follow-up question.
18 Webster Walk itself, there will be steps only in that
19 area to go between South Main Street, so if you can't
20 do those steps effectively you are going to have to go
21 up to South Main Street?

22 MR. HEAPES: If you can't do the steps
23 and you are not going to go inside, you are going to
24 stay outside, you would have to do the steps.

25 MS. MECK: But the other option is to go

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1 inside the library?

2 MR. HEAPES: The other option is to go
3 inside the library. We are exploring at different
4 times of day to see if you go inside the cinema and up
5 the escalators. I don't have the answer for that
6 today, I'm exploring that, but you are correct.

7 MS. MECK: Thank you, Mr. Heapes.

8 MAYOR HARRIS: Any further questions?
9 We are going to actually go to -- I think we have a TPZ
10 question. We will alternate between bodies if we can.
11 Mr. Begley, do you have a question?

12 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The
13 question in regards to walkability, I have a question
14 with regard to the condominiums. I'm concerned about a
15 safety issue in regards to underground parking garages
16 and how they come out onto the sidewalks in regard to
17 the hazard of people walking by.

18 MR. HEAPES: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to
19 be distracted. John was just telling me that the
20 difference is 6 to 7 feet.

21 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. You had
22 mentioned 8 to 10, it's about 6 to 7 feet at Isham, we
23 are raising the road.

24 MR. HEAPES: Okay, I'm sorry. How do
25 condominium parking lots come out on the sidewalk?

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1 MR. BEGLEY: That's correct.

2 MR. HEAPES: That would be the same
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3 concern with the parking under the office buildings, et
4 cetera, where you might normally have a parking
5 entrance where you can fly up a ramp and onto the
6 sidewalk, you can't see everything. I presume that's
7 the kind of condition you are considering. The neat
8 thing about the way the parking works is you actually
9 enter the below grade parking structures under Building
10 C, under the residential, from the lower level of the
11 public parking facility. So those cars come out the
12 same exit as the public parking is, so the neat thing
13 is we have 8 -- excuse me, 4 entrances, two in each
14 deck that are not located on primary walking sidewalks,
15 rather than you might expect 7 or 8 that come right
16 around the sidewalk. That condition of the car coming
17 out of the sidewalk and coming across the sidewalk
18 doesn't exist here. It's a really neat thing.

19 Now, the reason we can do that is the
20 people that are using the below-grade spaces are people
21 that use the parking every day. They live there, they
22 work there, so it doesn't need to be as obvious as a
23 retail customer kind of looking around to find out
24 where do I park. They come in every day; they know
25 where to go in; they go down; they go into their space.

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1 There will be a gate at the entrance to that parking to
2 keep it controlled away from the public parking, but
3 it's a pretty neat opportunity because of the grade to
4 minimize those vehicles crossing the sidewalk. Like

5 you have a couple of places in the Center today where
6 people go back into the lots. We won't have that here.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you. We had I
8 think Mrs. Carpenter next.

9 MS. CARPENTER: Yes. Mine is about
10 walking. What you need to realize is that we live in a
11 Town where someone will circle the library parking lot
12 for ten minutes rather than park at the education
13 building and go to the library, but today what I did
14 was I walked the walk from the two parking garages, and
15 I actually counted the steps, and there is actually 300
16 steps from the South Parking Garage and the North
17 Parking Garage to West Hartford Center, and it was
18 about a five-minute walk.

19 The problem was, when I got right to
20 South Main Street, there was a financial building and
21 there really wasn't much of an attraction, so the
22 actual walk of 300 steps is certainly reasonable. But
23 once you get to that corner, you really need to
24 continue your walk another five minutes in order to
25 make that -- to get where you need to go.

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1 My concern really is, how are we going
2 to make that connection between Blue Back and into the
3 Center? I guess sometimes I think about West Farms
4 Mall and how it has two anchors and the whole thing
5 would be you want to get people from Filene's to
6 Nordstrom's. How are you going to get people between

7 those two attractions if there isn't places to stop in
8 between? I think there has to be some kind of
9 attraction between the parking garages and between here
10 and the Center. I mean, it's going to take more than a
11 brick walk to get people to go there.

12 The other thing, whether or not you
13 might realize, in the winter time it really is very
14 cold and windy. It's like a tunnel, that walk. I
15 don't know whether or not you know that, but I used to
16 work in the old high school, and I would take the walk
17 to the bus stop. My concern is going to be, how are we
18 going to make that connection between Blue Back for
19 people who actually use it as an attraction into the
20 established Center so that it is kind of like places?
21 Explain to me what the walk is going to be like so that
22 there are attractions or steppingstones along the way
23 where people can stop and encouraging people to go
24 between those two spaces. Or are there going to be
25 attractions?

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1 MR. HEAPES: Well, you've just made the
2 case we feel very strongly about which is, what uses do
3 you put in the Board of Ed building, which is really in
4 the middle and can drive that kind of regional
5 attraction traffic. We won't get into the numbers of
6 customers that you would expect to go, but no matter
7 where you park in the Center, in the Town Center office
8 building garage, in the lot behind the Center block or

9 the two parking garages, those uses in that Board of Ed
10 building are really equal distance. You can park in
11 any of those places. So that at least will drive some
12 customers to both sides of the Center. We've tried
13 very hard to make this mid-block crossing kind of, if
14 you would, a temporary crossing place, knowing that in
15 the future other crossings will become more important.

16 I think it's fair to say that the Town
17 Center office building and its tenants are a reflection
18 of its location in the Center today, which is at the
19 end of the kind of walking path. There is not much
20 reason, you can't see it around the corner. I wouldn't
21 assume that over a long period of time that those
22 financial tenants would be the likely tenants to be in
23 that building in perpetuity. I mean, I can't speak for
24 the owner, but it sits in a different location. With
25 Blue Back Square coming, you would expect to see more

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1 retail or restaurant tenants make sense there. They
2 tried to do that when it opened, but it was just kind
3 of end of the line and things kind of ended down there,
4 so I would expect the tenants in that building to begin
5 to reflect their location across from some severe
6 regional anchors. The best example is you have an
7 office supply furniture store that has now become a
8 home good store, call it piano, piano shop, so I would
9 expect to see that tenant mix change. This gives me an
10 opportunity again to tell you how important the

11 Memorial connection is in terms of this kind of loop of
12 walking and driving.

13 Now, the question, going back to the
14 issue about this eventual loop, I think you have to
15 understand that this isn't the end of all projects in
16 the Center. The Center will evolve. Should you open
17 that Memorial walkway, I think you could see all kinds
18 of possibilities happen along there. But I think the
19 most important thing is to get the right regional
20 attractions in the Board of Ed.

21 I think another important issue is not
22 to have two centers, two kinds of sidewalks, two kinds
23 of streetlights so everywhere you look over time
24 becomes a single united streetscape system so it
25 doesn't seem like you are going to two places. You are

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1 wandering around one great place.

2 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you. My only
3 follow-up question is in any of your previous projects,
4 have you had this perhaps additional challenge of
5 having to connect more historic sites with newer
6 development and just what the outcome has been?

7 MR. HEAPES: Every project we've done
8 hasn't necessarily been of this size and scale. Almost
9 always we are asked to fit into an existing, and I'll
10 use the word "Urban structure," be it in a city or a
11 village. I have sensitivity to issues of architecture,
12 patterns, et cetera. I would say it's probably the

13 core of our practice, which is how do you respond to
14 the environment around you and make it more whole than
15 it is when you start? That is really the core of our
16 practice.

17 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you.

18 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you,
19 Mrs. Carpenter. Mr. Davidoff.

20 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, I
21 have several questions. I'm still not convinced that
22 the proposal as presented is the most pedestrian
23 friendly, and I think we just had a discussion about
24 the steps and the site. There is going to be steps on
25 Memorial walk and not a ramp area; is that correct?

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1 MR. HEAPES: No, Memorial will continue
2 to have its same sidewalk. Perhaps you mean Webster
3 Walk?

4 MR. DAVIDOFF: Webster Walk, I'm sorry.

5 MR. HEAPES: You are correct.

6 MR. DAVIDOFF: There is no possibility
7 of making that ramped so that people with baby
8 strollers or wheel chairs would be able to access that
9 road?

10 MR. HEAPES: Typically, I'm not opposed
11 to looking at it. In first looking at it, it is of
12 such a magnitude of grade change, even though we are
13 lifting that up, that really what we did was
14 consolidate the steps at Blue Back Square, which can

15 essentially perform as a place to sit, interact with
16 the fountain there and then keep the grade at the top
17 of the stairs. It's about 6 feet, relatively flat.

18 The other possibility is a ramp, but
19 there is so much ramp there, I think it would be
20 gobbled up by ramp and not a pleasant environment. I'm
21 not fundamentally opposed to looking at it, but it
22 would be significantly different than what we have, and
23 I can't guarantee that it would work.

24 MR. DAVIDOFF: What I was thinking was,
25 was a ramp that was staggered in stages so that it

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1 wasn't just one straight slope so that those who were
2 pushing baby carriages or wheelchairs weren't presented
3 with the walkability that they had to either go down
4 Memorial or down Farmington Avenue to reach that, that
5 was my concern there.

6 MR. HEAPES: It's a fair comment.

7 MR. DAVIDOFF: With respect to the width
8 of the sidewalk, the current West Hartford Center, you
9 can go as narrow as the sidewalk in front of Arugula to
10 as wide as what's in front of Grant's.

11 MR. HEAPES: Correct.

12 MR. DAVIDOFF: What would you say would
13 be the proposed width of yours in comparison to what
14 currently exists out there now?

15 MR. HEAPES: We have two widths
16 essentially. We have a 20-foot width, which is

17 narrower than it is in Grant, somewhat similar to what
18 it is on LaSalle, which is an 8-, 9-, 10-foot walking
19 area, 8-, 9-, 10-foot kind of tree amenity area. That
20 is our typical sidewalk on Memorial, on Isham and what
21 I would call the primary pedestrian areas. And that's
22 a sidewalk meant to have things on, be it cafes or
23 whatever.

24 Then we have what I would just call a
25 good, standard, large tree urban sidewalk 12-to-15 feet

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1 along Raymond Road, primarily along Raymond Road and
2 New Street, which has less kind of pedestrian
3 intensity, and that 12-to-15 foot sidewalk has the same
4 8, 9, 10 feet of walking area and 4, 5, 6 feet of green
5 and tree area, not intended to have cafes and those
6 kinds of things on that sidewalk. We wouldn't expect
7 to see cafes on Raymond, for example. But all of our
8 sidewalks are generous, without looking too wide.
9 Frankly, the sidewalks in front of Grant's without the
10 cows and without the cafes actually happen to be wider
11 than Fifth Avenue in New York, same desire, something
12 to make them a little less pavement. They look great
13 with the cafes on them. We have really excellent
14 sidewalks, 20 feet and 12 feet.

15 MR. DAVIDOFF: My next question is, what
16 would you do to change people's perception that they
17 are not walking very far distance? Say they were going
18 from the North Garage possibly to Bricco's or they were

19 picking up a parcel at Lux Bond or a heavy box over at
20 Bennet's of invitations and walking down to one of your
21 retail establishments, how would you change their
22 perception that they need not park twice, that they
23 could park once and walk it?

24 MR. HEAPES: I don't know how to add
25 more than I've added, other than put the same great

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1 sidewalks. I don't see anybody having trouble walking
2 from Bricco's up around to Friendly's. This is less
3 distance than that, on the same sidewalk, same large
4 trees. I'm not really sure what to add other than what
5 I've said, is have the great same sidewalks with the
6 paver, the large trees, the streetlights, which is what
7 we are proposing.

8 MR. DAVIDOFF: I guess as a follow-up,
9 it would be that I would find it hard to believe that
10 somebody who was purchasing a large item at one of our
11 establishments, and then they would need to bring that
12 to their car, and they are not going to, in my personal
13 opinion, trek from one end of our new Center to the old
14 Center and vice versa.

15 MR. HEAPES: I could just offer you the
16 examples I gave you.

17 MR. DAVIDOFF: With all due respect,
18 sir, you know, I've been to Mizner Park, and that's a
19 very flat terrain. I think with the grade that we have
20 along Farmington and Memorial Road, I don't think it's

21 that same set of scenarios.

22 MR. HEAPES: They don't do that in the
23 mall coincidentally, and I've been going to the mall a
24 lot. I've been interested to see how many people park
25 in the parking structure. My assumption would have

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1 been, according to local legend, that no one were to
2 park in the parking structure and everyone would park
3 in the surface lots. That hasn't been my observations
4 at the mall. There is anecdotal issues, that doesn't
5 make them true. The best example I have is Greenwich,
6 which is quite steep, quite steep, the whole street is,
7 and anecdotally, I go, I watch, I look, and I don't see
8 that behavior. So I don't have any proof of it, but I
9 just watch people's behavior.

10 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Davidoff, perhaps I
12 can go to the paper station in Newington and pull up
13 near the store.

14 MR. DAVIDOFF: You are more than
15 welcome, Mr. Mayor.

16 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Davidoff.
17 Mr. Connors.

18 MR. CONNORS: Thank you. You wait long
19 enough a lot of times a lot of your questions get
20 answered by a lot of folks asking questions here, but I
21 do have a couple left. I'd just like to make a point.
22 You did mention how important the tenant in the Board

23 of Ed building -- the tenants in the Board of Ed
24 building are going to be.

25 MR. HEAPES: The types of tenants.

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1 MR. CONNORS: Just something to think
2 about, I don't expect an answer right now, traveling
3 through the Center early morning yesterday, just trying
4 to envision what it would look like postdevelopment,
5 and it's going to be a big change for people to, I
6 think to get accustomed to, looking at the Board of Ed
7 building being more of a commercial structure, as the
8 way you look when you go down Main Street now and you
9 look at the church, the library, the Board of Ed
10 building, it's a very serene stately look. Changing
11 that to commercial, it will change that look and that
12 will be an adjustment that we have to make. I just
13 thought I'd mention that now. I don't expect an answer
14 because we are not really dealing with that kind of
15 aesthetic, but something that we will talk about maybe
16 as we go forward.

17 My question on some of the pedestrians
18 has been answered from your perspective, so I'd like to
19 ask a couple of questions of the Town. Understanding
20 the property west of Main Street in the Center, along
21 South Main Street is privately owned. There is a
22 walkway between where Friendly's is and I believe the
23 Masonic Temple, and there is some property behind that
24 does connect up to Farmington Avenue, but it's very

25 broken up. It's not the type of walkway that is going

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1 to encourage people to be used, and I'm wondering, if
2 this development is going through, are there plans to
3 make some changes behind -- you know, with that
4 walkway, because that would connect up with people
5 coming across from the library and encouraging people
6 to flow more into the Center as it exists now, and then
7 to finish that, to follow up on something Mr. Begley
8 said, that one of those driveways that come out from
9 those parking lots on Farmington Avenue that go right
10 over the sidewalk and are dangerous. Cars can just pop
11 out of there as kids are cruising by, and I don't know
12 if there is any plans to change some of those areas to
13 encourage more pedestrian walking in them and to
14 have -- you know, to increase the possibility of the
15 integration of the two centers.

16 MR. VAN WINKLE: Mr. Mayor, through you.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Van Winkle.

18 MR. VAN WINKLE: All of your ideas are
19 right on the money, the kinds of things we need to
20 begin to pay perhaps a little more attention to. Just
21 starting in the area to the south, something we already
22 talked about, we are having discussions with the post
23 office about strengthening that pedestrian access
24 through the private property, both the post office and
25 the Town Center building. We are hopeful that that

1 will go somewhere. Next to the Masonic Temple, again,
2 private property, and if we can get some cooperation in
3 there, perhaps we can do some connections back to the
4 parking lot. It would take you back into the parking
5 lot and not necessarily to quite as walkable an area
6 but again, that's a potential. It's often a number of
7 property owners that you need to get to cooperate with
8 you.

9 The exits from parking lots, interior
10 parking lots are always problematic because of
11 pedestrians. If you know West Hartford Center, you
12 know you pull out very slowly, you know your potential
13 to see someone. We come in on LaSalle, that was, you
14 know, an option there. Do you go in or do you go out?
15 And that one is a very difficult driveway to see going
16 out. Coming out only Main Street from that old Sage
17 Allen parking lot is a much wider space, and it's my
18 observation cars slow down. We talked about perhaps
19 doing some planters so that the pedestrians pushed out
20 more toward the street, but the cars are warned by
21 signs and seem to be moving slowly there.

22 It's always going to be a problem where
23 we have significant foot traffic on the sidewalk and
24 car traffic coming out of lots, but it's my observation
25 that it works pretty well in most cases. Those who use

1 those lots know well that the pedestrians are there,
2 they can sense that as you come to the end, you can see
3 the sidewalks and whatnot. So it's working well there.
4 About the only thing we didn't do, we rebuilt those not
5 too long ago on the LaSalle Road side, we put a little
6 painted pedestrian area on one side, and you know, if a
7 car comes down that driveway, you press yourself up
8 against the wall and wait for him to pass and then move
9 on. It's been that way since I was a kid and that's a
10 long time ago.

11 So all of those options we need to look
12 at in the Center about strengthening pedestrian
13 crossing zones. We've talked a lot today about the
14 connection between the two, and we talked about
15 crossing Main Street, but once we get across Main
16 Street, which is the point you are making, we need to
17 make sure that that pedestrian way is not a pedestrian
18 way that goes the long way around the block, but maybe
19 some shortcuts through that block.

20 MR. CONNORS: Thank you. Just as a
21 follow-up, I mean, you would think that even without a
22 development going in east of Main Street, you would
23 think that it would be a good idea over time to maybe
24 address these, and I think it would behoove the owners
25 of those properties to clean up those areas and make

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1 them more pedestrian accessible. Thanks.

2 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.
3 Any other questions on walkability? Mrs. McClay and
4 then -- Dr. Thornberry, I'm sorry, was next and then
5 Mrs. McClay.

6 MS. THORNBERRY: Thank you. Let me just
7 follow-up again on some of the questions that I started
8 with this evening, and then also some that Mr. Davidoff
9 has asked as well. Looking at the Blue Back Square
10 area, let's say -- how do I describe this? Where
11 might -- you know, if I'm physically disabled, as I
12 actually am, and where am I going to be challenged?

13 You just indicated that the Webster
14 Walk, where their stairs go from South Main Street
15 downstairs, sometimes if I see that, there will be an
16 elevator nearby. Now, you've indicated that it's just
17 the stairs; there is no zigzag ramping which would look
18 so unattractive, I understand that.

19 MR. HEAPES: I'm not sure it would fit
20 but --

21 MS. THORNBERRY: Yeah, right, I mean,
22 the scope of it or the length of it would be incredibly
23 long, but is there any place to put an elevator, an
24 access elevator? Would the library be the best place?

25 MR. HEAPES: There is -- if you remember

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1 the description of the entrance to the library,
2 remember at Blue Back Square level, there are no

3 library uses. That's below today's current children's
4 level, and so up there in the corner as you come -- in
5 Blue Back Square, right in that corner -- sorry, I'm so
6 nervous here -- is a small lobby that has both a stair
7 up and an accessible elevator that will take you either
8 to the children's level, today's current ground level,
9 or to Main Street level, and then you could leave via
10 the Main Street level.

11 Right now that's the most accessible
12 practicable solution that's available, as long as the
13 library is open, but I think you have clearly honed in
14 on the two challenges, which are getting on that
15 topography on Memorial and Webster Walk without a
16 doubt.

17 MS. THORNBERRY: Right. Is there an
18 entrance to the library from South Main?

19 MR. HEAPES: Yes, the existing entrance
20 stays exactly the same. They are adding a vestibule to
21 it relative to climate control, et cetera, but that
22 entrance and access to that elevator stays the same.

23 MS. THORNBERRY: Okay, that's great.
24 Where else would I be challenged, you know, walking
25 around there? You know, South Main, it's not

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1 impossible, but I'd have to go through the library to
2 get down there. What about to the condominiums? You
3 said that that wasn't a problem because you drive into
4 the garage, and on the street level go into an

5 elevator.

6 MR. HEAPES: Correct.

7 MS. THORBERRY: On the two parking
8 garages, where you indicated there are escalators --

9 MR. HEAPES: There are also elevators in
10 there.

11 MS. THORBERRY: Okay. Any other place
12 where there are stairs or large number of stairs?

13 MR. HEAPES: No. Literally the entire
14 area, including access to Town Hall, the existing
15 entrance, police facility, all the Blue Back Square
16 buildings, the church, the backside of the church are
17 now relatively accessible, and I don't want to say
18 relatively, because I'm thinking of the grade behind
19 the church, it's not completely flat, but is
20 essentially flat, will be fundamentally flat, no
21 stairs, curb and gutter with handicapped ramps like you
22 would expect to see, elevators in all of those
23 facilities, be they office, residential, cinema, et
24 cetera.

25 MS. THORBERRY: That's great. Thank

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1 you for explaining it, and thank you for designing
2 garages that women actually won't mind going in. I
3 appreciate that very much. I didn't have to have that
4 fight. Thank you.

5 MR. HEAPES: I understand.

6 MS. THORBERRY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you,
8 Dr. Thornberry. Mrs. McClay.
9 MS. McCLAY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I
10 have a quick question about the crosswalks. I
11 understand you plan on doing some improvements and
12 there is supposed to be a dedicated one. Is that
13 crosswalk, the dedicated crosswalk by the library, is
14 it right in front of the library, or is it more on the
15 corner of Memorial Road that would maybe cross over to
16 the hopefully new memorial walk?

17 MR. HEAPES: If you don't mind looking
18 at the site plan here, this is the library, existing
19 library there. The existing, I guess a wing with the
20 entrance to the library there. Noah sits right here,
21 so essentially all flat paving. That crosswalk is
22 right here. It would take you to almost in the middle
23 of this new Steinway store with the dedicated light.

24 MS. McCLAY: It would still be another
25 crosswalk at Memorial Road also?

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1 MR. HEAPES: Oh, yes.

2 MS. McCLAY: And I had a quick question
3 at the island on Farmington Avenue and North Main
4 Street, you had mentioned something once about pushing
5 it back, that it was not conducive to a good traffic
6 flow because it was sticking out too much and
7 everything. At this point, I think people, pedestrians
8 use it while they are crossing the street because they

9 can't necessarily get across that wide street without
10 stopping there.

11 MR. HEAPES: We were talking about a
12 matter of feet, 2 or 3 feet.

13 MS. McCLAY: So the island would still
14 be there, it would still be used by pedestrians, et
15 cetera.

16 MR. HEAPES: Yes.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. McClay.
18 Mr. Brown.

19 MR. BROWN: Dr. Thornberry brought up an
20 issue that I have a question through you, Mr. Mayor, to
21 Mr. Alair. Are we looking at a liability issue with
22 respect to the handicapped and accessing the Webster
23 Walk? We are being asked to, I believe, grant a
24 variance on Building A to have a zero side yard, and if
25 you were to -- if we said that, I'm just wondering if a

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1 case can be made where if we denied that variance,
2 there would be enough room on the building I saw at the
3 property line conceivably to put in handicapped access
4 if we didn't permit the building to come right to the
5 property line.

6 MR. ALAIR: I'm not sure that that's a
7 legal question so much as it is a code question, and
8 I'm looking at Mr. Van Winkle hoping that he might have
9 an answer. I don't believe it's a liability question,
10 no.

11 MR. VAN WINKLE: Looking at that
12 distance, and I'll pull out the maps maybe at our break
13 and maybe Richard or someone from my end could address
14 this, the change in elevation there is such that I
15 don't think there is any ramp that could meet the code
16 that could make that change. To get to Main Street,
17 Isham Road is steep enough that you can't design a ramp
18 that would make that, and if you could, it would really
19 be a long ramp.

20 MR. HEAPES: That ramp, we did some
21 quick calculations, would exceed 200 feet in length,
22 including landings, et cetera, so that is, given the
23 order of magnitude, the width of that parking garage is
24 120 feet, so it would be from that edge of the parking
25 garage down here someplace. So you are looking at a

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1 single ramp that really couldn't fit in that length of
2 walkway, which is how it unfortunately got to be the
3 way it is.

4 MR. BROWN: Well, there are a lot of
5 ramps that are switched back and also the distance
6 isn't too different from the distance of Isham along
7 Memorial Drive up to Main Street. I'm just wondering
8 if we are asking for trouble down the road.

9 MR. VAN WINKLE: I would just comment in
10 switch-backs, every switch-back is a platform, so you
11 only get a short distance going up till you get to your
12 switch-back, there has to be a platform and then go up

13 and then a platform. The distance is so narrow, we can
14 ask the architect to see whether it's something you can
15 lay out in there, but there is nothing that I know of
16 in the code that would require us to deal with an
17 exterior topographic feature that is not taking you to
18 the front door of the library.

19 Remember, your accessibility code means
20 you've got to get to the main entrance to the library.
21 In this case we have two main entrances. We've gone
22 beyond what the code says. Normally it would be get to
23 the main entrance, which would be the Main Street side,
24 so you'd have a handicapped space on Main Street, you
25 can park there and then walk into the library. But in

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1 this case we are placing an accessible entrance on both
2 the Isham Road side and the Main Street side for
3 someone who wants to get into our public building,
4 which is the code responsibility that we have, is get
5 someone into the building where they need to go.

6 The same would be true of the
7 architect's side, is retail stores. You've got to be
8 able to get someone from an accessible parking space to
9 the front door or to the building, inside the building
10 and ability to move around. It's within the building
11 that we worry about and not the -- and getting to the
12 front door of the building, not getting around the
13 building, which is essentially what those stairs do.

14 MR. BROWN: So we get by the code, so

15 what you are saying is we don't mind restricting
16 handicapped from Webster Walk?

17 MR. VAN WINKLE: No, that's not at all
18 what we are saying. What we are saying is that there
19 is a topo change here I don't believe you can come
20 close to solving, and if you did, you would have an
21 extraordinarily long ramp to do it, and you would not
22 be achieving the goal of what the accessibility code
23 is. It doesn't say that someone should be able to get
24 everywhere. We can't go up Farmington Avenue by the
25 Bank of America now. That's not -- that hill is not to

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1 code. That is not to say that that public sidewalk
2 should be flipped back and forth on Farmington Avenue
3 so that we can make it accessible up that hill. That's
4 not what the code requires. That's not what -- it
5 would be virtually impossible to do that in most places
6 with any kind of hill, so what we are -- what our code
7 tells us is get that person, get them to be able to get
8 to the site, park, and from that parking space, get
9 into the facility that they are going to, and that's
10 what this project and any project you would see would
11 achieve.

12 MR. BROWN: If we push the building line
13 back along Webster Walk, Building A, would that give us
14 enough room?

15 MR. VAN WINKLE: Ron Van Winkle again.
16 Again --

17 MR. BROWN: You can just say no. That's
18 fine.

19 MR. VAN WINKLE: The answer is probably
20 no, it's almost certainly no. What a ramp has to be is
21 1 foot for every 20 that you go in, most of these
22 cases, with some landings in them and whatnot. So the
23 distance you've got to rise, you've got to go a long
24 way. If you push the building back far enough, perhaps
25 there is some switch-back, but again, if you've seen

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1 switch-backs that go a long distance, they are a long
2 sidewalk trying to make it up.

3 MR. BROWN: Fine. The answer is no,
4 thank you.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Coursey is next and
6 then Mrs. McClay.

7 MR. COURSEY: I don't want to belabor
8 the point, but I think this is a very important issue.
9 When I look at stairs, I see a stop sign, and I know
10 all we have to do is look down at the riverfront, there
11 is a pedestrian walkway, a handicapped walkway that was
12 put down on Constitution Plaza, which is not very
13 attractive. It's something I don't think any of us
14 would want to see here, and it does what Mr. Van Winkle
15 was saying, it takes up a lot of area. It gets the
16 job done. It's increased visitations down to
17 Constitution Plaza. We have more people down there,
18 but it's not very attractive to look at. I don't think

19 that's something that we'd want here, but as one who is
20 pushing strollers in West Hartford Center, I've been
21 doing it for a long time, and I've got more years to
22 go, I just feel that especially as important as this
23 connection is to the existing Center, something has to
24 be done so that if somebody is in a wheelchair or
25 pushing a stroller, they don't come to that staircase

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1 and see a stop sign and not want to cross over to the
2 Center.

3 Is there enough room inside the building
4 there to add another elevator, a larger elevator? I
5 know you spent some time at the mall. Don't look at
6 the elevators that are in the Center of the mall,
7 that's the worst elevator known to mankind. You can't
8 fit more than one stroller in there. But I think if
9 you have some area in the lobby down there that was big
10 enough as a waiting area and sufficient sized elevators
11 to bring people up to street level, that would go part
12 of the way of correcting the problem. Is that
13 something you'd be willing to look at?

14 MR. HEAPES: Certainly the width of
15 Webster Walk is fixed by existing library front and the
16 existing Board of Ed building. What we have tried to
17 do is gang the steps in like three-step pieces so you
18 go down three steps, and then it's flat for quite
19 awhile and three steps, and tried to stretch that
20 progression out as much as possible. Obviously you

21 have the elevator in the library, which I think can get
22 you up. It doesn't necessarily get you, as you
23 described, to the place and then obviously knowing how
24 to go down. We do have -- meaning coming from the
25 Center, you are probably not going to know to go into

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1 the library, go all the way back to the back of the
2 library and go down. You might. That leaves us, what
3 kind of happens on our side of the fence? We do have a
4 tenant there, a cinema, that has entrance issues at
5 both levels, Main Street and Isham. I think we'd be
6 willing to look at how that could be used to help
7 without it being necessarily a 24-hour day open kind of
8 facility.

9 MR. COURSEY: Through you, Mr. Mayor, so
10 you are saying that there is not access. If I want to
11 go in, I know it's not the library at that level, but
12 in that building, and take an elevator up two floors,
13 that takes me to street level; correct?

14 MR. HEAPES: Correct. Exactly.

15 MR. COURSEY: Well, could we do
16 something with better signage or really pointing people
17 in that direction so that they know if they have a
18 stroller or if they are in a wheelchair, this is where
19 you go?

20 MR. HEAPES: We may be even able to
21 explore on the library having access to the middle
22 level, which it does inside at what you call the

23 children's level. That's kind of -- just so you know,
24 the way this works is you are at Main Street level here
25 when you go into the library, somewhere towards the

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1 Center of this you are at children's level. You go
2 down some steps, down some steps in the little three
3 groupings, and then you end up at Isham Road level
4 which is no library level. Between both sides of
5 Webster Walk there are elevators, and I think we could
6 explore how they could have some accessibility, be it
7 signage, way finding. I'm certainly hoping to looking
8 at how we could increase that. I don't think it's a
9 question of numbers. I think it's really a question of
10 obvious accessibility, and I don't think -- in a funny
11 way, a 200-foot long snaking ramp would be as big a
12 stop sign to most, so I'm willing to explore with you.
13 That's a good point, Mr. Mayor.

14 MR. COURSEY: Thank you.

15 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Coursey.

16 Mr. Van Winkle, I thought I heard a voice from
17 someplace.

18 MR. VAN WINKLE: I know that Richard
19 doesn't want to spend too much time discussing this
20 because they haven't identified specific tenants.
21 Until they get zoning approval, no one is going to sign
22 up, but the home goods store that we talked about that
23 is perhaps in the corner of the Board of Education
24 building was discussed as a two-level building. They

25 obviously would have an elevator. They'd have an

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1 entrance at Isham Road and an escalator perhaps and at
2 minimum an elevator that would take you up to the Main
3 Street level. So you in essence have here a library
4 elevator, an escalator that runs through the theater
5 that we have been talking about, and then another
6 elevator, escalator in the two-level home good store.
7 So that if you are in a wheelchair, there is an easy
8 way somewhere to get from one level to another as long
9 as those stores are open and presumably you are there
10 during the shopping hours, so there is an easy way to
11 park at Isham Road North Garage and get to Main Street
12 through one of those buildings.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Van
14 Winkle. Mrs. McClay.

15 MS. McCLAY: That was basically my
16 question, too. I understood that there was an elevator
17 in the library, but I would like to very much encourage
18 that the Board of Ed see the building have an elevator.
19 Escalators are not going to help handicapped or
20 strollers.

21 MR. HEAPES: They will have an elevator
22 as well, absolutely.

23 MS. McCLAY: And with elevators in two
24 buildings on either side of Webster Walk, I think that
25 would solve that issue.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. McClay.
2 Mr. Spada.

3 MR. SPADA: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This
4 whole side of the table has had some great
5 handicapped-related questions, and my question would
6 be, with all of the research and the consultants, it's
7 a 160 million dollar deal, so for both the Town and the
8 developer, did you go to an ADA specialist? Did you
9 have somebody walk through this entire deal and give it
10 a once-over from a handicapped perspective in terms of
11 all of the walking, all of the parking, all of the
12 building? And I would think it would make sense since
13 you've done extensive, to your credit, work on the soil
14 and the this and the that, that somebody would have
15 looked at that with some detail.

16 MR. HEAPES: We've had code specialists
17 look at the impact of all the codes, including
18 handicapped, including fair housing, all the codes that
19 impact that from that perspective. That's different
20 than an experiential perspective. That's just meeting
21 code and as Mr. Van Winkle described there is no doubt
22 relative to meeting code. I think what we are talking
23 about here is that extra mile and the experience that's
24 beyond the code issue just so that people actually use
25 it the way it's intended. As you can imagine, we are

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1 very sensitive to this relative to the walkability
2 issue, and we are just bumping our heads against the
3 topography here. I don't know what more to say to
4 that, but we've had it completely analyzed from a code
5 perspective.

6 MR. SPADA: Thank you. I guess from the
7 Town side, you are absolutely satisfied that our
8 exposure from an ADA perspective has been looked at and
9 analyzed and you are comfortable with it?

10 MR. ALAIR: As Mr. Van Winkle indicated,
11 the ADA requires access to public buildings and access
12 to public accommodations, public facilities, public
13 programs. It doesn't require, from a pure code
14 perspective, it doesn't require access from point A to
15 point B in exactly the route that you might like to
16 travel. That does not mean to say that it's not
17 desirable. As Mr. Heapes indicated, it's an experience
18 that we would like to encourage, but as I'm sitting
19 here listening to description of a 200-foot long ramp,
20 which if I recall correctly, every so many feet has to
21 have a platform, a flat level so that you don't have
22 somebody lose control and rocket down the full length.
23 I'm thinking that the construction of such a ramp in
24 and of itself might create liability. It might create
25 a scenario where particularly in inclement weather you

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1 have a, no pun intended, a slippery slope, as much as
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2 we have one in the parking lots behind the library and
3 Board of Ed today, and it seems to me that you may have
4 less of a liability issue with what is proposed here
5 than what's there today and less of a liability issue
6 than you might have if you had an exposed ramp of the
7 size that we are talking about here.

8 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Spada.
9 Dr. Thornberry.

10 MS. THORNBERRY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.
11 As you can see, ever since I had back surgery, this is
12 like -- this is my all-consuming thing, you know, how
13 do you get around, and going downstairs might not be so
14 bad, but do you have strength to go upstairs, and I was
15 in Savannah not too long ago, and I remember there were
16 these, from the river, if you've been there, you know,
17 you've seen the appearance is about 250 steps up to the
18 Main Street all made of cobblestone and as attractive
19 as it was, it still didn't compel me to walk them up.
20 But one thing I noticed by some stairs are these
21 elevators that are kind of one-person elevators, and I
22 think they are really designed for those individuals
23 who are in wheelchairs, but you just go in it, and you
24 close a little door and you push the button, and it
25 takes you up the level right next to the stairs. Now,

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1 obviously, I mean, I don't have that much -- I don't
2 know anything about them and maybe you could elaborate
3 on any you've seen, you've used or tell me more.

4 MR. HEAPES: The only issue here is
5 interaction with the weather, and when you have
6 escalators, and I'm familiar with it from transit
7 systems, usually you have to interact with them and the
8 weather. They can become a maintenance issue, more
9 escalators than elevators. I think it's something we
10 should look at relative to what happens on our side of
11 the thing and see if there is anything we can do.
12 That's the only thing that makes sense from a room size
13 kind of perspective rather than ramps or outdoor
14 escalators or any of that stuff. We should take a look
15 at it I think.

16 MS. THORNBERRY: So what you are saying
17 is that those -- I understand the weather issue, but
18 those as a general means aren't that reliable?

19 MR. HEAPES: Right. The important point
20 here is they are not required by code, which is a
21 different issue. You know, when a transit elevator
22 breaks down, it's a real problem, so I think we should
23 come back and discuss it with you and see what we find
24 out.

25 MS. THORNBERRY: That's great. Thank

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1 you. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

2 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Dr.
3 Thornberry. I think it's about time for a break. It
4 looks like the questions have been exhausted on this
5 issue. Maybe not, Mr. Connors.

6 MR. CONNORS: Sorry, Mr. Mayor, if I can
7 just ask one question, and this is just something I've
8 been thinking about as we have been going through the
9 process so far, and I spoke with Mr. Feldman a week or
10 so ago about this, and normally when the Council goes
11 through a zone application, the Town remains -- the
12 Town administration remains completely objective. In
13 this situation, because of the interconnection of the
14 Town and the developer, the Town administration
15 presents itself as being supportive of this
16 application, and this is by no means meant to be any
17 kind of a wise-guy question, but for my own information
18 as we go forward into trafficking and into the
19 financial piece, are there things that you, the Town
20 administration, still have that still trouble you about
21 this application, and are there things that you could
22 recommend to us that you think we still need to look at
23 and to get guidance as we move forward. If you want to
24 think about it, you can answer it later, but I wanted
25 to get it out before we took a break.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Feldman.

2 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, I'll leave it
3 up to you, if you want me to respond quickly, I can
4 elaborate as we go through this evening with you, but
5 Mr. Mayor, I'll leave it up to you.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: Why don't you respond
7 now, Mr. Feldman.

8 MR. FELDMAN: I'll be quick. There are,
9 I think, still issues that we have expressed to the
10 investors, particularly there is a couple of traffic
11 issues that we may touch on, particularly in the Park
12 Road area that Dave Kraus may talk a little bit more
13 about, so there are, to answer your question briefly,
14 there are some issues that are still unsettled that we
15 would talk more about publicly with you and the
16 developer is aware of. You may have to make a King
17 Sullivan type of decision, so along the way, yes, there
18 are points that are not in total alignment.

19 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Feldman.
20 Mr. Connors.

21 MR. CONNORS: So as we do go forward,
22 you'll let us know what those are, as we move along?

23 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Connors,
24 yes. I don't want to misrepresent or mislead. There
25 aren't many, there is very few. Obviously we wouldn't

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1 have ever even gotten to the point that we are at if we
2 felt there were too many that made us feel
3 uncomfortable. This is a very solid investment, but
4 there are a couple of points that we will make in our
5 discussion in answering your question probably later
6 tonight.

7 MR. CONNORS: Thank you.

8 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.
9 We will take a 15-minute break now.

10 (Recess taken from 8:19 p.m. to 8:47 p.m.)

11 MAYOR HARRIS: We are going to call the
12 hearing back to order. First of all, I just want to
13 put on the record that the discussion that we ended up
14 with was actually very, very important, as far as
15 accessibility issues, making sure that persons with
16 disabilities would have access to the project in a way
17 that was appropriate, and I could tell that with the
18 sentiments around the table, we are all in that
19 direction, and there was a lot of concern.

20 We used a lot of different terms, as is
21 often the case in describing the issue and the people
22 involved and the people that the sensitivity is
23 towards, and just for purposes of the record, I want to
24 put on that out of respect for the community, that we
25 were talking about, that the term that everyone was

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1 dealing with really was persons with disabilities, so
2 that would be going forward the way we should talk
3 about these issues.

4 Next we are going to be doing the
5 traffic portion, and Mr. Verrengia actually went around
6 and did take some photos of various intersections which
7 we will be able to show on the screen behind us. What
8 we'd like to do in this portion is, as Mr. Verrengia
9 goes through and asks some questions on a particular
10 intersection, if anybody else wants to use the visual
11 to ask questions, do so then before we go to another

12 slide, and I'll also ask the Town Clerk that the
13 pictures be made a part of the record. Thank you,
14 Mr. Verrengia.

15 MR. VERRENGIA: Is this on? Can you
16 guys hear me? Good. Thank you. As we all know,
17 traffic is probably one of the number 1 problems here
18 in West Hartford, and I've heard over and over from the
19 developer that in order for this project to be
20 successful, we need to bring people in. Those people,
21 I would imagine, are going to come by way of vehicles.
22 This is no longer a local project. This project is
23 going to be attracting people throughout the entire
24 region. So with that, obviously we are going to have
25 additional traffic. This panel has agreed to really

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1 look at this. Everyone here at the table takes this
2 issue very seriously, so we are going to take an
3 indepth look at it.

4 Having said that, I have a report that
5 was given to the Council by Urbi tran Associates. It's
6 titled "Blue Back Square Executive Summary," so for the
7 record, that's what I'm going to be working off of, and
8 in this report, there are some recommendations. But
9 before I get to the report, this is a, I understand it,
10 is an independent traffic study from the developer; is
11 that correct?

12 MR. HEAPES: Correct.

13 MR. VERRENGIA: Did anyone else, other
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14 than the developers pay for this report, for this
15 study?

16 MR. HEAPES: No.

17 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay, thank you. In the
18 report, it indicates that for the traffic estimates
19 that other projects of similar size and use were used
20 as a comparison. Can you tell me what those
21 comparisons were?

22 MR. PLANTE: In any traffic study, you
23 have standard manuals issued by the Institute of
24 Traffic Engineers, it's called the Trip Generation
25 Manual, and just as you saw the presentation on the

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1 parking, there are certain industry standards for
2 different types of uses. Retail has a certain trip
3 generation rate, condominiums, et cetera, they all have
4 standard trip generation rates, and those were utilized
5 to develop the trip generation for the site along with
6 a number of other factors which are taken into
7 consideration.

8 MR. VERRENGIA: Can you tell me
9 specifically, though, what sites were used as
10 comparisons? This says "Estimates of the numbers of
11 trips generated by the various land uses proposed for
12 Blue Back Square were based on empirical data collected
13 at other similar-sized developments."

14 MR. PLANTE: Right. That's a
15 publication used by traffic engineers issued by the

16 governing body, if you will, Institute of Traffic
17 Engineers. They take data from various traffic studies
18 throughout the country, hundreds of different sites,
19 specifically those could be researched into what sites
20 they are, but they are a pool of similar uses, retail
21 uses, et cetera, that are evaluated and a rate that is
22 appropriate is developed off that data set, which could
23 be hundreds of studies.

24 One thing that's important to remember
25 is that's just the base, the base number we get for the

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1 different types of uses. Those are, in this case,
2 being a mixed use, that's combined into one
3 development, and as I mentioned during my presentation,
4 DOT looked at these numbers. We passed them by them,
5 they signed off on those, and as part of that sign-off,
6 they only required us or allowed us to use a 5 percent
7 shared trip.

8 To give you an example, of the new trips
9 that are coming or generated by this site during the
10 p.m. peak hours, the worst-case scenario, that tells us
11 or that parameter only allows us to take credit for, 76
12 trips to the Center will actually do two things. It
13 will actually --

14 MR. VERRENGIA: If I can interrupt you
15 for a minute, there is a time constraint here, and I
16 don't want to go into too much detail because I
17 understood your explanation. So there really is no

18 comparison that we can point to as far as what we can
19 use for these trips?

20 MR. PLANTE: No, that's not correct.

21 This is based on I believe empirical data at the
22 project throughout the country.

23 MR. VERRENGIA: The other thing is the
24 projections that we have listed here go out through the
25 year 2006, and I'm referring to page 4 on the bottom

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1 part of this study. These trips, I understand it, are
2 just the amount of trips that are going to affect Blue
3 Back Square; is that correct?

4 MR. PLANTE: These are new trips
5 generated by the Blue Back Square project, yes.

6 MR. VERRENGIA: For the entire Center or
7 for the square?

8 MR. PLANTE: For what we are proposing
9 in this application, new trips to West Hartford.

10 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay. So, for example,
11 the 2,035 trips for peak hours on Saturday midday,
12 that's for the entire Center?

13 MR. PLANTE: Define "Center." All of
14 the existing Center proposed? No. This is just for
15 the project, the new buildings, the new uses that we
16 are proposing. That's the new -- these are new trips
17 associated with that.

18 MR. VERRENGIA: Right. So do we know
19 the total amount of trips, what we have, I guess,

20 existing compared to what Blue Back Square is going to
21 bring in?

22 MR. PLANTE: We did a study throughout
23 the Town at each one of the intersections where we
24 further studied them, we have counts, actual counts on
25 how many vehicles use those intersections during the

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1 peak periods. We took those existing actual numbers,
2 added our numbers to that.

3 MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you. You have
4 over the next three years, you are saying that there is
5 going to be approximately a 5 percent total growth in
6 existing traffic volumes. Is that 5 percent based off
7 of your numbers or the entire trips? I still don't
8 know what that number is.

9 MR. PLANTE: The 5 percent refers to if
10 this project didn't exist at all, and looking ahead to
11 2006, that's what the Town can anticipate for a growth
12 in traffic without Blue Back Square. It includes Whole
13 Foods. But that was based on, we went back the last
14 three years and got empirical data in the growth of
15 traffic in the Town right now, from three years ago to
16 now, and/or three years ago to when we did our traffic
17 count, and projected that forward in that same growth
18 factor, which is in the parameters that you would
19 expect in The Hartford region.

20 MR. VERRENGIA: Thanks. You said that
21 you had studied, as part of your overall study, you had

22 studied accident reports in these major intersections.
23 Out of that study, was there anything in particular
24 that stuck out as far as any one intersection having a
25 lot of accidents and/or any one intersection that had a

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1 common contributing factor to an accident?

2 MR. PLANTE: Yes. Actually the
3 Farmington, Main Street intersection. That had 112
4 accidents. And of that 112, almost 30 were sideswipes,
5 which was an indication of lack of clarity when people
6 travel through that intersection. That's why the
7 improvement we are suggesting there should not only
8 help operations, but really improve safety in that
9 intersection.

10 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay, great. If we can
11 just go to the first slide. This here is actually the
12 intersection of the Boulevard if you are looking west
13 at Raymond Road. This traffic here is stopped at a
14 light westbound at Raymond Road, it's crossing over.
15 If you can just help and refresh my memory, because
16 it's been a while since I heard your presentation, what
17 are the recommendations with respect to this
18 intersection here?

19 I understand that from this point west
20 of South Main Street you are going to put a line to
21 kind of make that street narrower, almost like a
22 parking-space type thing. Is that correct?

23 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. If this is
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24 the intersection of Raymond and Memorial and we are
25 looking westbound, then --

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1 MR. VERRENGIA: It's Boulevard, this is
2 Boulevard here.

3 MR. PLANTE: This is Boulevard, I'm
4 sorry. And if this is westbound from this intersection
5 over to South Main Street, we will be striping both
6 sides of the road to make it one lane in that
7 direction.

8 MR. VERRENGIA: So if these two -- as
9 these two cars are stopped here, what kind of signage
10 or lanes are going to be designated here at the light?

11 MR. PLANTE: There will be pavement
12 markings to show the lane merging. There will be
13 appropriate signage according to the appropriate
14 regulations and in conjunction with working with the
15 Town staff on the signage they'd like to see.

16 MR. VERRENGIA: I guess my question is:
17 Is this going to be a one lane that's going to continue
18 west and is this going to be a designated left turn?

19 MR. PLANTE: No. You will transition
20 down to one lane. You will be able to take a left and
21 a through from the left lane and a right and a through
22 movement from the right lane.

23 MR. VERRENGIA: So there is going to be
24 two through movements at this intersection, is that
25 correct, into one travel lane?

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1 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. There will
2 be a transition on the far side of the intersection.

3 MR. VERRENGIA: In your experience as a
4 traffic consultant, do you think that's an improvement,
5 to have two vehicles merge into one lane?

6 MR. PLANTE: Yes, if it's done with the
7 appropriate geometric and striping and signage, yes.

8 MR. VERRENGIA: And there is not going
9 to be striping for two lanes here, though, right, not
10 until you get up to the intersection, I believe there
11 is going to be some additional striping?

12 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. It will
13 open up to three lanes at the intersection of South
14 Main.

15 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay. Thank you. If we
16 can just go to the next one. I'm sorry.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Does anybody else have
18 questions on this? Mrs. McClay.

19 MS. McCLAY: I have a question on the
20 Boulevard. I know some of the residents there are
21 concerned because that is a historical district and
22 they are concerned too much striping is going to make
23 it look too urban. And so I'm curious about what you
24 have to say about that, but also shouldn't there be a
25 crosswalk at Raymond Road and the Boulevard there, just

1 like there is up at South Main Street, perhaps a
2 bumpout, how you described the one at South Main
3 Street.

4 MR. PLANTE: There will continue to be a
5 crosswalk as there is today, a striped crosswalk.

6 MS. McCLAY: Would it be better to bump
7 it out there, and then it would almost naturally turn
8 into one lane, as you say, instead of doing just the
9 striping, if you had it come out like for --

10 MR. PLANTE: You'd need the
11 appropriate -- if you have a two-lane approach to this
12 intersection, as you see here, you'd need an
13 appropriate length of transition after that
14 intersection. A bumpout wouldn't allow that transition
15 at that location.

16 MAYOR HARRIS: Any follow-up,
17 Mrs. McClay?

18 MS. McCLAY: No.

19 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Begley.

20 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I
21 have a question with regards to the crosswalk in
22 regards to being a current pedestrian phase. Is there
23 a reason we can't have an actual flashing "don't walk,"
24 and "do walk" signal there? Because when I try to
25 cross those streets with my children, we have a lot of

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1 problems with people turning right on red, turning into
2 the traffic lane, and the same thing is occurring down
3 at the Overbrook crossover, or excuse me, the Park Road
4 and Raymond Road. That also is a very hazardous
5 intersection for crossing.

6 MR. PLANTE: You are saying this
7 location and that location, if a pedestrian signal
8 could be placed there?

9 MR. BEGLEY: That's correct, because
10 currently you just look up at the light, and you see
11 the light red, and then you start to cross, and then
12 the right turn on red are coming right at you. It
13 would be nice if you could gauge that and actually see
14 a flashing light to cross and not cross.

15 MR. PLANTE: Certainly an upgrade such
16 as that is possible, but again, in balancing the
17 improvements and the impact due to this project, this
18 wasn't an area that was identified as going to be
19 impacted. We don't anticipate, based on the traffic
20 configuration and distribution, we don't anticipate
21 from this intersection to South Main Street being
22 traveled by new trips related to this project.

23 MR. BEGLEY: If we are talking about
24 pedestrians walking from Greenhurst, Glenbrook and
25 Overbrook, they are going to cross that intersection,

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1 and we are encouraging people to walk into the Center

2 of Town.

3 MR. PLANTE: Yes. As I said, a
4 pedestrian improvement there could be done. It's not
5 currently in our proposal.

6 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you.

7 MR. VERRENGIA: Just one quick question.
8 If you were to continue south on Raymond Road, you'd be
9 at the intersection of Raymond Road and Park Road. My
10 question is: If there is a tractor trailer, an
11 oversized truck coming off the highway and wanting to
12 take a right onto Raymond Road, it doesn't appear to me
13 that that's a big enough turning radius. If that's
14 correct, are there any recommendations to make any
15 change there and/or is there anything stipulated to
16 restrict oversized vehicles from using Raymond Road?

17 MR. PLANTE: We have, again, as Richard
18 had indicated, certainly every effort would be made to
19 designate truck routes to this side of the Center.
20 Trout Brook and Memorial extension would be the
21 preferred route. If a truck, as it does today, would
22 go down Raymond Road, none of our improvements would
23 obstruct that. They still could make that movement.
24 We are proposing all along Raymond Road at this
25 intersection here and at Park the flush pavers, similar

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1 to what's been installed on Farmington. So those are
2 demountable. If a truck for some reason did go down
3 there, they could traverse that area, if they chose.

4 MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Verrengia, I have a
6 general question, but I don't know what your other
7 slides are, so perhaps you can, if it's more
8 appropriately asked elsewhere, let me know, and we will
9 try to compartmentalize like we are trying to do on all
10 these issues. One of the concerns is if this passes,
11 with the expected increase in volume, the new cars, the
12 2,000 plus trips, which we hope happens because if it
13 happens, we want it to be successful, that this
14 neighborhood is protected, as with all our
15 neighborhoods, and one of the ideas was to try to
16 encourage traffic to actually use the Memorial Road
17 extension as opposed to this intersection.

18 Is there anything about the design of
19 this intersection or perhaps another one of the slides
20 that would try to encourage that type of use on Trout
21 Brook as opposed to through this neighborhood?

22 MR. PLANTE: I think even before traffic
23 gets to this intersection, we've taken a number of
24 steps to discourage the use of Raymond Road, the
25 biggest of which is the improvement we are proposing at

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1 the off-ramps on 43, Exit 43, and those improvements
2 and the additional lanes to bring people from the ramps
3 onto Trout Brook will encourage that usage up to
4 Memorial extension as well as deemphasizing Raymond.
5 We are going to essentially, you know, for lack of a

6 better word, penalize people for using Raymond. We are
7 going to put a signal at Raymond and Memorial, provide
8 less green time at this intersection and at Park for
9 the Raymond Road. That's why on that slide I showed
10 the other night, you saw a plus number. That was
11 related to the movement on Raymond Road to discourage
12 that, and the improvements on South Main, again, to
13 make the arterials more appropriate and easier to use
14 than Raymond Road. Will that stop people from using
15 Raymond Road? No, we are not closing that road, but I
16 think we've done a -- made a significant improvement
17 beyond just our impacts to encourage the arterials.

18 MR. VERRENGIA: Mr. Heapes stated
19 earlier that one beauty part of his project is that he
20 can control a lot of things that the other Center
21 can't, so maybe this is something that we can look more
22 closely at a little bit later. The next one.

23 This is the intersection, again it's not
24 a really good picture, but this is the intersection of
25 Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road. You'd be looking

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1 eastbound.

2 My question is: If you look at the
3 location of the traffic lights, you will see that the
4 crosswalk is here on this side of the intersection, and
5 you can't really tell that good in the video, but if
6 you actually visited the intersection, you'll notice
7 that the light is actually on the other side of the

8 intersection, approximately 75 feet, which it seems to
9 be unusual throughout the Town. I didn't see that
10 before. The problem with this here is that once you
11 pass this cross mark, that light can turn red, so I've
12 seen this situation exist where you have a car or cars
13 that are actually stopped and blocking the intersection
14 for the flow of the green light here.

15 Did you look at, it's kind of swapping
16 these lights so that this far light is on this side,
17 and that would be my question.

18 MR. PLANTE: I would defer to them, to
19 the Town.

20 MR. KRAUS: This is called a far side
21 signal design with a mask arm. It is different for the
22 Town of West Hartford, but the state Department of
23 Transportation has accepted this design in all of its
24 new traffic signal, so the signals that you are going
25 to see installed in the next year on New Britain Avenue

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1 and the following year on Albany Avenue will all have
2 this design of far side signal heads. It is more
3 common throughout the rest of the country and the state
4 DOT has adopted it for all of the state highways. They
5 do not force it on the towns but encourage us to use
6 this, so I know it's unusual, but --

7 MR. VERRENGIA: Again, the concern here
8 is the cars that are stuck in the middle. Just a
9 reminder, when we are looking at this traffic plan, you

10 can't look at it in today's terms. I mean, you've got
11 to think about 2006, additional traffic, regional
12 traffic, so I would imagine that maybe this situation
13 may become a little exacerbated. The next one.

14 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Coursey, did you have
15 a question on the other one?

16 MR. COURSEY: Yes. While we are diving
17 into traffic lights, at the intersection of Memorial
18 and Isham, is that going to be a light? And its
19 Memorial and Isham; right?

20 MR. HEAPES: No, Memorial and Isham is a
21 four-way stop -- two-way stop, I'm sorry.

22 MR. COURSEY: Two-way stop, okay. Thank
23 you.

24 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay. This here is the
25 intersection of North Main Street. Right here, this is

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1 a straight lane and a right-turn lane and the lane next
2 to it is a straight line. The intersection of North
3 Main Street and Farmington Avenue.

4 Again, we have two lanes of traffic
5 going southbound. Can you just -- is that the way the
6 lane is going to be with the recommended change or is
7 it going to have a --

8 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. It will
9 stay as it is today.

10 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay. So again, we have
11 a situation where we have two lanes going straight

12 into, for all intents and purposes, one lane of
13 traffic. This isn't one lane. Unless it's painted
14 otherwise, we assume that this is one lane. That's a
15 very dangerous corner here for a number of reasons:
16 One, if a car backs out and another car coming south
17 has got to stop for that vehicle, traffic gets stuck
18 here. Number two is if you are in this left lane and
19 you are going straight around this corner and this car
20 here is going right next to you, and you take a left
21 into that parking space, the vehicle on the right is
22 actually in violation of the motor vehicle laws for
23 illegal passing. There is only three times in the
24 state of Connecticut that you can pass on the right,
25 and this isn't one of them. So it creates a very

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1 dangerous situation here.

2 My question is: Have we looked at
3 somehow expanding -- I mean, I'm looking at this green
4 here -- making this situation wider? Did you look at
5 that?

6 MR. PLANTE: It was looked at, but I
7 would defer to Town staff on that.

8 MR. VAN WINKLE: The Goodman Green is
9 owned by the First Church. It is a historic green that
10 we've historically in the eighties talked about moving
11 the green over to the church so that we could get a
12 better connection between those two. We looked at
13 several options, moving it over toward the stores. The

14 sense of the church is they do not want their green
15 moved or changed, and so it is the church property and
16 we have never been successful. And I think perhaps the
17 sense of the community, we heard at that time, too, is
18 that Goodman Green needs to stay where it is, and we
19 will suffer the problems it generates. So we have
20 looked at it, but never been able to change the green
21 for the purpose of traffic.

22 MR. VERRENGIA: I totally understand the
23 historical value of this premium parking here and the
24 angle parking, but again, in 2004, this is broken down.
25 In 2006, it's only going to be exacerbated, plus with

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1 the additional 5 percent increase. We will take
2 another look at this on the other side.

3 The other question I have is, over here
4 there is a light, that would be the light at Farmington
5 Avenue and South Main Street for the traffic that's
6 going eastbound. I believe there is two lanes there,
7 two eastbound lanes. Is that correct?

8 MR. PLANTE: Actually one of the issues
9 is it's just a wide open swath of pavement, so that's
10 one of the critical issues we identified when we looked
11 at it. There really isn't any defined lanes, and
12 that's part of our proposal, is to stripe the interior
13 of that intersection, to clearly define left-turn lanes
14 going northbound and southbound and lanes that are
15 going through, so our proposal, we feel, will really

16 address some of the safety issues and the concerns
17 about passing through that intersection.

18 MR. VERRENGIA: But I'm talking about
19 eastbound.

20 MR. PLANTE: Yes.

21 MR. VERRENGIA: This would be the
22 eastbound. You said north and south. Did you mean to
23 say east?

24 MR. PLANTE: No, the left-turn lane to
25 go north or south.

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1 MR. VERRENGIA: Those aren't going to be
2 additional lanes, those are going to be painted lanes;
3 is that correct?

4 MR. PLANTE: That's correct.

5 MR. VERRENGIA: From the time someone
6 gets at the light over here going eastbound and wanting
7 to take a left-hand turn, there is probably a space
8 here for about five or six cars, and with the timing of
9 the lights, what happens is this vehicle here that
10 wants to take a left has the green light, but again
11 there is that traffic jamb here creating a very
12 dangerous situation. I'm not sure by just putting
13 paint down and making that left turn that that's going
14 to correct that problem.

15 MR. PLANTE: I think we also adjusted
16 the signal timing for this intersection to provide more
17 green time in the east-west movement to help those

18 vehicles, not only are we going to guide them where
19 they should go, but allow us for clearance through that
20 intersection a little bit better than it is today.
21 Again, that's a geometric problem because it's a very
22 large, wide intersection, a lot of distance between
23 stop bars and that's directly the result of the green.

24 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay. Just hold a
25 thought here. Picture a family, some kids walking

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1 eastbound here and wanting to cross over, and we are
2 going to take another look at that, but just picture
3 that scenario here for a minute, if you will. Does
4 anybody else have another question?

5 MR. COURSEY: Yes. Through you,
6 Mr. Mayor.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Coursey.

8 MR. COURSEY: Actually I did want to
9 talk about that crosswalk. Currently today the
10 north -- the crosswalk on North Main, north of
11 Farmington Avenue, you have -- there is actually two
12 different crosswalk lights. You can go to the island
13 and stop on the island for safe haven and then continue
14 to cross. It looks like on the diagram here, that's
15 just going to be one long crosswalk.

16 MR. PLANTE: We are not going to be
17 changing the pedestrian signals at that location, no.
18 There is a small area, if I'm not mistaken, between the
19 islands that that is just pavement, and you can kind of

20 stop in there as a reserve area if you need to if you
21 can't make it across.

22 MR. COURSEY: So it's going to remain
23 the way it is today?

24 MR. PLANTE: That's correct.

25 MR. COURSEY: Thank you.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Verrengia.

2 MR. VERRENGIA: This is actually the
3 other side of that green. This is the southern part,
4 and when we talk about changes and negotiating any
5 change, if you look, this is really ideal, if you look
6 at the south part and you look at the space here that
7 people have going northbound, so when we talk about
8 change, and again I understand the historical value of
9 this Goodman Green, but really we are talking a minor
10 change to create something like this that would give us
11 this opening. And as I said earlier, this car -- this
12 was by accident, this wasn't intended. It's a really
13 perfect example of a car backing out and blocking that
14 entire intersection and backing up traffic, again, in
15 2004, only worse in 2006.

16 Did you look at that at all?

17 MR. PLANTE: The angle parking
18 relationship?

19 MR. VERRENGIA: No, the relationship to
20 the size of the width of this size of the green
21 compared to the other side. I'm just wondering if you

22 looked at it at all.

23 MR. PLANTE: I'm not clear on your
24 question, I'm sorry. The north side of the green, was
25 that wide, would that be better?

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1 MR. VERRENGIA: Right.

2 MR. PLANTE: I think, I guess from a
3 pure traffic point of view at that intersection, the
4 answer would be yes.

5 MR. VERRENGIA: So we are really not
6 talking about major change to Goodman Green to make
7 that improvement that really take us into 2006.

8 Does anybody else have another question?

9 MR. VAN WINKLE: Mr. Mayor, I've been
10 doing this for awhile and a change to Goodman Green
11 would, first of all, it's not the Town's property, nor
12 is it the developer's property, so they would have to
13 purchase it from somebody, or the Town would have to
14 condemn it and take it. Changing Goodman Green is no
15 small thing in my history with West Hartford. The
16 church protects that property like it was their front
17 lawn, because it is. And although it is perhaps
18 possible over a period of years to have that
19 discussion, I doubt whether we would expect the church
20 to change their position very quickly.

21 MR. VERRENGIA: Right. And I can
22 respect that from the church and again the historical
23 value.

24 This is a vehicle that's northbound on
25 South Main, taking a left turn. If you are stopped at

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1 this light, you are going to see what your sight line
2 is for that family or whoever might be walking along
3 eastbound on Farmington Avenue crossing over South Main
4 Street, and I would imagine we are going to see
5 increased pedestrian traffic here because of the
6 location of the South Garage, so again, when we talk
7 about pedestrian traffic, we are going to be talking
8 about additional traffic, and I'll show you what that
9 person's sight line looks like.

10 MR. VAN WINKLE: Mr. Mayor, just to
11 comment, that intersection is a protected pedestrian
12 intersection. When you push the button, all the cars
13 stop, you walk, so no one should be making that turn or
14 the right turn because there is no turn on right there,
15 so that one leg there ought to be as safe as we can
16 make it for pedestrians, given the fact that they are
17 crossing a Main Street.

18 MR. VERRENGIA: Right, thanks.

19 And I'll throw a disclaimer on here,
20 this is somewhat digitalized and enhanced because of
21 shadows, for all intents and purposes, that is still
22 the sight line. I understand that there is a crosswalk
23 and there is control there, but at times people, for
24 whatever reason, choose to ignore them, and what this
25 creates is a dangerous situation for someone who has

1 got the green light taking a left turn. He doesn't
2 have a sight line seeing maybe any individual or child
3 who might dart out onto the street or create that type
4 of situation.

5 So I guess my question is, while again
6 this is the Goodman Green, so I probably know what the
7 answer is, although there is a Town ordinance that
8 covers obstructions to intersections, has this been
9 looked at at all?

10 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, if I could,
11 there is a long-range plan, Mr. Mayor and
12 Mr. Verrengia, to fill and actually improve that
13 greenery that you are looking at.

14 MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you. If we can go
15 to the next slide. Does anybody have any questions?
16 One of the other obstructions. This is again the
17 eastbound lane from Farmington Avenue crossing over to
18 South Main, there is a location of this bus. It's a
19 Connecticut transit bus stop. At peak hours, as the
20 situation exists now, when this bus is either stopped,
21 taking a break or picking up its passengers, because of
22 the proximity to that intersection, it blocks traffic.

23 Has anyone -- have you looked at that
24 bus stop at all?

25 MR. PLANTE: We are aware of the bus

1 stop locations. I defer to the Town on where the
2 locations and how they were derived by the Town and the
3 authority.

4 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, the Town
5 Engineer. These bus stops have been here for just an
6 extremely long time. They are very heavily used.
7 There is no space in the right of way to take a bus
8 further off the road. This is not a layover place.
9 They are not supposed to stay here for 15 minutes.
10 This is just a stop and a pickup area. Even the bus
11 shelter had to have a separate easement negotiated with
12 the church in order to put the shelter behind the
13 sidewalk. That's how close the right of way is here to
14 the pavement.

15 MR. VERRENGIA: Okay. Was there any
16 thought of moving that bus stop further away from that
17 intersection?

18 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus again, no, the
19 bus shelters and the stops that we have here, this is a
20 transfer area between bus lines, meaning that a person
21 that gets off this has to walk across to the People's
22 Bank in order to make a transfer, and we have had
23 complaints in the past when stops have moved away from
24 intersections and away from places that you are
25 encouraging people to use and to move across the

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1 intersection.

2 MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you. Anyone else?

3 This is actually a photo from the Town
4 parking spaces behind Friendly's. This is the exit
5 onto Farmington Avenue. So if you were exiting the
6 Town lot onto Farmington Avenue, this is what it looks
7 like from that angle, and this is your sight line.

8 MAYOR HARRIS: South Main I think.

9 MR. VERRENGIA: I'm sorry, what did I
10 say?

11 MAYOR HARRIS: I think you said
12 Farmington.

13 MR. VERRENGIA: I'm sorry, South Main
14 Street, this is the Town lot entrance onto South Main
15 Street. If we can go to the next video. If you look
16 across the street from that angle, it look like a
17 pretty innocent exit there. If we can go to the next
18 video or picture.

19 This is where the problem comes in, and
20 I'm not sure, I might have missed it, are there any
21 recommendations to alleviate this dangerous situation
22 here? This vehicle here's sight line is 100 percent
23 obstructed by this building. I'd like to think this is
24 a family of four here and this wife was very brave by
25 having her husband go first, but this is a very

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1 dangerous pedestrian situation, and the further
2 question, because I would imagine this pedestrian

3 traffic is only going to be exacerbated by the location
4 of the new crosswalk further south here, are there any
5 recommendations or changes that are going to be made to
6 that?

7 MR. PLANTE: Existing condition, I defer
8 to the Town.

9 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, Town Engineer.
10 We have looked at this, and as yet we have not
11 implemented them, but there were a couple of
12 recommendations here. One is to put planters against
13 the building to make the pedestrian move out closer to
14 the road and give the vehicle a better sight distance,
15 but even the way it operates, you can see the stop bar
16 is well behind the building. There is a stop sign
17 there that if that motorist obviously sees what he is
18 approaching, if he obeys the traffic laws, the
19 pedestrian can cross safely. It is an area that you
20 have to be careful of, and we would like to try to get
21 some additional sight distance there, but because of
22 the location of the buildings, it is an area that you
23 need to be careful with.

24 What part of the application here,
25 however, does, as you can see now, vehicles coming out

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1 of the driveway come into a part of the green and are
2 difficult to negotiate. This proposal extends the
3 green all the way to Memorial Road, and therefore, it
4 gives the opportunity to create a better access from

5 that driveway and into the Town Center property as
6 well.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Begley.

8 MR. BEGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.
9 Mr. Kraus, have you ever looked at doing a speed bump
10 before the car actually came out?

11 MR. KRAUS: Speed bumps -- the vehicle
12 has already stopped about 75 or 100 feet before this
13 location in order to pay at the booth, so in that
14 relatively short distance, I don't think that speeding
15 is really a problem. The speed bump -- we were very
16 cautious in using them, to be honest. They tend to
17 allow people to go up and down. You tend to -- people
18 will tend to walk over them and slip and fall on them.
19 They become a plowing problem for people plowing.
20 There would have to be some -- I mean, it is a speed
21 bump, it's intended to slow people down. I don't think
22 this is really a speeding problem. It's more of an
23 inattention problem. The times I've walked by here,
24 it's inattention of drivers coming out of there,
25 speaking on the cell phone, adjusting their radio,

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1 putting their seat belt on, those kinds of activities
2 that cause the problem rather than the speeding
3 problem.

4 MR. BEGLEY: Through you, Mr. Mayor, the
5 concern isn't so much again speeding, but just as you
6 had said, if you did something to slow a car down about

7 15 feet or 10 feet before the intersection, before they
8 actually came out, that would give them, you know,
9 attentiveness in regards to knowing something is coming
10 up.

11 MR. KRAUS: We can certainly look at
12 that, yes.

13 MR. VERRENGIA: I would disagree in the
14 sense that we have 100 percent obstruction from that
15 person who is stopped at that stop bar. If you stopped
16 at that bar and you look to the left, there is a nice
17 window there with an oriental rug, and it's 100 percent
18 obstructed. In order to come out, you have to inch
19 your way out which creates a very dangerous situation.
20 But I would feel more comfortable with this traffic
21 plan if somehow we were able to get these people away
22 from the building and further away from that driveway.

23 MAYOR HARRIS: Yes, Mr. Verrengia,
24 that's actually my question. You'll see on the Kaoud
25 side there is a planter there, there is nothing on the

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1 side of the piano store. Is there a way that through
2 maybe some kind of fencing or something else that you
3 could actually put a barrier on a portion of the
4 sidewalk, thereby narrowing the pedestrian right of way
5 on that area so that people won't be crossing as close
6 to the building in that blind spot.

7 MR. PLANTE: I think that's what the
8 Town staff has indicated they've been evaluating, some

9 kind of mechanism like that, to push the pedestrian
10 further away from the building.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: The other question, I
12 think there is a mirror on the other side of the
13 building there so you can see, I don't know if people
14 look at that, I know Kevin looks at it. That's because
15 you are at the level in that huge thing that you drive
16 there. Is there statistically, are those effective in
17 making places like this safer?

18 MR. HEAPES: I don't have experience
19 with them, other than at parking garages.

20 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Kraus, do you know
21 anything about that?

22 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, Town Engineer,
23 that mirror has been there ever since I can remember.
24 But do I feel they are effective? No, I don't think
25 most people even notice it. But the few people that

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1 did, they could utilize it. It has been there awhile,
2 and I would suspect maybe some of the frequent users of
3 the facility tend to try to use it. I'm reluctant to
4 remove it, but I don't think with the casual user here
5 it would be very effective.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: But you don't know just
7 as a general matter statistically whether those types
8 of mirrors, in general, make things safer or not?

9 MR. KRAUS: I don't think they do, no.

10 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you.

11 MR. VERRENGIA: There is no question in
12 my mind, both from the developer and the Town
13 standpoint that safety, pedestrian safety is without
14 question all our number 1 concern here, and I don't
15 doubt that for a minute.

16 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Davidoff, then
17 Mr. Doolittle.

18 MR. DAVIDOFF: So far on this slide
19 here, we discussed things that a driver can do. Are
20 there site improvements we can make so that pedestrians
21 are aware that there is an active driveway here,
22 whether it be through signage or change of pavement or
23 narrowing of pavement?

24 I don't know who would best be able to
25 answer it, whether or not it would be the developer,

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1 expert or the Town staff.

2 MR. KRAUS: We can look at that as an
3 option to make the driveway more visible to the
4 pedestrian. It is a brick walkway that goes through
5 the driveway, but the front of the driveway is
6 concrete, so there is a different texture, not all that
7 noticeable though, and probably there is more that
8 could be done to make it more noticeable that it is a
9 driveway to the pedestrian.

10 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Kraus.

11 MR. VERRENGIA: We can skip that one. I
12 believe this is my final slide, but this here is

13 actually the intersection of Isham and Raymond Road,
14 and my question is, and I should say that in this lot
15 here would be the Whole Foods lot; is that correct, in
16 that general area there?

17 I haven't seen Whole Foods, but could
18 someone, through you, Mr. Feldman, tell me
19 approximately how many parking spots Whole Foods is
20 going to have?

21 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Van Winkle.

22 MR. VAN WINKLE: It's about 230, 240,
23 it's a very large parking lot.

24 MR. VERRENGIA: Could you help me with
25 this? Are there any recommendations or changes to the

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1 width of the road from Isham or actually over to
2 Farmington Avenue and Raymond all the way up to
3 Memorial? Is there any plans to make that wider?

4 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus again, the Town
5 Town Engineer, and no, the curb lines will remain the
6 same. The parking that is now on the east side will be
7 transferred to the west side as part of the Blue Back
8 Square proposal.

9 MR. HEAPES: I think it's important
10 though that on our side of the road, for lack of better
11 words, we have -- the lane is bisecting the middle of
12 the road. We will have parking along this side and
13 bumpouts here similar to the rest of the Blue Back
14 Square area, up here around New Street. There are

15 bumpouts that allow for that safety zone of
16 over-the-curb cars and that kind of shortening of that
17 distance across there.

18 MR. VERRENGIA: Right. So there is not
19 going to be a designated left turn into the Whole Foods
20 lot; is that correct?

21 MR. HEAPES: That's correct.

22 MR. VERRENGIA: Would you say in your
23 expertise that this situation will not exacerbate the
24 traffic flow on Raymond Road north or south? Because
25 it would seem to me that if someone is taking a left,

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1 it's 230 cars, not all together, but throughout the day
2 taking a left, that is going to negatively affect the
3 flow of Raymond Road the way we know it today.

4 In addition to that, keep in mind over
5 here at Isham, there is going to be additional traffic
6 because I believe that's where the entrance to one of
7 the garages is.

8 MR. PLANTE: The proposed Whole Foods
9 driveway will line up with Isham, as you see right
10 there. Their driveway will line up here, so it will
11 create a four-way intersection. We did analyze that
12 and even with their traffic, our projected traffic,
13 that intersection will operate appropriately.

14 As you noticed on the diagram, the
15 entrances into the garage are pulled back away from
16 Raymond. They are as far along the Isham face of the

17 garage as possible, so we are very comfortable with the
18 interaction of the garage activity in that
19 intersection. And also, again, the balancing that we
20 try to do is not to necessarily progress more traffic
21 on Raymond faster or more efficiently, it was to create
22 a traffic-calming type design that will still process
23 the traffic, but it will also have different feel than
24 you see out there today. Today you just have a
25 straight strip with those bumpouts, the on-street

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1 parking, and the signal at this location we believe
2 will not only handle the traffic, but also slow the
3 traffic down and create that pedestrian environment
4 that the project is searching for.

5 MR. VERRENGIA: And my last question,
6 that's the last slide, if anyone has a question about
7 that slide.

8 MR. DANIELS: I'm not sure if this is
9 going to pass, but since you raised the question of
10 Whole Foods, my question is: Do the traffic analysis
11 and the counts include the traffic from Whole Foods?

12 MR. PLANTE: Yes, we did.

13 MR. DANIELS: So the 240 cars and
14 whatever that hourly activity is --

15 MR. PLANTE: We looked at their traffic
16 study and incorporated their numbers into our study as
17 essentially the baseline condition before we even show
18 up.

19 MR. VERRENGIA: Just my last question to
20 Mr. Feldman. In this report, it indicates that after
21 one year, one year after the completion of this
22 project, there is going to be a study done to see what
23 the impact has been. And my question is: Are there
24 any reserves, bonds, escrow being put aside by the
25 developer in the event that the recommendations and the

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1 response to these recommendations do not pan out?

2 MR. VAN WINKLE: Your point is well
3 taken. I think actually the study is the
4 recommendation of the Town Engineer, not the developer.
5 I believe the Town Engineer suggested that we do a
6 study a year after. We did this with Home Depot and we
7 did escrow money with the Home Depot study that the
8 developer would agree to implement the changes that
9 were deemed necessary after that one year of operation.
10 So we've done that in the past and the Town Engineer
11 did recommend in his memo, too, that we set aside money
12 for that study.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Van
14 Winkle.

15 MR. VERRENGIA: And that's in the Master
16 Agreement, that funds. Is there a determined amount of
17 funds or is it open checkbook? I didn't see it in the
18 Master Agreement.

19 MR. VAN WINKLE: Ron Van Winkle again.
20 In the case of Home Depot, we had them set aside,

21 agreed to do a study one year after they opened, and I
22 believe we set aside -- they set aside, the developer
23 set aside 100,000 dollars to make changes to the road
24 systems that were deemed appropriate after that study
25 was complete.

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1 In the case of Home Depot, there were no
2 necessary changes. The system worked, and it works
3 today quite well. So we had the developer set aside
4 the money and agreed to do that study, and then a year
5 after opening, implement those changes that were deemed
6 appropriate.

7 MR. VERRENGIA: Right and my question
8 stemmed from that development. But my question is:
9 With respect to Blue Back Square, is there a determined
10 amount of money put aside in reserve, bonds, whatever?
11 Is that part of any agreement, other than the fact that
12 we are going to look at these recommendations a year
13 after the project is completed?

14 MR. VAN WINKLE: Ron Van Winkle again.
15 There is nothing in the Master Agreement that calls for
16 that. That would be a condition that I would assume
17 you would put on the, if you decide to approve this,
18 you would put that condition on the project that that
19 happened. It's not in the Master Agreement.

20 MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you. And I really
21 want to thank my colleagues for cooperating and helping
22 me through this. Thank you.

23 MR. HEAPES: If I can have one comment,
24 it's important to recognize that Whole Foods isn't
25 doing any traffic improvements as part of their

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1 application. As an as-of-right use, frankly we are
2 taking care of their traffic. We are taking care of
3 the improvements caused by their traffic. So while I
4 think it's appropriate for them to be considered in the
5 implications they have on the traffic system, in
6 essence we are paying up-front. We are fixing the
7 improvements up-front rather than living with
8 unmitigated traffic causes.

9 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Heapes.
10 Dr. Thornberry.

11 MS. THORNBERRY: When I was looking at
12 the design, at one point it was unclear as to whether
13 there is another mode of ingress and egress for Whole
14 Foods. Mr. Verrengia referred to the 230 cars there at
15 Raymond Road and Isham, but there has to be -- it
16 appeared to me that there was something on Farmington
17 Avenue.

18 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, Town Engineer.
19 Yes, the Whole Foods has actually three entrances and
20 exits. One from Memorial Road extension, one from
21 Raymond Road, and one from Farmington Avenue. The
22 Farmington Avenue entrance and exit is limited to a
23 right turn, a right out only, and Mr. Heapes is also
24 correct that as a matter of the site plan approval

25 process, the off-site improvements that may have been

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1 required from Whole Foods are not able to be required
2 of them, and they chose not to make the improvements
3 that we asked them to do on Farmington Avenue. Again,
4 creating left-turn lanes from Raymond Road to Trout
5 Brook Drive on Farmington Avenue, it would facilitate
6 the turning movements, the left-turning movement onto
7 Raymond Road or going north onto Trout Brook Drive.

8 As part of the Blue Back Square
9 application, they are making that improvement, and so
10 that is one of the things Mr. Heapes was referring to
11 that this is a traffic improvement that will benefit
12 both of these developments.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Slifka.

14 MR. SLIFKA: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I
15 have two unrelated traffic questions. The first is I
16 believe the traffic study, and I'm not sure which of
17 the documents we have had this in it. I regret that I
18 don't have it in front of me, but it says that there is
19 a proposal to decrease the all red timing for the
20 east-west traffic at the intersection of Farmington and
21 South Main, I guess it's South Main and North Main,
22 from six seconds to two seconds, and I don't know if
23 I'm directing this to Mr. Kraus or to Mr. Heapes, and
24 the point of the all red time is to allow the left
25 turns from Farmington Avenue to complete clearing the

1 intersection, but I had it suggested from a neighbor in
2 particular that this would be an awfully dangerous
3 reduction in time. Can you address that? I'm assuming
4 you know the intersection I'm talking about.

5 MR. PLANTE: I think with the other
6 improvements that we are proposing at that
7 intersection, with the restriping internally providing
8 more green time to cross through the intersection, that
9 was an appropriate adjustment to the timing based on
10 the analysis and observing how it operates. So with
11 those -- it's kind of in conjunction with the other
12 improvements that we are proposing.

13 MR. SLIFKA: What specific improvements?

14 MR. PLANTE: The restriping internally,
15 providing left-turn lanes internal to the intersection
16 and the through lanes, making it clear, that will aid
17 in reducing the confusion in that intersection that
18 exists today and then providing more green time for
19 that east-west movement for those vehicles going into
20 those directions to pass through the intersection.

21 MR. SLIFKA: And there may be some
22 follow-up depending on how my neighbor feels about the
23 answer.

24 MR. PLANTE: A traffic engineer?

25 MR. SLIFKA: No, not a traffic engineer.

1 The other point I want to discuss, I'm referring to,
2 actually I don't even know what the title is, but the
3 book that we got from you on the first night which has
4 great Town place on the front cover. There is not a
5 page number, otherwise I'd refer to that, there is a
6 chart that says average change in delay weekday p.m.
7 peak. Are you guys caught up?

8 MR. PLANTE: We have that chart, we can
9 place that up there.

10 MR. SLIFKA: On here are a number of, I
11 think you addressed every single intersection that you
12 are proposing to change in some form here, and then the
13 time of it. Wow, that's impressive.

14 MR. PLANTE: We aim to please.

15 MR. SLIFKA: This is the right one.
16 I'll stop describing it now since we have it on the
17 screen. In the corner where you have the smaller
18 section, Route 44, north Main Street, this seems to be
19 the only spot in the entire panorama here where I see
20 only increases. There are increases throughout this
21 chart that are offset by much larger decreases, and
22 that's I think how you said we have an infrastructure
23 in place, with a little tweaking can handle the
24 increased traffic flow. But it looks like our friends
25 up in the northern section of Town may not be as happy,

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1 based on this.

2 Can you address this? I'm sorry to
3 interrupt, and I'm also -- that intersection seems to
4 be a bit of a distance away from this project, and
5 whether that traffic is -- these increases are a result
6 of the proposal of Blue Back Square or if this is just
7 sort of how it is.

8 MR. PLANTE: To answer that question,
9 yes. What you see out here in this slide is the result
10 of Blue Back Square and the mitigation that we are
11 proposing, so the negative is a result of the
12 mitigation. At Route 44 and North Main Street, I think
13 we are all familiar with that area, there is very
14 limited ability to do anything up there. No mitigation
15 was proposed, but not because necessarily there was no
16 room, but really we are talking at the worst-case
17 scenario ten seconds, an additional ten seconds average
18 delay at that intersection, really a negligible
19 increase, not one that's noticeable. I think it stands
20 out on here because everywhere else is so improved, but
21 it's a minimal delay. It certainly doesn't change the
22 perceived operations to the motorists at that location,
23 and that when we worked with the Town in developing a
24 criteria from where we would go for mitigation, at what
25 level would we investigate mitigation at a minimum

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1 level, that fell within that criteria. That's the only
2 ten-second one out there.

3 If I could show you a slide, if we could
4 go to this same period without our mitigation, that's
5 what you have up there right now. As you can see, the
6 plus numbers are significantly more. That is the
7 result of our project if we do nothing. Add the
8 project and do nothing.

9 As you can see, there is impact. The
10 other night, if I didn't come across with telling you
11 that, there is impact with that project, but the
12 mitigation we are proposing creates that slide you just
13 saw.

14 So you can see from this, there is a
15 direct impact in the roadway network, not that the
16 yellow is bad, but that just indicates there is an
17 increase in delay. Some locations we want the yellow,
18 it's safer. But as you can see in Route 44 and North
19 Main, those numbers essentially stay the same.

20 MR. SLIFKA: Mr. Kraus, can we get your
21 take on this?

22 MR. KRAUS: On the North Main Street or
23 on the Mountain Road, Albany Avenue intersection?

24 MR. SLIFKA: I'm talking about that
25 whole square, the 10, the 8 and the 5. Because the 10

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1 is the worst of them, but it also look like, I'm adding
2 it up, it looks like you have, if my math is correct, a
3 23 second increase if you are making the trip along
4 Albany.

5 MR. KRAUS: That's right. And that
6 intersection and Albany Avenue are really controlled by
7 the state -- it's a state highway, and they are in the
8 process of going to the State Traffic Commission.

9 MR. SLIFKA: Who is "they?"

10 MR. KRAUS: The developers of Blue Back
11 Square is in the process of going to the State Traffic
12 Commission, and the State Traffic Commission has
13 guidelines on the amount of delay that they will
14 require improvements of the developer of a project like
15 this.

16 My impression is that these are going to
17 be close to that threshold with the state, but it's one
18 that, because there is so limited opportunity from the
19 Town side to make proposals or mitigation efforts, that
20 we didn't really pursue that a great deal.

21 The Town does have an accident reduction
22 program at Mountain Road and Albany Avenue that we have
23 attempted to get through the state, still
24 unsuccessfully however, which would alleviate that
25 condition somewhat, and as this project goes through

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1 the state and the State Traffic Commission, I'm sure we
2 can discuss that issue as well.

3 MR. SLIFKA: At least as far as what we
4 would do on Albany Avenue, that is mandated by the
5 state. In other words, we can't mitigate it on our
6 own?

7 MR. KRAUS: That's correct.

8 MR. SLIFKA: Thank you.

9 MR. PLANTE: Can I just add one bit of
10 clarity? You said there looked to be a 23 second delay
11 on Albany. Those numbers are average for all the
12 approaches, not just, you know, Albany Avenue, so
13 that's an average for the whole intersection, so all
14 four approaches, so it's not relative to one direction
15 or the other.

16 MR. SLIFKA: Thank you.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Mrs. Carpenter.

18 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you. My question
19 is the success of this program is based upon traffic,
20 so traffic is a good thing here because we want to get
21 people to come here, but we still want to create a very
22 traditional feel in the Town of West Hartford, and the
23 traffic is pretty much the same in the Town in which I
24 grew up. What I'm dealing with right here is, we have
25 information from the developer which is, you know,

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1 certainly very empirical. We have information from
2 Mr. Kraus which is very anecdotal, and this evening we
3 heard Mr. Verrengia, who gave information from us that
4 was really based on experiential.

5 My question is: How are the three --
6 now that we have all this information, I don't know how
7 we are going to resolve some of the traffic issues in
8 this proposal. How are we going to get the three

9 pieces to join and to meet in order so that we can
10 resolve some of these traffic issues before the
11 proposal goes through? Or is there going to be any
12 change in the recommendations? How are we going to
13 start to see some of the answers to some of these
14 issues that have been brought up?

15 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, Town Engineer
16 again. We have worked with the developer. We have
17 used our experience and our observations over a long
18 period of time. There are but a few outstanding issues
19 that we still have with the developer on improvements
20 to the transportation system, but the vast majority of
21 this proposal mitigates the impact or the increased
22 traffic that you hope to see goes to the Center and
23 Blue Back Square.

24 MS. CARPENTER: So some of these issues,
25 excuse me, will really not be resolved at the time in

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1 which we accept the proposal or not accept the
2 proposal? They won't be that specific? Some of the
3 changes.

4 MR. KRAUS: Some of the issues may be
5 resolved by conditions of approval from the Council for
6 the development, and we will be happy to make those
7 recommendations to you, and you can either adopt those
8 or not.

9 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you. My other
10 question is just in terms of financing and the

11 contribution is, right now what is the contribution
12 between the Town and the developer in terms of making
13 these changes? Has there been any amount given in
14 terms of changes or commitments between the Town and
15 the developer in terms of cost for these changes?

16 MR. HEAPES: With all due respect to my
17 friends on the other side of the room, the Town is not
18 making any contributions. What is proposed here is
19 entirely being contributed by the development project.

20 MS. CARPENTER: So the developer is
21 paying the cost for the traffic changes that are being
22 made?

23 MR. HEAPES: 100 percent.

24 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you very much.
25 And I guess my last one has to do with I-84, and we

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1 talked a little bit about how far along are the
2 negotiations, although they can be -- take a great deal
3 of time. Do you expect that some of these changes will
4 be done when the Blue Back Square proposal is
5 completed?

6 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus again. By the
7 time Blue Back Square is open for business, all of the
8 changes should have occurred. Some of these we may
9 want to discuss being done earlier in the program, but
10 some of them are of no benefit really until Blue Back
11 Square is open. The additional turn lanes on Main
12 Street at Memorial Road really won't serve any purpose

13 until Memorial Road is open and the parking garages are
14 functioning. On the other hand, the traffic signal at
15 Raymond and Memorial may be valuable to have toward the
16 end if the Healthtrax is open and some access is
17 available there. So it's one that we will have to feel
18 our way.

19 This is going to be a very dynamic
20 situation to work through during construction. Whole
21 Foods may be under construction at the same time, and
22 that's another condition that we will have to consider
23 during the construction of this.

24 MS. CARPENTER: Okay. Thank you.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you. We have

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1 Mr. Spada and Mr. Connors, Mr. Davidoff and
2 Mr. Coursey, then Dr. DeVaughn. So Mr. Spada, you are
3 up.

4 MR. SPADA: Oh, boy, that's a long list.
5 Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I first would like to thank
6 Mr. Verrengia for a tremendous presentation, a
7 Spielberg S presentation. I didn't think I was going
8 to have this question on the financial piece, but the
9 two buckets that we keep referring to, the 110 million
10 and the 48 million, I was under the impression that all
11 the street improvements was in that second bucket, that
12 48 million dollar bonded bucket.

13 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, street
14 improvements are different than traffic improvements.

15 I want to be clear. Are you thinking streets in the
16 sense of new pavement, new sewers, new lights, that's
17 in that public improvement. Traffic improvements being
18 different are, as Mr. Heapes suggests, at the expense
19 of the investors.

20 MR. SPADA: Thanks for the
21 clarification. The second question is: Are we
22 proposing or is the proposal recommending any changes
23 on any of the state roads? And I know there is some
24 talk of the widening of 84.

25 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. We are

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1 proposing --

2 MR. SPADA: Do you work in consultation
3 with the state in terms of getting their blessing?

4 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. The state
5 has given us an indication that this project will
6 require a certificate of operation, which means the
7 State Traffic Commission, the STC, will review this
8 project and impose conditions on it. Subsequent to
9 that, or as parts of our proposal, as you've seen, is
10 work on the state highway, which is the off-ramps.
11 We've had initial discussions with them. We've told
12 them what we are proposing. We've worked through a lot
13 of issues with the trip generation with the state and
14 their staff, so we will get a certificate of operation,
15 which allows us to then take a next step.

16 Whenever you are working on state roads,

17 you need to apply for what is called an encroachment
18 permit, which allows you to physically do that work, so
19 they will review any drawings, any plans, any
20 construction methodologies on their state roads, so
21 they will have a thorough review in addition to Town
22 staff on the ramifications of the improvements.

23 MR. SPADA: And that state piece, the 84
24 piece is part of that 13 million?

25 MR. VAN WINKLE: No.

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1 MR. SPADA: That's not?

2 MR. FELDMAN: That's theirs to deal with
3 as far as financing it.

4 MR. SPADA: I guess just the last
5 question on that point, and maybe the left side, left
6 to us, would have some experience. Is it typical that
7 when private developers work in consultation and make
8 changes to state roads that they incur the cost?

9 MR. FELDMAN: Yes.

10 MR. SPADA: That's standard, okay.

11 Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

12 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Spada, there was
13 nodding of heads. Let the record reflect that the
14 answer to your question was yes. Mr. Connors.

15 MR. CONNORS: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

16 Just this is kind of just like a global look at this
17 thing. Obviously traffic is one of my biggest
18 concerns, probably the biggest concern of the folks

19 around the table, and it's one of the biggest concerns
20 of people out in the public. It's what I hear over and
21 over again, traffic, traffic. Just looking at what
22 you've told us you are going to do, I'm having a hard
23 time getting my arms around how traffic can be better.
24 Traffic is -- our Town Center, our Town streets are
25 very, very busy right now. Peak hours are extremely

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1 busy. Some of the changes you are making, I'm just
2 having trouble figuring how it's going to be better or
3 at least the same. Discouraging traffic on Raymond
4 Road, traffic on Burr Street, you are saying is going
5 to be less. The all red crossings on South Main
6 Street, right now we have one at Memorial and one at
7 Farmington. You are adding two more of those. How
8 will those help traffic move along? I assume they are
9 going to be button and pedestrian activated?

10 MR. HEAPES: Correct.

11 MR. CONNORS: You are going to be
12 queuing up traffic at like not on an interval basis, it
13 will be more of a random basis, so I'm wondering if you
14 can just kind of explain to me, so I can understand,
15 how changes you are making to take traffic off certain
16 roads and putting impediments on other roads, and
17 looking at 3 million dollars a year in parking revenue
18 and 2,000 extra trips, which the 2,000 extra trips is
19 at peak hours without Whole Foods, correct, that's Blue
20 Back Square's extra trips?

21 MR. PLANTE: That's correct.

22 MR. CONNORS: So if you can just maybe
23 explain to me how traffic is not going to be much more
24 slow than I'm getting a representation that it will be?

25 MR. HEAPES: How about if I try and then

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1 we don't have to listen to engineer talk, and then the
2 two engineers can fill in underneath me. I think this
3 diagram is pretty telling. It's not bad between green
4 and yellow. It's different between green and yellow.
5 You remember the diagram we showed a couple of minutes
6 ago it was all yellow with some significant increases.
7 If we made a mistake the other night, it was leaving
8 the impression that you'd have all this new traffic and
9 it would be better. Without doing some significant
10 mitigations, it would not be better. It would be much
11 worse, so your intuition is, you know, is correct on
12 that.

13 This is a good diagram that shows the
14 impact of three strategies. Strategy number 1 is
15 improving the left-hand turns in and out of the ramps
16 at 84, which I think we've talked about, and being
17 familiar with that intersection, you could see if you
18 could double its capacity, widen the ramps, add some
19 lanes to Park, you could significantly more than we are
20 causing improve that intersection.

21 What you see in addition is, in the
22 yellow with some modest increases is our desire to

23 balance the traffic to the negative, if you would, to
24 more delay along Raymond Road. Were there mitigations
25 we could do to turn that more to green? Yes, but that

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1 is counterintuitive. It makes Raymond Road more
2 attractive and doesn't solve the problem. Putting the
3 parking, putting the bumpouts, putting the
4 intersection, retiming the green times makes those
5 yellow things moderately worse.

6 I view that as an improvement. It
7 improves the traffic situation in the neighborhood, the
8 number of cut-throughs, and it encourages this to work
9 on Trout Brook.

10 These intersections, there is Burr,
11 that's very easy to understand. Why did that get a lot
12 better? We took the Town's municipal traffic off of
13 Burr, so you only have traffic now using Burr as a
14 residential. The balance of these improvements,
15 particularly of these, were by adding new left-hand
16 turn lanes to those intersections along South Main,
17 which makes them more efficient, makes them able to
18 have more capacity, and we actually robbed a little bit
19 of that capacity and put it in the pedestrian signal
20 here and there, otherwise it could have been even
21 better.

22 Frankly, we could have improved this to
23 a zero by playing around with the all ped phase and
24 allowed some people to turn right on red, et cetera.

25 The Town staff knowing your long history of bias toward

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1 the pedestrian and all ped phases, just like Goodman
2 Green said, don't even think about that, and so hence,
3 you are seeing that as slightly more delayed as a
4 result of those decisions.

5 I think when we say improved, you have
6 to go back to what we called the five key concepts, one
7 was safety. In doing a lot of these intersections,
8 such as Farmington and Main Street, there is a
9 two-second more delay, but it is more safe. That's
10 improved. There is increased pedestrian safety through
11 the South Main Street crosswalk, increased
12 pedestrianism, and these were the fine balancing things
13 that we went intersection by intersection and said, do
14 you give it all to the car, is there some little
15 tweaking toward safety, is there some tweaking toward
16 access that you balance? And it wasn't us making these
17 decisions. We don't know West Hartford quite like, you
18 know, Dave, who has been here 30 years, who is really
19 following their intuition. But I think this diagram
20 shows those five things, improve safety, some improved
21 speed or, excuse me, delay, on Trout Brook and Main
22 Street, some more delay on Raymond, which is an
23 improvement for my concern, and it was intersection by
24 intersection by intersection, balancing these things.

25 Now, at the end of the day, unless these

1 ramps really work and are really more convenient so
2 that you do this to come to the Center and to come to
3 our project, and you've been over there, you can almost
4 lay down at Trout Brook at certain times of the day.
5 There is plenty of existing capacity. Unless the Town
6 had put that extension in, you know, years ago, with a
7 lot of foresight, this concept wouldn't have worked.

8 So it is taking advantage of capacity
9 that you have there, improving safety, improving
10 pedestrianism. It seems counterintuitive. I can't say
11 anymore. That's as much as I know. I don't know if
12 that was even helpful.

13 MR. CONNORS: Well, at least you
14 explained it again. I did hear it the first time.
15 Just to say it's going to be safer, and it's going to
16 be more pedestrian friendly. North-south on Main
17 Street is probably, correct me if I'm wrong, our
18 busiest, north-south is our busiest streets in Town.

19 MR. VAN WINKLE: Correct.

20 MR. CONNORS: We are going to be adding
21 a number of more vehicles to that road at peak times
22 and at nonpeak times, and I'm wondering if adding that
23 many more cars on a daily basis, and cars are not just
24 going to be going north-south, they are going to be
25 going onto Ellsworth Road, they are going to be turning

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1 down Memorial, they will be turning down Burr. Adding
2 that many more cars at different parts of the day, peak
3 hours, nonpeaks, is that going to make things more
4 pedestrian friendly, or is it going to seem more and
5 more city like where it changes the perception of being
6 able to walk and changes the perception of what the
7 Center gives us now in terms of a less intense place to
8 shop and move around? I'm trying to find a good way of
9 wording it, but --

10 MR. HEAPES: I will let Dave weigh in on
11 this.

12 MR. CONNORS: You are going to stop
13 traffic at different times in the middle of the Center
14 across from the library and Memorial Road, and believe
15 me, I'm not arguing about the all pedestrian. I'm glad
16 you finally saw the light, we've been fighting about
17 this for years with different intersections, but it
18 seems like if you are going to stop traffic at a
19 pedestrian button, it will follow up cars coming
20 without it having it being on a timely basis.

21 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus, Town Engineer,
22 and you are right in a lot of those observations.
23 Actually Trout Brook Drive is a little more traffic
24 than Main Street, but it's the left-turn lanes.
25 Someone says I make too big a deal out of those, but

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2 about 30 percent and when you say, all right, add the
3 pedestrian phase to that, that's going to reduce that
4 30 percent down to maybe 15 percent, but that's still
5 an improvement, significant improvement in capacity.

6 It also reduces the traffic accidents in
7 half, so that's a significant vehicle safety issue, so
8 I think the left-turn lanes, and with the narrow lanes
9 that we use, we are not increasing the pedestrian
10 distance to cross the road substantially. We are
11 talking about a 10-foot widening, four steps as a
12 pedestrian is crossing the road, so those left-turn
13 lanes I think have a significant, significant impact.
14 If they hadn't been doing those, then they, as I said,
15 what they are basically adding is eight of those to
16 this project, much more than we've ever added in any
17 other project that has come before us. I think they
18 have significant improvement to even the condition that
19 we have today.

20 MR. CONNORS: Thank you. The traffic is
21 a huge piece of this, and at the end of the day,
22 whether we support it or don't support it, if we do
23 support it, you've got to be able to defend it as
24 people approach you, how could you support something
25 like that, look what it's going to do to traffic. We

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1 as people who are voting on it need to be able to
2 defend what we are doing here, and it's hard to grasp
3 that it could actually be better or almost the same.

4 MR. HEAPES: I don't think you can
5 underestimate the impact of mixed uses, and now as the
6 total, there is a big bag of stuff, but it is made up
7 of four small bags of things behaving independently,
8 behaving in concert with another. There are no trips
9 going to the cinema at the same times as they are going
10 to the office. Almost 90 percent. And it's very
11 intuitive and it makes a lot of sense to remember that
12 that's a dynamic part of traffic. This is generated by
13 peak hours, the total traffic generated by mixed use
14 that behaves very organically. It's a really important
15 feature to this.

16 MR. CONNORS: Thank you.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.
18 Mr. Coursey.

19 MR. COURSEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I
20 think what we are all struggling with, especially on
21 the topic of traffic, is we are being asked to take a
22 lot of information on faith. The question I have for
23 Mr. Kraus, and I want to thank you for your wonderful
24 traffic presentation last week. That's almost a
25 misnomer, but for 20 minutes, you really -- I thought

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1 you explained it very well, and in talking about the
2 left-turn signals, we do have an example in Town where
3 we have made some significant traffic improvements,
4 probably similar to what is proposed in this
5 application. I'm thinking of up on Farmington Avenue

6 and Mountain Road by Stop & Shop. Do we have any
7 information that we can take a look back and say this
8 is what the experience was the year before those
9 improvements were made, and I think it's been up and
10 running for more than a year, and this is what it's
11 been like the year after?

12 MR. KRAUS: Yes, we do have that
13 information, and the year before the Farmington Avenue
14 project, we had ten accidents or 12 accidents at the
15 Mountain Road, Farmington Avenue intersection, and for
16 the year after the improvement, we were down to four,
17 so that's a significant reduction in numbers of
18 accidents at an intersection like that.

19 A number of those accidents, by the way,
20 were T-bone accidents that resulted in -- I think it
21 was about 40 percent of the accidents had personal
22 injuries, so that was a significant improvement, and to
23 be honest, that's one of the major reasons that the DOT
24 funded that project, was the safety improvement aspects
25 of that intersection.

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1 The same thing happened in the Home
2 Depot application down on New Britain Avenue, at New
3 Park Avenue. They were required to install a left-turn
4 signal, again, that was a state highway on New Britain
5 Avenue, and they were required to install that
6 left-turn lane onto New Park. And again, we saw a
7 reduction in accidents by about 50 percent, but it is a

8 very significant improvement.

9 MR. COURSEY: That's good news, safety
10 is good, but I think we are also looking for some info
11 on moving traffic through efficiently. Up at Mountain
12 and Farmington, there was no major project going
13 forward that was changing the amount of traffic that
14 was going through, but I wonder if there is some data
15 that you have that can show how traffic is moving
16 through that intersection more efficiently.

17 MR. KRAUS: We can go back and look at
18 the traffic volumes that are going through the
19 intersection. It's difficult to quantify the concept
20 of efficiency when you are looking at traffic like that
21 because we didn't really increase the number of lanes.
22 We rearranged their use and made the lanes a more
23 designated use. Instead of weaving back and forth,
24 lanes were assigned a particular use. The
25 efficiencywise really wasn't the purpose of that

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1 project. It was really a safety project.

2 MR. COURSEY: With regards to the Home
3 Depot, would we have any information on that in terms
4 of what the traffic improvements did to, you know,
5 waiting times?

6 MR. KRAUS: I don't have it offhand. We
7 could -- let me look and we will try to find something
8 for you on that.

9 MR. COURSEY: Okay. Mr. Mayor, I have

10 one other question on traffic.

11 Mr. Kraus, you talked about the need for
12 a pedestrian safety bridge, I believe that was the
13 term, on Park Road. Could you elaborate? I think that
14 several of us had questions about that. Could you just
15 elaborate? It's my understanding that because you are
16 increasing the width of Park Road that there would have
17 to be an addition to the bridge there over Trout Brook
18 to allow for pedestrian crossing.

19 MR. KRAUS: That's correct. And this is
20 one of those items that at this point the Blue Back
21 Square Development team and ourselves have not
22 completely seen eye to eye. Because there are
23 basically two ways to try to accommodate the pedestrian
24 movements over the existing bridge and widening the
25 existing bridge to accommodate another lane of traffic,

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1 Blue Back Square has proposed to widen the lanes and
2 leaving about a five-foot pedestrian sidewalk adjacent
3 to those lanes going over the bridge. Basically we
4 feel that that is insufficient because there are no
5 shoulders on the roadway. It's a very tight lane. You
6 are in a confined space, cars next to you on the other
7 side.

8 So really in the spirit of enhancing
9 pedestrian movement throughout the community, that's
10 why we proposed at a significant increase in cost a
11 separate pedestrian bridge upstream of the vehicle

12 bridge, therefore separating the pedestrians entirely
13 from the vehicle bridge on Park Road. But that's what
14 it is, it's a separate pedestrian bridge. They are
15 about 8 feet wide, it would be a span of about 100 feet
16 over Trout Brook.

17 It is not an inexpensive feature, but it
18 certainly would improve the pedestrian movements in the
19 area, and the argument can be made that, well, gee,
20 there aren't that many pedestrian movements that we
21 should expend those kinds of funds to accommodate, but
22 I think that the advent of, in the future, a pedestrian
23 pathway or bikeway along Trout Brook that can connect
24 up into the Boulevard, it serves both purposes of the
25 safety today that is created by widening the bridge

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1 structure for vehicles and for the future of
2 accommodating additional pedestrian movement safely
3 through that area. But that's what it is, it is a
4 separate structure upstream.

5 MR. COURSEY: Thank you, Mr. Kraus.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Coursey.

7 Dr. DeVaughn.

8 MR. DEVAUGHN: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. A
9 couple of questions relating to, first of all, parking,
10 I guess, more than traffic. When the developer used
11 the national models or formula to determine or generate
12 the number of parking spaces needed, was there room in
13 that formula for local considerations or local

14 characteristics? I'm speaking primarily of the idea
15 that I think this is an area where people more or less
16 expect to find a place to park close by where they are
17 going to their business, and I was wondering about the
18 adequacy of spaces so that we don't get into situations
19 where the overflow of traffic winds up in the
20 neighborhoods, which is of great concern. Then I have
21 a couple of other questions.

22 MR. GOLDMAN: Yes, can you hear me?
23 Norm Goldman. The statistics that are derived include
24 visitors and employees, for example, to an office
25 building, medical offices, et cetera. And within those

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1 numbers of parks per thousand, there is local and
2 other. I mean, they don't discriminate between the
3 local and long distance. It's the generator that
4 brings the number of people to the site.

5 One of the things that is very
6 interesting about the Blue Back Square project is,
7 first of all, the location of the North and South
8 Garage, which makes those garages very proximate to the
9 various uses where people would want to eventually go.
10 If you look at the distance from the garages to the
11 various generators, they are very short. The other
12 thing you need to realize is that each of those
13 garages, one carries 450 cars, the other one carries
14 550 cars, so that's an awful lot of volume in two
15 locations. If we compare that to the existing Center,

16 where we have three parking lots, we have the Center
17 lot, which is 200 and some-odd spaces, we have the
18 north lot and then Arapahoe, that only has like 60 or
19 80 spaces in it. So the more cars you have in a
20 facility, the better your security is because there are
21 more people around, the more likely you are to find a
22 parking spot because there are more spaces there in the
23 first place, and I think the shared use concept of this
24 complex, where volumes occur at different times, will
25 also give you what you are looking for in terms of

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1 space availability.

2 MR. HEAPES: If I might just add to that
3 quickly, it's important to understand that good parking
4 is critical to success of the development. It's
5 absolutely fundamental to our success, and in that
6 vein, about two years ago we undertook a study at five
7 places, some our projects, some not, that had similar
8 mix of uses, to test the theoretical model against what
9 actually happened and found that it was a very accurate
10 representation of what you would expect to see.

11 Remember that we have some devices that
12 the rest of the Center doesn't have to control and
13 discourage parking in the neighborhood. Number 1, we
14 can force the employees of the office and the retail to
15 restrict the use of street parking for their employees,
16 and we plan on doing that. That will be in the lease,
17 and that also drives some of the permit parking for the

18 garages. Number two, at nights and weekends, when you
19 would expect the pressure to be, frankly any pressure
20 on the neighborhood streets is not good, but nights and
21 weekends would be the worst, we do have a residual of
22 535 spaces here at Town Hall available between our
23 project and the neighborhoods to handle capacity,
24 frankly at nights and weekends, and we have probably
25 twice the amount of parking that's required versus at

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1 our peak time at 1:00 in the afternoon. So we have
2 some things, extra parking here nights and weekends,
3 ability to restrict where employees park, and that's
4 who would tend to park in the neighborhoods looking for
5 long-term free parking, and finally a confidence in the
6 model based on our own studies. We believe, at least,
7 that the parking is not only adequate, but will perform
8 the way we expect it to and we need it to.

9 MR. DEVAUGHN: Another question, if I
10 may.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: Dr. DeVaughn.

12 MR. DEVAUGHN: Let's do a before and
13 after. We assume that this project goes through, we
14 will call it the after. Currently if there is a
15 concert on the Town Hall lawn, I can drive in, park,
16 watch the concert, have a picnic lunch, whatever, and
17 leave without having to pay for parking.

18 MR. HEAPES: Correct.

19 MR. DEVAUGHN: If this project goes

20 through, is that situation something that remains or
21 will I be charged to come in and find a place to park
22 to listen to the concert? The same would go if I came
23 to use the new public park, am I going to have to go
24 into a parking garage, go over to the park and pay to
25 get out?

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1 MR. HEAPES: I will let the Town answer
2 that.

3 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, I would only
4 respond -- good question -- there is probably a lot
5 more thought that needs to go into what that policy is,
6 but it's exactly what Jim Francis alluded to the other
7 night. The reason that we felt so strongly that
8 parking should be owned and then managed by the
9 municipality is because of issues like that, meaning
10 that we may want to decide on community events, a
11 concert in the park that we don't charge because of the
12 community nature and the desire to have people
13 participate and come to these events. So those are
14 good questions that we haven't spent a lot of time
15 puzzling through. But my own initial reaction is those
16 community events, you'll probably see the gates flipped
17 up the same way we flip up the gates right now in the
18 public parking in the Center when there are certain
19 periods during the year that we want to encourage
20 people to use and enjoy West Hartford Center.

21 MR. DEVAUGHN: Thank you. Just one last
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22 follow-up question along the same vein, I believe I
23 heard the developer say as we go along we will
24 eliminate the half-hour free parking which currently
25 exists, and I'm wondering --

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Dr. DeVaughn, I didn't
2 catch it on the first one, but if we can hold all the
3 parking, because we are going to go into that in more
4 detail.

5 MR. DEVAUGHN: That would be fine.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Feldman was too quick
7 on me, too, at this time. But are there any more
8 direct traffic questions?

9 MR. DEVAUGHN: No.

10 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Doolittle and then
11 Mr. Daniels.

12 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: I'm sorry, Mr. Davidoff
14 has been waiting, Mr. Doolittle.

15 MR. DOOLITTLE: Very well.

16 MR. DAVIDOFF: Before the break, we
17 heard from Town staff that they had specific concerns
18 with respect to some issues, and I think one of the
19 issues was traffic, and I'd like to get a listing of
20 the concerns that have not been addressed by the
21 developer with respect to the traffic issues. I think
22 one was the pedestrian crosswalk or bridge over at Park
23 Road, but I'm certain there are several others that

24 have not been addressed or brought forward this
25 evening.

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1 MR. VAN WINKLE: Ron Van Winkle, first
2 of all, in your package should be memos from the staff
3 which give you a listing of issues that the staff --
4 still remain open. Some of those are relatively minor,
5 some of them the developer has since taken care of, but
6 some remain open, and maybe I'll just let, since we are
7 talking about traffic, let Dave kind of look through
8 his memo and highlight those that are still open for
9 your consideration.

10 MR. DAVIDOFF: That would be great.

11 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus again. May 27th,
12 there should be a memo in your packet that lists a
13 number of issues, one of which is the left-turn lanes
14 on Farmington Avenue at Trout Brook Drive and Raymond
15 Road. The developer has agreed to provide those, and
16 so that item has been taken care of. The separate
17 pedestrian bridge we've talked about and still our
18 recommendation; the utility question, undergrounding
19 the utilities on Raymond Road, especially at the
20 entrance to Memorial Road, at that intersection,
21 utilities are being underground by Blue Back Square at
22 their expense throughout their whole site. Raymond
23 Road, however, is kind of on the border between the
24 Whole Foods and this project, so utilities are
25 remaining overhead. We have made the recommendation

1 that we try to work with the utilities in trying to
2 underground those utilities on Raymond Road. It's just
3 that it's a very expensive and cumbersome process to
4 work through the utilities.

5 Just as an aside in the 1950s the
6 utilities were all placed underground throughout West
7 Hartford Center at the utilities' expense in order to
8 promote commercial development. We've changed in 50
9 years from a utility taking a very proactive approach
10 to now placing all of the cost onto private development
11 and with restrictions that are making it very difficult
12 to even accomplish. It's a different role. But the
13 developer has agreed to work with us and the utilities
14 to try to accomplish that goal, but it's one that is
15 extremely expensive, but it is a desirable one with the
16 amount of activity going on here, and in fact Whole
17 Foods offered to donate a certain amount of money
18 toward that effort, but it's just not enough money to
19 really do an awful lot with.

20 Other issues is Burr Street is a
21 residential street that abuts the project. There is
22 work going on, not a great deal, but sporadically on
23 Burr Street, and we would like to work with the
24 developer to, at the end of this project, reconstruct
25 Burr Street as our neighborhood reconstruction programs

1 go about, and them doing part of Burr Street and the
2 Town doing part of Burr Street as part of our normal
3 street -- neighborhood street reconstruction projects,
4 and they are proposing the overlaying of a portion of
5 Raymond Road. It's just that I think they are
6 disturbing a little bit more. They're eradicating and
7 moving the double yellow center line and resetting some
8 of the curbing into bumpouts at the intersection of
9 Burr and Raymond, and I think some more overlay in that
10 area would make the project finished and finish all of
11 the neighborhood streets all around the project as
12 well. Those are some of the recommendations. I think
13 they all should be in that memo.

14 MR. DAVIDOFF: Through you, Mr. Mayor,
15 to Town staff, so am I to understand that it would be
16 your recommendation that as a condition of approval for
17 this development project, that those three or four
18 things that you just outlined would be proper
19 conditions for either the Zoning Board or the Council
20 to impose as a conditions approval?

21 MR. KRAUS: Yes, it would.

22 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you. I have two
23 other concerns with respect to traffic. There was a
24 comment made this evening about this project will
25 require a certificate of operation. For us lay persons

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1 of the panel, what are the criteria that are outlined
2 in order to designate something that would require a
3 certificate of operation?

4 MR. PLANTE: The State Traffic
5 Commission, which is an independent body, utilizes the
6 Connecticut DOT traffic section as a technical advisor.
7 Part of our process as we've been going through this
8 study has been to have discussions with them as far
9 back as almost a year. The first step with them was
10 coming to an agreement on what the trip generation
11 would be anticipated for this project. Not knowing
12 whether they were going to require a certificate or not
13 at that time, we decided to use their methodology. We
14 feel it's conservative. Five different traffic groups
15 have looked at that number, Langan Engineering,
16 Urbitran, Town staff, the DOT, and also the Town hired
17 a consultant, Alan Davis. His estimation, and I quote
18 from his memo, is it's a gross overexaggeration of the
19 trip generation one can anticipate for this project,
20 but still we use that as our basis, and based on that,
21 they look at the intersections, state highway
22 intersections. They really don't really look at
23 necessarily what's happening around downtown West
24 Hartford and the Center. They want to know what the
25 impact on the state highway would be from this project,

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1 and they have kind of a rule of thumb threshold, 100

2 trips, new trips to an intersection generally gets them
3 to look at what the impact is, and they have recently
4 gotten back to us to say that they feel the amount of
5 trips that we are adding at the ramps and up to Route
6 44 will require them to issue a certificate, and that's
7 a process of submitting our traffic report and
8 application data. They review it with the help of the
9 Conn DOT traffic group, and they provide
10 recommendations for improvement. They agree with our
11 improvements. They add improvements if necessary, and
12 they make those recommendations to the State Traffic
13 Commission, and then the State Traffic Commission
14 hopefully will approve those subsequent to local
15 approval. They won't act until local approval occurs.
16 This is a normal occurrence for what is called a major
17 traffic generator. It's that certificate for that.

18 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you. And my last
19 area of concern is: Can you describe what the truck
20 route would be to this development, and more
21 specifically, after you describe it, explain to me how
22 18-wheel trucks would travel on Isham Road, whether or
23 not there would be loading or unloading of those
24 trucks, whether or not they would need to make a turn
25 of any sort in terms of backing, things of that nature?

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1 Because the way that I see the proposal, there is
2 street parking of cars parked on both sides of Isham,
3 and I just want to make sure I have a full explanation

4 as to how truck traffic would operate in that area, and
5 then if you could bring it out a little further as to
6 how truck traffic would operate on Memorial Road in
7 accessing those properties there. Thank you.

8 MR. PLANTE: As for the route, truck
9 route, certainly as Richard indicated, with the control
10 over the tenants as they will have, they can try to
11 designate those routes and the anticipated route would
12 be off the highway, up Trout Brook Drive, and then
13 Memorial Drive extension. That would be the
14 anticipated route, the least impact in the
15 neighborhood.

16 As for 18 wheelers, I think Richard had
17 indicated that with the type of tenancy here, it's not
18 anticipated 18 wheelers will be visiting the site.
19 Certainly if somebody is moving from a house to a
20 condo, they might have a large truck, but we have
21 evaluated all these intersections for turning
22 movements, specifically when we sat down with the Fire
23 Department, provided plans with truck turning templates
24 on them to illustrate how these vehicles can move
25 around the site, and we certainly believe that Isham

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1 Road, coming from Memorial only, Isham Road will
2 operate very similar to as it does today, and I believe
3 there was large vehicles coming to the dealerships
4 with, you know, car trailers, et cetera.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Davidoff, is that it?

6 MR. DAVIDOFF: Yes, nothing further.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you. I apologize
8 for missing you, Mr. Davidoff. Next I guess we have
9 Mr. Doolittle and then Mr. Daniels.

10 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.
11 Mr. Heapes, I just want to make sure I understand the
12 general thrust of your traffic presentation. The first
13 time it went through, the impression given was sort of
14 that Blue Back Square is going to make traffic better,
15 and I think that perhaps, and I'll give you my
16 impression and you can correct me if I'm wrong, that,
17 in fact, you understand that Blue Back Square is going
18 to generate a substantial amount of traffic?

19 MR. HEAPES: Correct.

20 MR. DOOLITTLE: And in order to figure
21 out if there is a way to handle that traffic, you
22 design this traffic mitigation study, and your
23 conclusion is that these traffic mitigation
24 improvements taken as a whole will in many respects
25 improve traffic flow.

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1 MR. HEAPES: Correct.

2 MR. DOOLITTLE: So the piece that
3 perhaps was missing in my mind, and maybe some other
4 folks' mind was this traffic study and this traffic
5 mitigation program is separate and apart from Blue Back
6 Square, so that for instance, what I mean is that if
7 this project were not approved, the Town could go ahead

8 and make some of these improvements?

9 MR. HEAPES: Certainly. And many of the
10 improvements are existing conditions that are no
11 mystery to you that don't work well today, such as the
12 ramps at 84.

13 MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Now, there has
14 been several times reference to the fact that Mr. Kraus
15 has recommended that there should be a follow-up study
16 after, one year after the build-out.

17 MR. HEAPES: Right.

18 MR. DOOLITTLE: The piece that I haven't
19 heard is whether your organization agrees with that,
20 doesn't agree with that, or is that one of the
21 differences between the Town and Blue Back Square?

22 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Heapes, before you go
23 through that, we have to do a tape change, TV timeout.

24 (Pause.)

25 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Heapes, we are back

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1 on TV, timeout over.

2 MR. HEAPES: I don't know if you want to
3 repeat the question. I do remember the question.

4 We have agreed to work with the Town and
5 fund a study -- the study a year later and see what it
6 comes up with. We have not agreed and would not expect
7 to agree to fund extra reserve in light of the
8 expenditures that we are doing as part of the
9 application.

10 MR. DOOLITTLE: But you agree the study
11 makes sense?

12 MR. HEAPES: Absolutely. And we want to
13 know how it works and how it's different and what the
14 impacts are. Frankly, without the study, there is no
15 way to second guess what that is anyways, but we
16 absolutely want to know, as well as the Town.

17 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you. Now this
18 question is for Mr. Kraus, and this is more of a
19 follow-up to an earlier question by Leon Davidoff.
20 Going back to Mr. Verrengia's slide show and the
21 particular slide of the alley between the rug store and
22 the piano store, I certainly would like to see follow
23 through on Leon's suggestion to perhaps develop some
24 kind of visual vocabulary so that people who are
25 walking would be aware that they are approaching an

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1 intersection. I'm thinking of course of the children
2 who are in that particular photo would be running up to
3 the Dunkin' Donut store, they are there, and I don't
4 know whether a red stripe would possibly -- you could
5 establish, perhaps you might want to think about
6 establishing some kind of visual signal, especially for
7 the younger kids that was consistent throughout the
8 Center. I don't know if that has been given any
9 thought with the onset of this Blue Back Square project
10 which is so pedestrian-oriented.

11 MR. KRAUS: Those are all suggestions

12 that we will look into. One of the things about
13 traffic is consistency, and traffic engineers use a
14 manual that's produced that tries to add consistency
15 for different traffic situations, and we will look into
16 that and report back to you on it.

17 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, sir. Thank
18 you, Mr. Mayor.

19 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Kraus,
20 Mr. Doolittle. Mr. Daniels.

21 MR. DANIELS: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I
22 know we are not doing parking, but I wanted to add one
23 comment and a question to staff on the issue raised by
24 Dr. DeVaughn, and then I have three questions.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: If you can just go to the

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1 traffic now and then hold your parking questions till
2 after, please.

3 MR. DANIELS: I will have to remember
4 your train of thought from the questions you asked. I
5 have two or three traffic questions. One is sort of
6 micro and one is macro. The same chart that Mr. Slifka
7 had put up on the a.m. peak delays and the changes.
8 Magic. And I was having a little, few questions on
9 that. I was looking in particular at the I-84 on-ramp,
10 which seems to be the most significant mitigation
11 issue, 30 second reduction, and then I looked at the
12 chart that was on the Town's representation, it was
13 titled "West Hartford Town Council TPZ Commission, Blue

14 Back Square At the Center Briefing Book," and on page
15 22, it depicts the actual changes in the traffic and
16 the lanes at that intersection.

17 I guess my puzzlement, if someone can
18 explain this to me, is the five-lane expansion appears
19 to address the off-ramp, not the on-ramp, and my
20 current experience is that it's the on-ramp that
21 produces and generates enormous amounts of backup, and
22 I'm wondering if someone can explain to me the
23 mitigation on the 30 second reduction and the fact that
24 the traffic change plan doesn't seem to adjust that
25 area.

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1 MR. PLANTE: I think I'll take that one.
2 What that improvement does, you are right in assessing
3 that we've added another lane to take a right on the
4 off-ramp and then another lane to take a left onto
5 Trout Brook. As we all experience that area today,
6 it's gridlock through all those intersections. They
7 operate fairly, pretty much as one intersection because
8 there is just not enough space between them. When we
9 decrease -- one of the components that creates that
10 delay is that there is only so much space coming off
11 the off-ramp to take a left onto Trout Brook. You have
12 to stop that traffic after a certain period of time
13 because there is just no place to put them. There is a
14 couple of hundred feet to stack them up. What we do,
15 and that you have to do more often, you let them go,

16 stop them, let them go, stop them. What our
17 improvement does is lengthen and gets more traffic
18 through that improvement, and it allows us to provide
19 more green time for the rest of the intersections, so
20 they all operate better because there is more green
21 time to be put to the other movements, where today you
22 have to allocate and stop that green time for that
23 movement. It allows us to create a better situation
24 for all those, and it's a domino effect in essence. So
25 they, the efficiency of that movement creates an

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1 improvement for the rest of those intersections, those
2 three intersections.

3 MR. DANIELS: Go ahead.

4 MR. KRAUS: One of the reasons that John
5 had said that is that the intersection of Raymond Road
6 and Park Road, they are going to create more of a
7 delay, that's why there is a plus 7 at that
8 intersection. That creates those gaps, more gaps,
9 where your car is getting onto the entrance ramp from
10 Park Road and get onto the ramp.

11 MR. DANIELS: So essentially then it
12 depends on the traffic signal on Raymond Road to create
13 more break points so people can get on the highway.
14 That makes a little more sense to me because the
15 generating traffic in a.m. is not people coming off
16 that ramp, it's people trying to get on solely, and the
17 backup does not occur from the other. It's a tough

18 intersection, forget this proposal, but this mitigation
19 is the most significant piece.

20 I have a macro question. I think
21 Mr. Kraus testified that it would be an increase of 10
22 to 20 percent in the amount of traffic generated after
23 this proposal was done, and I assume -- is that true?

24 MR. KRAUS: (Nodding in the
25 affirmative.)

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1 MR. DANIELS: And that includes the
2 traffic from this proposal and the traffic from Whole
3 Foods?

4 MR. KRAUS: That's correct.

5 MR. DANIELS: And then there was another
6 statement that you made, and I may have taken it down
7 wrong, that where now it's 60 percent of capacity?

8 MR. KRAUS: That was a real estimate,
9 but yes, and that's an overall, like you said, a macro
10 assessment of where the Center is today and what it may
11 be able to grow to, yes.

12 MR. DANIELS: I'm not an expert in
13 traffic at all, but I used to regulate hospitals. I
14 need to understand the difference between gross and --
15 gross capacity and real or net capacity. Let me give
16 you the example that I would use. When I was
17 regulating hospitals, the hospital has 100 beds.
18 That's not its real capacity. A community hospital has
19 the capacity of like 93 beds. You need 7 beds of slush

20 for a variety of things. In a tertiary hospital, it's
21 87 beds. I'm trying to understand what the real
22 capacity of the system is, not the rated capacity.

23 MR. KRAUS: I don't think we have ever
24 really done a thorough analysis of the capacity of the
25 Center, but when you look at the numbers of lanes that

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1 are serving the Center going northbound, you have four
2 lanes on Main Street, five lanes on Trout Brook Drive,
3 you have nine lanes of traffic. There is a lot of
4 traffic that can be handled in that way. And we look
5 at just overall capacity of a lane, it's about 500 cars
6 at an intersection. And so when I take some just gross
7 numbers that way, I try to interpret what the capacity
8 of all of those lanes and what it's being used for now
9 and what that increase is going to be and what that
10 reserve is. What I was trying to say was that even
11 after this project, there would still be capacity left
12 in the system.

13 MR. DANIELS: So your number, however,
14 doesn't net out some reduction for facts of life, like
15 small people like me, having small legs taking longer
16 to cross the street or an accident or other issues that
17 get in the way?

18 MR. KRAUS: No, not at all.

19 MR. DANIELS: Sorry, I didn't want to
20 say little old ladies crossing the street. I guess my
21 last question is, on a simplistic basis, is it possible

22 to produce a chart that takes a look at the present
23 capacity number, that takes a look at the gross
24 capacity traffic increase, the 10 to 20 percent, and
25 then looks at the mitigation numbers and tries to again

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1 place those as percentages and then display it in some
2 kind of simplistic fashion that shows us where we are
3 at the end of the day, to use Mr. Heapes favorite
4 phrase?

5 MR. KRAUS: I think they have already
6 displayed some of that information to you. I think
7 what is missing is what is the capacity of the system,
8 and what is reserve. I think that's really what you
9 are trying to get at.

10 MR. DANIELS: I think so, you said it
11 better than I did.

12 MR. KRAUS: And I think that is
13 something that we can work with Langan Engineering and
14 try to determine something that we can present back to
15 you on that.

16 MR. DANIELS: I think that would
17 increase the confidence level that there is some room
18 left to maneuver, no pun intended.

19 MR. PLANTE: Mr. Chairman, can I
20 volunteer an answer to that also?

21 MAYOR HARRIS: Sure.

22 MR. PLANTE: In the report, and we
23 didn't get into a lot of the minutia because sometimes

24 it's very confusing, how we analyze an intersection is
25 level of service. I'm sure you heard Dave talk about

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1 that in different forums, LOS. That's a measure of
2 capacity of an intersection, and in the report every
3 intersection has been analyzed for that capacity. You
4 have the existing condition, the no build condition,
5 the build condition, and the build condition with
6 mitigation, and I think if you look in there, I can --

7 MR. DANIELS: But I'm looking for it all
8 added up together on a sheet of paper so one can see it
9 as a layperson as a total effect.

10 MR. PLANTE: If you look at -- it's in
11 the executive summary, and it has that chart with all
12 those together.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: That would be Table 1, I
14 believe.

15 MR. PLANTE: That's correct, Table 1,
16 and it shows you the capacity. Level of service A is
17 the best level of service where there is nobody there;
18 level of service F is at capacity or worse. And I
19 think you can see from the chart that all of the
20 intersections throughout this area were either
21 improving or maintaining that level of service, so
22 maintaining that capacity at the intersection. So Blue
23 Back Square's impact on the project is really stated in
24 the terms you are looking for here.

25 MR. DANIELS: Forgive me, I'm still

1 lost. If the testimony is that it increases traffic 10
2 to 20 percent and now you are telling me that you
3 looked at each of the intersections and they mitigate,
4 I'm having trouble getting from A to B.

5 MR. PLANTE: We are mitigating our
6 impacts. That's what we are telling you, that the
7 increase in traffic due to Blue Back Square has been
8 mitigated. There are --

9 MR. DANIELS: So your testimony is there
10 is no increase in traffic?

11 MR. PLANTE: No, we are mitigating our
12 increase in traffic. We are doing improvements to
13 increase that capacity to a level that is either equal
14 to without Blue Back Square or better.

15 There are four locations that there is a
16 slight decrease in capacity, and I think you saw those
17 up at Route 44, Mountain and, you know, along Albany
18 Avenue, there were some slight decreases under the
19 build condition, still acceptable levels of service,
20 not failures, not past capacities, but a slight
21 decrease. And again the worst case is 10 seconds
22 average delay. So we are saying our proposal, what we
23 are proposing to do, maintains or improves capacity at
24 all the other intersections besides those, so that's
25 where Dave -- where his opinion that there is capacity

1 in the roadways, that's what the numbers do show. And
2 that's based on real empirical data like you were
3 indicating in a chart, that's what that does, it puts
4 it in a letter form.

5 MR. KRAUS: Dave Kraus again,
6 Mr. Daniels, we will get back to you on a report, and
7 really it's, yes, we are anticipating more patients,
8 but we've built more hospital rooms with more beds in
9 it.

10 MR. DANIELS: Thank you. That would be
11 really helpful to see it in some kind of fashion I can
12 understand. Thanks.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Daniels, anymore
14 questions?

15 As long as we are on Table 1, if I can
16 just interject one question on how to read it that I
17 had before. If you go across, say, the top one
18 Mountain Road/Route 44 where it's D, E, E, then there
19 is the shaded boxes, that is no change, that would be
20 an E also, under the mitigated build.

21 MR. PLANTE: That's correct. Where the
22 box is shaded, as I said earlier, we are not proposing
23 any mitigation there. We were within the threshold of
24 impact that we established.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: So that means no

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1 mitigation at that area, so it would stay the same as
2 it would be in just the build situation?

3 MR. PLANTE: That's correct.

4 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you.

5 MR. DANIELS: And I had trouble with
6 that chart. Is there some place where there is a
7 legend that tells me what A, B, C, D, E is?

8 MR. PLANTE: In the text of the report
9 it explains what that is.

10 MAYOR HARRIS: Any additional questions
11 on traffic? Mr. Brown.

12 MR. BROWN: I would just like to follow
13 up on something Mr. Spada asked regarding traffic
14 improvements and the payment of those versus street
15 improvements, and could you, through Mr. Mayor, maybe
16 Mr. Feldman, you could explain an example of each.

17 MR. FELDMAN: The street improvement
18 would be perhaps Memorial, which is changed
19 considerably as you've heard through these nights, new
20 street surface, new sewers, new sidewalks, new curbs,
21 all of that would be part of the public investment.
22 Traffic improvements might be a protected left-turn
23 lane, perhaps other changes to a pedestrian crosswalk,
24 signals, that would be a traffic improvement at the
25 expense of the developer.

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1 MR. BROWN: Okay, thank you. And to
2 follow up on that, do developers not typically address

3 street improvements as well as traffic improvements?

4 MR. FELDMAN: Maybe you can just repeat
5 your question again.

6 MR. BROWN: I'm sorry. I'm just
7 wondering if developers very often pay for street
8 improvements?

9 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, they do, but
10 given the size and scope of this investment and there
11 is a different arrangement, there is a different
12 cost-sharing proposed. Most private investments that
13 we've had over the years pale in comparison to the
14 public investment that you need in this particular part
15 of the Center.

16 MR. BROWN: Do you suppose we can swap?
17 The street improvements are going to be huge in
18 comparison, I think. Anyway, thanks very much.

19 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Brown.
20 Any further questions on traffic? Okay. We would go
21 on to parking right now, but I presume that people have
22 a fair number of questions on parking. Can I just see
23 a show of hands for people who have parking issues?

24 Okay. So why don't we do this, with the
25 consent of everybody here, hopefully we will break for

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1 tonight, we will come back on Wednesday night and begin
2 with parking, and then also begin to go into the
3 financial pieces. For expediency, because we did tell
4 the public that that would be the first night of public

5 comment, perhaps the various bodies procedurally could
6 try to have some point people ask the questions and
7 gather the questions that people might have so we can
8 be efficient in a line of questioning, because what I
9 would like to do, if possible, so that we don't have
10 people showing up expecting to speak at 6:15 and then
11 not be able to be heard until 10:00 at night, if we can
12 test, obviously, without sacrificing the number process
13 and being able to get through the information to try to
14 just tell the public that by 8:30 or so they will be
15 able to speak, so the questioning on both those pieces
16 will be important, remembering that we will have the
17 ability to follow up after the public comment period.
18 So as long as some of the issues are raised, we don't
19 have to get every little piece done. Is that
20 acceptable to everybody? Okay.

21 The other thing that I'd like to do, Mr.
22 Davidoff had suggested, and I know we talked about
23 before, to the extent that the administration has heard
24 various conditions mentioned, potential conditions for
25 the SDD and for some of the other applications that are

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1 conditioned, if a list can start to be compiled and
2 perhaps at some point in the near future if we can
3 start seeing how those are developing, I think that
4 would be helpful for all the commissioners and
5 councilors.

6 Anything else for anyone? If not, we
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7 will adjourn the hearing till 6:15 on Wednesday June
8 23rd, my parent's anniversary.

9 (Hearing adjourned at 11:01 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE
2 I hereby certify that the foregoing 178 pages are
3 a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of
4 my original stenotype notes taken of the Joint Hearing
5 between West Hartford Town Council and West Hartford
6 Town Plan and Zoning Commission, which was held at West
7 Hartford Town Hall Auditorium, 50 South Main Street,
8 West Hartford, Connecticut, on June 21, 2004.

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Sandra V. Semevolos RMR, CRR
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