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WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING

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JULY 14, 2004

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West Hartford Town Hall  
50 South Main Street  
West Hartford, Connecticut

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Reporter: Sandra V. Semevolos, RMR, CRR, LSR #00074  
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1 A P P E A R A N C E S :

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3 Present for Town Council :

4 Jonathan A. Harris, Mayor

Scott Slifka

5 Joseph Verrengia

Barbara Carpenter

6 Kevin M. Connors

Charles T. Coursey

7 Maureen K. McClay

Art Spada

8 Carolyn Thornberry

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10 Also Present:

11 Joseph O'Brien, Esq.

Corporation Counsel

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Patrick Alair, Esq.

13 Deputy Corporation Counsel

14 Barry Feldman, Town Manager

15 Norma Cronin, Town Clerk

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1 (Special Meeting commenced at 8:03 p.m.)  
2 MAYOR HARRIS: We will call the special  
3 meeting to order. If we would rise, please, for pledge  
4 of allegiance.  
5 (Pause.)  
6 MAYOR HARRIS: Roll call please,  
7 Mrs. Cronin.  
8 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. Carpenter.  
9 MS. CARPENTER: Here.  
10 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Connors.  
11 MR. CONNORS: Here.  
12 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Coursey.  
13 MR. COURSEY: Here.  
14 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Harris.  
15 MAYOR HARRIS: Here.  
16 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. McClay.  
17 MS. McCLAY: Here.  
18 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Slifka.  
19 MR. SLIFKA: Here.  
20 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Spada.  
21 MR. SPADA: Here.  
22 MS. CRONIN: Dr. Thornberry.  
23 MS. THORBERRY: Here.  
24 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Verrengia.  
25 MR. VERRENGIA: Here.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin.  
2 I want to begin tonight by putting this  
3 meeting into context. Tonight we will vote on a series  
4 of items that will determine whether this Council  
5 approves the Blue Back Square proposal. We reached  
6 this point after much listening, studying, questioning  
7 analyzing, considering and deliberating. We face a  
8 huge decision, but thanks to our citizens, our  
9 administration, and the applicant, we face it with all  
10 of the pertinent information on the table.

11 As one would expect from our engaged  
12 community, and as is needed to appropriately consider a  
13 proposal of this magnitude and complexity, the public  
14 participation in this process has been unprecedented.  
15 We have received hundreds and hundreds of e-mails and  
16 letters. For nearly a year, the proposal has been the  
17 subject of much discussion and debate in our community.  
18 We have benefited from about 50 hours of public  
19 hearings. And again, I want to give special thanks to  
20 our citizens for all of the input that they've had in  
21 this process. It's really, I'm speaking for all of us,  
22 it has been helpful to us. For each hour of hearings,  
23 Town Councilors have spent additional hours to study,  
24 to learn and to prepare. In short, we are ready to  
25 decide. But the process may not end tonight.

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1 As recently as yesterday, I was asked in

2 person and through e-mail why we would not just put  
3 this proposal to a vote of our citizens. The answer is  
4 that we are not empowered to do so by our Town charter,  
5 and the charter is here. It's on the web site. I urge  
6 everybody, the structure of our government, to take a  
7 look at it and to better understand the context within  
8 which the Council works. But the charter does provide  
9 for citizens to have the ability to petition for two  
10 referenda, one on the bond ordinance, if it's adopted,  
11 and one on the sale of public land, if it's approved.

12                   This is democracy in action. While all  
13 councilors, I'm sure, no matter where they stand on  
14 this proposal, do so with conviction and with pride, I  
15 believe I can speak for all of us and say that we  
16 support the people's right to take this to a vote. We  
17 will welcome and embrace the debate and future  
18 participation on this proposal and other issues facing  
19 our community.

20                   Now, I'd like to go over a little bit  
21 about tonight's procedure. This was of course a  
22 complex project, and we have a series of applications  
23 and ordinance proposals that we are going to be dealing  
24 with. First, I'll have Mr. Slifka actually read some  
25 items onto the record.

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1                   MR. SLIFKA: Communication from the Town  
2 Plan and Zoning Commission, July 12, 2004, recommending



4 development plan.

5                   Application for monument permit,  
6 relocation of Noah Webster statue. Ordinance making  
7 appropriations aggregating \$48,821,543 for Town  
8 projects and public improvements related to the Blue  
9 Back Square project and authorizing the issuance of  
10 \$48,821,543 bonds of the Town to meet said  
11 appropriations and pending the issuance thereof, the  
12 making of temporary borrowings for such purposes and  
13 declaring the Town's official intent to reimburse  
14 expenditures from such borrowings.

15                   Ordinance establishing a Special  
16 Services District for a portion of West Hartford  
17 Center.

18                   And resolution authorizing the execution  
19 of a Master Agreement between the Town of West Hartford  
20 and Blue Back Square, LLC, which provides, inter alia,  
21 for the conveyance of real estate by the Town of West  
22 Hartford to Blue Back Square, LLC, a portion of 20  
23 through 28 South Main Street and a portion of 50 South  
24 Main Street, 103 Raymond Road; provides for the  
25 construction of certain improvements upon land owned or

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1 to be owned by the Town; provides for the conveyance of  
2 real estate by Blue Back Square, LLC to the Town of  
3 West Hartford, a portion of 33 Raymond Road; and  
4 provides for the execution of certain easements,

5 licenses, and leases between Blue Back Square, LLC and  
6 the Town of West Hartford to allow for the efficient  
7 operation of their respective real estate uses.

8 MR. SPADA: I second it.

9 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion has been made and  
10 seconded. All those in favor.

11 VOICES: Aye.

12 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries.

13 Next I'll lay out the steps so you can  
14 understand how it's going to unfold. We are going to  
15 go now through the process, starting with item 1, the  
16 consideration of the application for Special  
17 Development District. The first step we have worked on  
18 through boilerplate language that's used typically on  
19 Special Development Districts, through stuff from the  
20 record that was raised, issues raised and conditions  
21 raised by councilors at the hearings. We have a draft  
22 of conditions of approval. That will be amended onto  
23 the SDD application, and then what we will do, after we  
24 vote on that, to have the basis of the discussion, the  
25 document, we will then open it up to councilors to pose

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1 questions, have further amendments on the application  
2 for the SDD as amended by the draft proposals.

3 After we do that, I would like to open  
4 it up to councilors to offer any other types of  
5 amendments or specific comments on the remaining items,

6 2 through 5 on the special notice. Once that is  
7 concluded, and we have the final shape of all of the  
8 items on the agenda, I will open everything up to  
9 general discussion about the entire Blue Back Square  
10 proposal, about all of these items.

11 Finally, when that general discussion is  
12 over, we will then move to split the questions. We  
13 have everything from a parliamentary perspective on the  
14 table at once, but we have to vote on these separately,  
15 so we will vote to split the question, and we will take  
16 each of the items up on a separate occasion as a vote,  
17 and that would be the end of the procedure.

18 So very good. Now we need a motion to  
19 amend the Special Development District application.

20 MR. SLIFKA: I move that we amend the  
21 Special Development District application with the  
22 document titled "Conditions of Approval, Blue Back  
23 Square, SDD number 36, SDD number 113, and SDD number  
24 114, dated July 14, 2004."

25 MR. SPADA: Second.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion made and second.

2 Any discussion? There being none, all those in favor.

3 VOICES: Aye.

4 MS. CARPENTER: I'm sorry, just a little  
5 bit of discussion on the Special Development District.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: We have to amend first.

7 MS. CARPENTER: Okay.  
8 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you,  
9 Mrs. Carpenter.  
10 MS. CARPENTER: I'm sorry.  
11 MAYOR HARRIS: That's okay. All those  
12 in favor.  
13 VOICES: Aye.  
14 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries.  
15 Now we are, under discussion right now will be item  
16 number 1, the application for Special Development  
17 District as amended by the draft conditions of  
18 approval. Mrs. Carpenter.  
19 MS. CARPENTER: Yes. Thank you,  
20 Mr. Mayor. My question is: One of the biggest  
21 concerns that I have about this is the sale of the  
22 public property, the Board of Education building as  
23 well as the surrounding property, which includes the  
24 transfer of property, which is something that we  
25 wrestled with during the debate.

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1 During the hearings, Mr. Feldman, you  
2 gave an excellent explanation as to the process that  
3 the administration went through that included kind of  
4 the future of this property, what the future of the  
5 Board of Education property and surrounding property  
6 would be, and I was wondering, just in making my own  
7 decision, if you could explain that to me once again.

8 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Feldman, before we do  
9 that, and I probably should have done this first, I  
10 apologize, Mrs. Carpenter. If Mr. Alair maybe can go  
11 through and give a quick summary of the draft  
12 conditions of approval so that people have a better  
13 understanding of what we are dealing with.

14 MR. ALAIR: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. For  
15 the record, Pat Alair, Deputy Corporation Counsel.

16 The conditions you have before you are a  
17 total of 12 pages in length. They commence with a  
18 preamble, which is in essence a set of findings which  
19 certainly the Council can debate. They are a draft set  
20 that we, staff, put together to support the conditions  
21 that are before you. Starting with page 3, you have a  
22 series of conditions. Item 1 is the approval of the  
23 plans, the actual first condition, which says the plans  
24 are approved. In fact, because this is a rather unique  
25 project, which is three SDDs, three separate SDDs, it

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1 in fact approves three separate SDD designations for  
2 portions.

3 Item 2, traffic improvements required.  
4 This condition includes all of the traffic improvements  
5 proposed in the Urbitran report which was the basis for  
6 the applicant's presentation, and includes six  
7 additional improvements which are recommendations which  
8 were made during the hearings by staff, and I believe

9 you may recall some of them, many of them were in  
10 reports that were submitted to you. All of them I  
11 believe were in reports submitted to you: Pedestrian  
12 crossing over Trout Brook at Park Road; additional  
13 vehicle detection and traffic progression analysis on  
14 Main Street; count down pedestrian signals where new  
15 intersections are being replaced; creating  
16 traffic-calming measures at the intersection of Raymond  
17 Road and Boulevard, or rather working with the engineer  
18 to do that, the Town Engineer to do that; attempting to  
19 maintain a pedestrian refuge area at the crosswalk on  
20 the north side of Farmington Avenue at North Main  
21 Street, and relocating the handicapped parking space  
22 and bus stop located on South Main Street in front of  
23 the piano store. These were all comments that came  
24 from staff in the various reports.

25 Future traffic improvements. There is a

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1 condition proposed modeled on the condition which was  
2 adopted originally with the Home Depot SDD, which would  
3 require the applicant to commence a traffic study after  
4 the project is opened and to put \$250,000 in escrow or  
5 in the form of a bond as an alternative to study and  
6 implement any recommended changes which would result  
7 from that traffic analysis after it's completed.

8 The next item is transportation. It's a  
9 provision which encourages employees to use mass

10 transit systems, that's part A; and part B would  
11 propose the implementation of some form of alternative  
12 transportation system throughout the Center generally  
13 bounded by Farmington, LaSalle, Main, Ellsworth,  
14 Memorial and Raymond, to study that, to implement it  
15 and to keep it in place for at least six months in  
16 order to determine its viability and its long-term  
17 efficacy, if you will.

18 Architectural changes. You will recall  
19 a recommendation made by the Design Review Advisory  
20 Committee, which has been incorporated into this  
21 condition, which would allow the Town Planner to  
22 approve administrative amendments to the Special  
23 Development District with the approval of DRAC and of  
24 course ultimately with the approval of the Council, as  
25 our administrative amendment process requires for

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1 signage within the SDD, so long as it's consistent with  
2 the signage program that the applicant has proposed,  
3 and other minor architectural changes which otherwise  
4 would not increase building footprint, but as you will  
5 recall the issue of a disabled access elevator or some  
6 mechanism in Webster Walk to get down the hill was  
7 proposed, and that would be permitted as well as  
8 working with DRAC and the Town Planner to review the  
9 facades to the library -- excuse me, to the two parking  
10 garages. That was proposed by the applicant as well.

11 Item 6, contact with neighborhoods and  
12 other groups, meetings and telephone numbers. This  
13 requires the applicant to maintain a contact number and  
14 to give it to neighborhood organizations, to conduct  
15 regular meetings with the neighborhood and also to work  
16 with the local nonprofit arts theaters organizations to  
17 work with them to coordinate their activities. You  
18 heard some testimony on the record about concerns from  
19 that community and that there is a condition.

20 Then we go through a number of fairly  
21 boilerplate conditions, operational conditions  
22 regarding maintaining solid waste compactors, snow  
23 maintenance, equipment use, motorized power-cleaning  
24 equipment to be used only within limited hours, pickups  
25 and deliveries and construction traffic. Construction

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1 traffic requiring the use of approved construction  
2 routes, coordinated delivery schedules, tractor  
3 trailers not to be used after 9:00 p.m. unless they are  
4 parked and closed fully off the street. Outdoor  
5 displays and merchandise not to impede pedestrian  
6 traffic. A requirement that they implement a  
7 maintenance plan and put it in place and keep it in  
8 place.

9 Bonds and performance guarantees for the  
10 various obligations which they have. A hundred percent  
11 performance bond for the project street and

12 infrastructure improvements, a number of other related  
13 conditions about how that would work; a permanent 2  
14 percent maintenance bond for all of those  
15 infrastructure improvements; requirement that all  
16 underground utility or all utilities be placed  
17 underground.

18                   A construction phasing condition which  
19 would require them to establish a detailed construction  
20 sequencing and work with the Town Engineer on that; a  
21 condition which would require that final certificates  
22 of occupancy for buildings A or B cannot be issued  
23 until all traffic improvements are completed.

24                   I believe you will recall from the  
25 testimony that Buildings C and D would be completed

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1 before all of the traffic improvements are done, but  
2 that A and B would not be.

3                   Detailed construction plans for all  
4 off-site improvements to be submitted prior to issuance  
5 of building permits; applicant to provide for a  
6 full-time inspector for all on- and off-site  
7 improvements; progress reports to be given to the Town;  
8 plans, basically a set of as-built plans for all  
9 off-site improvements; a requirement that we receive  
10 acknowledgment of the applicant's receipt of required  
11 approvals from other agencies.

12                   Final plan review by the Town Planner

13 incorporating all of the changes which may be made here  
14 tonight or may have been made during the process. A  
15 requirement that in relocating the Noah Webster statue  
16 the conservator's report, which was submitted during  
17 the hearing, be followed, and in essence that's it. A  
18 couple of other procedural ones, but those are the  
19 details.

20                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Alair.  
21 Now that there is a better understanding amongst the  
22 public about the items in the conditions of approval,  
23 why don't we turn it back to that and discuss any  
24 amendments to the conditions as outlined by Mr. Alair.  
25 Mr. Connors.

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1                   MR. CONNORS: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
2 Mr. Alair, I brought this up as a condition, a draft  
3 condition that I did not want to have in the document  
4 because I don't think we had it fully nailed down.  
5 This is in regards to reassuring, legally reassuring  
6 the Council and the public that the residential  
7 buildings do get built in this process. It was  
8 explained during the public hearing process that there  
9 is a series of penalties for delay in building the  
10 residential units, penalties, monetary penalties. But  
11 as I tried to explain that item, what I would like to  
12 do is try to get something a little bit more, instead  
13 of penalties, have other things fall at risk if those

14 buildings were not going to be built. I really think  
15 the residential piece of this development is extremely  
16 vital. So you drafted a condition for me, and I'm  
17 understanding there may be some issues with that. I  
18 don't know if you want to read that, I can read it if  
19 you like, whichever.

20 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Alair.

21 MR. ALAIR: Mr. Mayor, the condition  
22 which you had asked me to draft as a separate condition  
23 is as follows: "In order to ensure the mix of uses  
24 which in part makes this project superior to those  
25 which might otherwise be permitted pursuant to the West

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1 Hartford zoning ordinances, the applicant shall be  
2 required to construct all of Building B, including  
3 parts B-1 and B-2 and B-3 at one time. No certificate  
4 of occupancy shall be issued for the building shell or  
5 any portion of Building B, including parts B-1, B-2 and  
6 B-3 until all portions thereof are ready for such a  
7 certificate of occupancy."

8 As you indicated, the concern, which in  
9 reviewing the transcript was expressed during the  
10 hearing by the applicant and which might be a concern  
11 here is for the financing of the project. Obviously  
12 once the hearing is closed, we can't sit down and ask  
13 them whether that's a problem, and as a result I had  
14 expressed some reservation about that.



16 relatively same period of time, completion is going to  
17 occur around the same time for a lot of these  
18 buildings, by proposing this, it puts some of the  
19 revenue we would take in at risk is what you are  
20 telling me, a period of time?

21 MR. ALAIR: Yes, it would at least defer  
22 it, yes.

23 MR. CONNORS: I still feel that there  
24 needs to be some other hook to this where we can make  
25 sure -- I mean, even -- this really refers to just

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1 building 3 and not the building on Memorial Road as  
2 well.

3 MR. ALAIR: Building B, yes.

4 MR. CONNORS: Residential. So -- I'm  
5 sorry, yeah. So I mean, is there any other ideas you  
6 have that can help settle this?

7 MR. ALAIR: I go back to the testimony  
8 that you have in the piece of the transcript before you  
9 and remind you, and it's a piece that perhaps was  
10 glossed over a little too quickly, but it's in there  
11 when I reread it, the notion that the Town closing does  
12 not occur until all of the developer's construction  
13 financing is in place, which would mean the  
14 construction financing for Building B, B-1, B-2, and  
15 B-3, including the residential piece. That's already  
16 in the Master Agreement, and that was said during the

17 hearing, but the conversation very quickly shifted, and  
18 you can see that from the segment of the transcript  
19 that I've provided you. And what that tells you is  
20 that before the Town property is conveyed to the  
21 developer, the developer will have had to meet whatever  
22 presale requirements are mandated by its lender on  
23 Building B-3 and whatever presale or prelease  
24 requirements are mandated on its lender and presumably  
25 it's the same lender, but not necessarily, on Building

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1 B-1 and B-2, the commercial portions.

2                   So independently, those requirements  
3 will have had to have been met under the terms of the  
4 Master Agreement before the Town property gets  
5 conveyed. I don't know if that gives you the level of  
6 comfort that you were looking for.

7                   MR. CONNORS: Mr. Mayor.

8                   MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Connors.

9                   MR. CONNORS: If someone obtains  
10 financing, if they obtain financing for those pieces  
11 and we do then go forward with the closing, how likely  
12 is it that that project still might not go forward and  
13 that financing never actually be taken from the  
14 investor?

15                   MR. ALAIR: I have no idea. That would  
16 be pure speculation for me to try to give you an answer  
17 to that. I mean, if you've met all of the

18 requirements, presumably you would go forward and build  
19 it, but I can't tell you today that under no  
20 circumstances would a developer not change their mind.

21 MR. CONNORS: The only thing that struck  
22 me, and I mentioned during the hearing, was that we  
23 separated these parcels out from the rest of it and put  
24 penalties for delays in building and we didn't do that  
25 on the other pieces, so it just kind of stuck out as,

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1 is there the chance that these buildings may not be  
2 constructed if there is some change in market or  
3 whatnot. But it would be the normal practice if the  
4 developer actually obtained the financing for the  
5 building that they would go ahead and build it.

6 MR. ALAIR: That's certainly been our  
7 experience.

8 MR. CONNORS: But the possibility --  
9 there is that possibility that they could choose not to  
10 even with the financing in place and not take it.

11 MR. ALAIR: Yes.

12 MR. CONNORS: Have we quantified at all  
13 what kind of a financial impact delaying the COs for  
14 those other buildings if we put this amendment in?

15 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Feldman.

16 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, you might -- I  
17 don't know if you have this available -- but you may  
18 remember in the financing briefing book, there is a

19 construction timetable that looks like this, and you  
20 can just kind of glance at the different parts of the B  
21 building, and you can see that potentially there is a  
22 lag between the retail, the office and the housing  
23 elements to the B complex. And again, as Attorney  
24 Blair mentioned correctly, we do anticipate revenue for  
25 the special services tax that the developer investors

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1 will pay to us, so if there should be some delay, that  
2 will have an impact on our cash flow.

3 Mr. Mayor, if I could, at the risk of  
4 interjecting a comment --

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Feldman.

6 MR. FELDMAN: -- that may or may not be  
7 helpful to Mr. Connors, we've spent a considerable  
8 amount of time in negotiating the Council component,  
9 both building D as in David and Building B as in Baker,  
10 and came up with, I think, a rather unique way to  
11 handle Building D because it sits on our property.  
12 Building B was a little bit more difficult to deal  
13 with, but one of the things that convinced me, because  
14 like Mr. Connors, I think all of the Town  
15 administration was very concerned that the housing be  
16 built as soon as possible, as soon as practical, and I  
17 recall the piece of the conversation that at least had  
18 the most traction with me, and it was the argument that  
19 essentially went along the lines of, one thing that if

20 there is a worst-case scenario, worse than the housing  
21 not being built is that the building would be built,  
22 but they could not sell it for whatever market reasons  
23 exist, and that we then have essentially a vacant  
24 building, which at least in my own mind's eye is worse  
25 than having nothing other than just a vacant piece of

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1 property waiting for the market to essentially catch up  
2 to what we hope to build.

3                   So after thinking about that for some  
4 while, I realized that the worst course was not the  
5 certain course that I would like, which is make them  
6 build the building, and if the market isn't there, let  
7 the building sit vacant, and that again I thought was  
8 worse than not having the building built and allowing  
9 the market to do what markets do, which is to generate  
10 necessary demand and allowing them then to build the  
11 housing to meet that demand.

12                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Feldman.  
13 Mr. Connors.

14                   MR. CONNORS: All right. Thank you.

15                   MAYOR HARRIS: One just factual point  
16 question, as far as Building D as in David, where we  
17 have the other piece of the residential and this  
18 portion of Building B, the overwhelming majority of the  
19 housing is in Building D.

20                   MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, that's correct.

21 There is essentially 70 units. It's not an awful lot  
22 of housing that we are talking about, but you are  
23 right. The majority of the units, I think 45, give or  
24 take one or two units are in Building D as in David.  
25 Building B as in Baker have essentially in the 20s, so

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1 we are not talking a lot of housing units.

2 MAYOR HARRIS: Anything further,

3 Mr. Connors?

4 MR. CONNORS: Nothing further.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Anybody else?

6 Dr. Thornberry.

7 MS. THORNBERRY: Mr. Mayor, has

8 Mr. Connors withdrawn his proposal?

9 MAYOR HARRIS: There was nothing on the  
10 table, just discussion.

11 MS. THORNBERRY: Okay, fine. So I can  
12 begin with mine. On item 4, page 5, item 4-B, I'd like  
13 to talk a little bit about this since this was really  
14 kind of my baby. I was very concerned, as all of us  
15 are, that we not have two West Hartford Centers. We  
16 want to have one West Hartford Center, and we are going  
17 to have one West Hartford Center, but I also indicated  
18 that I'm not sure that I would be able to walk from  
19 Chico's on one side of West Hartford Center all the way  
20 to the other end and then maybe back again in one trek,  
21 and it would be nice if there was something available

22 that I could take, and I didn't have to get into my car  
23 and drive to a different part of the Center.

24                   So in discussing this with the  
25 applicant, I know that we talked about several

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1 different things that can be -- that can be used, and  
2 what I wanted to put in here is that the applicant is  
3 the expert in this area, I am not. The Town does not  
4 have a great deal of experience with pedi-cabs or  
5 perhaps horse-drawn carriages or some places even have  
6 rickshaws, so what I wanted to do was have a way that  
7 the applicant form -- have a way that the applicant --  
8 I'm giving a lot of latitude here -- puts together a  
9 committee or just himself or a few people to really  
10 study and do a pilot program for some of those  
11 transportation vehicles that we can use, and I'd like  
12 for them to bring back to the Council a report of what  
13 works best, what works at all, and see what we can do  
14 in the future.

15                   I think because of how -- Mr. Mayor,  
16 through you, to Mr. Blair, I think the way that this is  
17 worded, we might want to take a couple of things out,  
18 and I would probably start with, after we've defined  
19 the perimeters of that transportation area ending with  
20 the "Memorial Road," where it begins with "Said  
21 alternative transportation" and goes on and ends with  
22 "if it shall be determined to be unnecessary or

23 unsuccessful," I think we can probably delete this. I  
24 am concerned that this would compel the applicant to,  
25 on the timing of some things that may not be in the

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1 best interest of getting a real feel of the  
2 transportation vehicles and items, so that if for some  
3 reason the CO on Building B coincided with summer or  
4 the late spring where people traditionally do walk,  
5 that this would not give us a really good, you know,  
6 feel for things, and it might leave out the winter  
7 where we talk about the inclement weather and people  
8 might like to use something like this, so I would like  
9 to give them as much flexibility to do a good study.

10                   And as far as the six months, again,  
11 that could confine them to a term that left out a time  
12 of year that might be more indicative of when the use  
13 is needed, and so what I say to the -- what I say to  
14 the applicant here is, you know best as to how these  
15 vehicles are used. You've had other experience. Would  
16 you try some of these out, use them? Would you do a  
17 research report for us, and would you come back to the  
18 Council and advise us as to how we should continue?

19                   MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Alair.

20                   MR. ALAIR: In order to be clear, I'm  
21 removing the last two sentences, and then do you want  
22 the addition of a sentence which in essence says come  
23 back at some point to the Council and advise us?

24 MS. THORNBERRY: Yes, I would.

25 MR. ALAIR: Do you have some time frame

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1 in mind?

2 MS. THORNBERRY: Well, I'm going to  
3 leave the time frame open because then again, it would  
4 be -- we can tie it into the completion of a particular  
5 building, but that may, again, may not be the right  
6 time, so I'm going to have to rely on the expertise of  
7 those who have done it, of the applicant and his  
8 company that have done this in other places to further  
9 decide what is the best time frame to do this where  
10 you'd get the best results for what you are looking at.

11 As a researcher myself, you know, the  
12 first rule is you always begin with the research  
13 question, you know, so that is what, you know, he needs  
14 to do, to frame it and to do the research, so I don't  
15 want to limit it.

16 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Alair.

17 MR. ALAIR: Mr. O'Brien just raised a  
18 question. The fourth line says "Applicant shall study  
19 and implement." You want them to do, as I understand  
20 it, more than just study. You want them to actually  
21 implement the program?

22 MS. THORNBERRY: In my way of thinking  
23 on this, I do not believe that they could study how  
24 well, let's say, a pedi-cab is used in West Hartford

25 Center unless they actually have a pedi-cab in West

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1 Hartford Center and see the use. So to that extent,  
2 they are going to have to implement one or more of the  
3 others to get some idea as to what works. Often you  
4 can tell very early on that something just isn't going  
5 to work, and then other times it takes longer to know  
6 that. They are in the best position to know that.

7 MR. ALAIR: If I might offer a  
8 suggestion.

9 MS. THORNBERRY: Please do.

10 MR. ALAIR: And the suggestion would be  
11 to remove the second sentence -- the last sentence, but  
12 not the prior sentence, and the reason for that is  
13 twofold: As I was trying to draft this, as you had  
14 requested, my first dilemma was, well, when do we make  
15 it start?

16 MS. THORNBERRY: Exactly.

17 MR. ALAIR: I chose the opening of  
18 Building B because that's where the predominant rest --  
19 excuse me, retail area is furthest away from the  
20 Center, the existing Center. It's the other side of  
21 the Board of Ed building. That's why I chose to use  
22 Building B as the trigger. If you don't have some form  
23 of trigger, then we can't tell when the applicant is in  
24 violation of the condition.

25 MS. THORNBERRY: I understand.

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1 MR. ALAIR: And hence, that sentence.  
2 The second sentence was intended as a guideline to say  
3 you've got to at least run it six months. If you leave  
4 that sentence out, if you leave it open, that would be  
5 up to the Council to make the determination. If they  
6 come back to you and say, you know, this thing isn't  
7 working, it would be up to you to say you haven't given  
8 it enough time. So certainly leaving that last  
9 sentence out, I think gets at the spirit of what you  
10 are suggesting and would also provide the mechanism for  
11 that report back to the Council. They would come back  
12 to you if it's not working.

13 MS. THORNBERRY: Mr. Mayor.

14 MAYOR HARRIS: Dr. Thornberry.

15 MS. THORNBERRY: I agree with Mr. Alair  
16 as to his suggestions and would recommend that we do  
17 such.

18 MAYOR HARRIS: So then the amendment  
19 that you are offering on the table would be to delete  
20 the final sentence of that subparagraph B, beginning  
21 with "The applicant" and ending with "unnecessary or  
22 unsuccessful?"

23 MS. THORNBERRY: Yes. And --

24 MR. ALAIR: And the addition of a  
25 sentence in its place which would require the applicant

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1 to report back to the Council on the success of the  
2 program.

3                   MAYOR HARRIS: Perhaps, Mr. Alair, you  
4 can draft a quick sentence. We will move away from  
5 this particular issue, see if anybody else has  
6 anything, and then we can take that motion up, that  
7 amendment up.

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

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

11                   MR. VERRENGIA: Yes, I have a question  
12 for Mr. Alair. Page 4, the future traffic  
13 improvements, halfway down, where the sentence starts  
14 "For the purpose purpose of funding any adjustments or  
15 refinements to the traffic system which may be  
16 recommended in said study, the Applicant shall place  
17 the sum of \$250,000 in an escrow account." I don't  
18 want to split hairs, but in looking at the words  
19 "adjustments or refinements," those would imply like a  
20 Band-Aid type of approach, and I'm just curious if we  
21 would want to change that to like "improvements."

22                   MR. ALAIR: Ultimately this is my  
23 attempt to capture the concept that I believe is the  
24 Council's intent. If that's what you are more  
25 comfortable with, certainly. The intention, as I

1 understood it, was that the various intersections which  
2 are being improved ultimately might require, as I put  
3 it, adjustments or refinements, changes in timing of  
4 signals to perhaps pulling down a signal and replacing  
5 it with a different signal, which I thought was  
6 encompassed by that, but if you are talking about  
7 improvements, that would be fine.

8 MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you. And just a  
9 question regarding the -- we heard a lot about the  
10 parking reserve fund, which in other words is like a  
11 rainy day fund, put that money aside.

12 My question is, and I just want to make  
13 sure I understand the answer, is that any shifting of  
14 those monies would have to go through the Council and a  
15 stipulation at this point would not be needed; is that  
16 correct?

17 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, that's correct,  
18 Mr. Verrengia. We cannot spend any money without your  
19 appropriation, without you approving a specific  
20 appropriation.

21 MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you.

22 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Verrengia, you raised  
23 the issue of improvements, not a recognized part of  
24 legislative history, but if you do want to offer an  
25 amendment to perhaps say any adjustments, improvements

1 or refinements, you could offer that now. I just  
2 wanted to clarify that.

3 MR. VERRENGIA: Yes, that's what I would  
4 like to do.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion is to insert after  
6 "adjustments" a comma "improvements" and then continue  
7 "or refinements" so Mr. Verrengia has moved it. Do we  
8 have a second?

9 MR. SLIFKA: Second.

10 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion has been made and  
11 seconded. Any discussion? Dr. Thornberry.

12 MS. THORBERRY: Mr. Mayor, when you use  
13 the terms "adjustments or refinements," they can  
14 include improvements. Improvements require a level of  
15 judgment being made by sometimes a different party that  
16 may or may not render it an improvement, but you can  
17 always have an adjustment or a refinement and having an  
18 improvement be so. I think the word "improvement"  
19 could halt or could muddy the waters of some projects.

20 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you,  
21 Dr. Thornberry. Any further discussion? There being  
22 none, all those in favor.

23 A VOICE: Aye.

24 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed.

25 MS. THORBERRY: Nay.

1                   MAYOR HARRIS: Motion carries.

2 Mr. Connors.

3                   MR. CONNORS: Thank you. Just a follow  
4 up to Mr. Verrengia's question, \$250,000 held in  
5 escrow, is that the limit to what they would be liable  
6 for if improvements exceeded that amount? Just because  
7 it's held in escrow that's kind of like a cushion, but  
8 if there are improvements that go beyond that, who is  
9 liable for those? If we know 24 months past the  
10 opening of the first building, figure maybe a year past  
11 the project or development is in full operation, we  
12 finally need to change dynamics of the roadway or  
13 whatever, who at that point is liable? The 250 I don't  
14 think would go tremendously far. I know we can't just  
15 pull a number completely out of the air, but I would  
16 just like to get a feel for that.

17                   MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Alair.

18                   MR. ALAIR: Some -- as you know, one of  
19 the improvements being proposed is revisions to the  
20 Park Road off-ramp, which is a state highway. With the  
21 exception, everything else that I can think of is a  
22 Town road which is being approved, and we as the Town  
23 do control the streets and do maintain the streets and  
24 operate them, so I would assume that that  
25 responsibility would be on us if we determined that

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1 something needed to be done.

2 MR. CONNORS: I understand that. Just  
3 as a follow-up, I mean, the traffic study that was done  
4 is pretty -- there is a certain amount of certainty  
5 that they think that these changes they are going to  
6 make will work and mitigate any traffic. So I'm  
7 wondering if -- it would seem that this developer is  
8 doing this and he is confident that the traffic study  
9 has covered what he thinks would happen, but what if,  
10 again, there needs to be a change and now we have to  
11 undertake a roadway change and it costs a million  
12 dollars? I mean, that money obviously then comes out  
13 of our pocket. Mr. Feldman.

14 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, if I could. I  
15 didn't mean to interrupt you, Pat. You raise an  
16 interesting question, and I guess what we have to do,  
17 and we puzzled over that issue, to be honest with you,  
18 trying to understand what might else be required. If  
19 you just look at the list of improvements that would be  
20 done to the intersections and the roadways in the  
21 Center, it's purely significant. All the hardware, the  
22 signalization, all of those things for the most part  
23 are included in the investor's requirement to upgrade  
24 traffic control systems. What else might be done?  
25 Your suggestion that there might be a million dollar

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2 suspect that could be road wide -- I mean, what we are  
3 dealing with is some widening of roads and all of those  
4 things, we just dismiss, we wouldn't even consider  
5 doing any of those things. So I think you are back to  
6 what else might be done, and I think it's what Attorney  
7 Alair began to outline, which is you might change  
8 hardware, traffic controllers; you might change walk,  
9 don't walk signals; you might restripe, all of which is  
10 not terribly expensive. I'm trying to think, all the  
11 intersections are signalized; all intersections for the  
12 most part have walk, don't walk signals. There is a  
13 requirement that they even install the count-down walk,  
14 don't walk signals that are at least amongst the newest  
15 technology. So I'm just sitting here in my own mind  
16 kind of mulling over what else might be required, and  
17 for the most part, it should be handled within that  
18 quarter million dollars that they are setting aside.

19                   Had they not invested the amount of  
20 money that they are investing, they are investing  
21 upwards of somewhere in the neighborhood of almost 2  
22 million dollars in our road system, had they not done  
23 that or only done pieces of it, I think your point  
24 would be right on target. But given the types of  
25 investment that they are making in our road system,

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1 what changes need to be done subsequent to the opening,  
2 subsequent to the traffic study would lead most

3 reasonable people to believe it would be relatively  
4 minor, modest expenses that should be within a quarter  
5 of a million. There is no guarantee, there is no  
6 perfect things, as we certainly know, but the consensus  
7 of most people who are more expert than I is we should  
8 be able to accommodate any additional traffic  
9 improvement changes within that quarter million  
10 dollars.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Feldman.  
12 Mr. Connors.

13 MR. CONNORS: Okay. Thank you for that.

14 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.  
15 Mr. Slifka.

16 MR. SLIFKA: I have a few amendments.  
17 They should be fairly quick. I'll try to go in  
18 chronological order the best I can. The Section 3-a,  
19 actually there is no A, just Section 3, Future Traffic  
20 Improvements. The first sentence is "Applicant shall  
21 commence a traffic study to be conducted by an engineer  
22 approved by the Town administration," and I think I  
23 would like to strike or move that we strike "Town  
24 administration" and substitute there "Town Council."

25 MR. SPADA: I second it.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion is made and  
2 seconded. Any discussion? There being known, all  
3 those in favor.

4 VOICES: Aye.

5 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries.

6 Mr. Slifka.

7 MR. SLIFKA: Next is Section 6, I have  
8 one for A, B and C. The first I think to move that for  
9 Section A, following the statement that says "The  
10 applicant shall maintain a telephone number," I would  
11 like to add to that "and an e-mail address." Pretty  
12 self-explanatory.

13 MR. SPADA: I second that motion.

14 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion made and seconded.

15 Any discussion? All those in favor.

16 VOICES: Aye.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries.

18 Amendment adopted.

19 MR. SLIFKA: Section 6-b, I'll just read  
20 it so I can put this in context for everybody. It says  
21 "The applicant's management team shall assume the  
22 responsibility for conducting regular meetings with the  
23 neighborhood and the other provisions of this  
24 condition. The applicant shall make a good faith  
25 effort to address reasonable neighborhood concerns.

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1 The Town Manager will attempt to mediate any disputes."  
2 I'd like to add onto the end of that paragraph that the  
3 applicant shall report to the Council, to the Town  
4 Council on a regular basis to be determined, and maybe

5 if somebody has a feeling we need to tweak that a  
6 little bit, I'm happy to consider that, too.

7 MR. MAYOR: Mr. Slifka, if I can  
8 clarify, a schedule on a regular basis to be determined  
9 by the Council, that the intent of this was that  
10 perhaps at the beginning as that these buildings come  
11 online that you might need a shorter schedule, whereas  
12 after experience, it would be longer periods of time  
13 between. So a schedule to be determined by the  
14 Council.

15 MR. SLIFKA: I would agree.

16 MR. SPADA: I second the motion.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion made and seconded.  
18 Any discussion? Mrs. McClay.

19 MS. McCLAY: I just need a little  
20 clarification to Deputy Mayor Slifka, exactly what  
21 would the applicant be reporting back on, the whole  
22 project, you know, the construction updates type thing,  
23 as well as any input they might have gotten from  
24 neighbors? What type of report are we actually asking  
25 for?

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Slifka.

2 MR. SLIFKA: I think given the section  
3 that this is in, although we hope to get regular  
4 updates in all forms, that this is particularly dealing  
5 with the burdens on the applicant to have contact with

6 the neighbors and to discuss any issues of concern with  
7 them and that the Town Manager, that says, will attempt  
8 to mediate any disputes, and that we certainly want to  
9 be kept apprised of an issue raised by the neighbors  
10 and the success or failure in dealing with whatever  
11 they are.

12                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Slifka.  
13 Mrs. McClay.

14                   MS. McCLAY: Thank you. I take it this  
15 is not necessarily in person, but a written type form?

16                   MR. SLIFKA: I guess for the legislative  
17 record, I would like to say it would be in person.

18                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Slifka.  
19 Perhaps we can, to clarify that, and not hamstringing  
20 again for always being in person because there could  
21 always be a situation that could be relatively minor  
22 that a memo can be used, we can have a friendly  
23 amendment to say based on the schedule to be determined  
24 by the Council and in a manner to be determined by the  
25 Council, schedule something to that effect. I'm the

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1 chair so someone else should move that.

2                   MR. SLIFKA: So moved.

3                   MR. SPADA: Second.

4                   MAYOR HARRIS: Motion made and seconded.

5 Any discussion? There being none, all those in favor.

6                   VOICES: Aye.  
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7 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries.  
8 Amendment is adopted.

9 Mr. Slifka, anything else?

10 MR. SLIFKA: Yes. Moving to Section  
11 6-B, again, just for context I'll read the paragraph.  
12 It states "In order to ensure the success of the  
13 theater space within Blue Back Square and to ensure  
14 that it does not function to the detriment of other  
15 vital art opportunities in our community, the Applicant  
16 shall use its best efforts to work with existing  
17 nonprofit theater operators in the Hartford community  
18 to coordinate their activities and to work  
19 cooperatively for the mutual benefit of all of them."

20 I would like to add on to the end of  
21 that a comma, after "them, "including but not limited  
22 to Real Art Ways and the Wadsworth Atheneum."

23 MR. SPADA: Second.

24 MR. SLIFKA: I'll add to that if I've  
25 missed any particular group I didn't mean to offend

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1 them, and I would be happy to take other suggestions  
2 that should be added to that.

3 MAYOR HARRIS: You are not a frequenter  
4 of arts movies, Mr. Slifka?

5 MR. SLIFKA: I withhold comment. Whose  
6 art is what?

7 MAYOR HARRIS: We have a motion, it's  
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8 been seconded. Any discussion? There being none, all  
9 those in favor.

10 VOICES: Aye.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries.

12 MR. SLIFKA: And the last one, on this  
13 one I'm going to perhaps ask Mr. Alair's assistance or  
14 Mr. Feldman's assistance. Section 12-D, again, I'll  
15 read it for context. "The Applicant shall provide for  
16 a full-time inspector for all on- and off-site  
17 improvements. Monthly inspection/progress reports  
18 shall be provided to the Town Engineer for his review.  
19 A monthly job meeting shall be held with the Town  
20 Engineer, the Project Inspector and his construction  
21 personnel. The purpose of these meetings will be to  
22 problem-solve and review needed corrective measures as  
23 construction progresses."

24 Now, having read that and working with  
25 construction law, I understand what this means is that

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1 this could be for kind of the means and methods of the  
2 project and probably a level of detail that the Town  
3 Council would not want to eject itself into, but to the  
4 point that Mrs. McClay raised a moment ago, I'm looking  
5 for an appropriate place to say that the Town will get  
6 regular updates from someone on the project, be it the  
7 applicant, be it construction manager, be it some  
8 combination thereof, as to how construction is

9 progressing in general terms, you know, perhaps not  
10 down to whether we are using a particular type of pipe  
11 or not, but, you know, as to how things are proceeding  
12 in a global sense.

13                   So if maybe somebody could suggest the  
14 right place to put that. Looking at this, the best I  
15 could come up with is D, but somebody might have a  
16 better suggestion and a better suggestion on how to  
17 phrase that.

18                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Slifka.  
19 Mr. Alair, do you want to --

20                   MR. ALAIR: A sentence at the end of  
21 that subsection which would say perhaps "The Applicant  
22 shall provide a monthly construction update to the  
23 Council in writing."

24                   MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, if I could.  
25 Mr. Slifka, are you trying to get information from the

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1 applicant, or are you trying to get information from  
2 us?

3                   MR. SLIFKA: I know Mr. Connors wants to  
4 add to this. I think -- I don't have a full answer,  
5 but I think we want it from whoever has got the  
6 answers, whoever is the right person to give us the  
7 update, we want the update. I don't want to split  
8 hairs so --

9                   MR. FELDMAN: I was waiting for

10 Mr. Connors.

11 MR. CONNORS: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Slifka was  
12 just following the line of thinking I had. I sent a  
13 proposed condition to Mr. Alair regarding a  
14 construction manager employed by the Town that would  
15 report back to the Town, report to the Council on a  
16 regular basis, the time frame not determined, but  
17 someone that the Town has hired to oversee the  
18 construction to make sure materials that were expected  
19 to be used would be used, so on and so on, so the  
20 Council at that time has a handle as the project goes  
21 forward as to what's happening, and if there are any  
22 problems, if there are any changes to change orders,  
23 whatever, that, you know, maybe not down to the size of  
24 a pipe like Mr. Slifka said, but, you know, kind of an  
25 overview, and you mentioned to me that that was not

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1 something we would make a condition of.

2 MR. ALAIR: Well, I had suggested to you  
3 that as an alternative to imposing it as a condition of  
4 approval here, that's, if you will, an operational kind  
5 of condition which you as the Council can direct the  
6 administration to do or ask the administration to do.  
7 We certainly don't need to be directed to do it, you  
8 can ask us, but to ask the administration to do that  
9 without necessarily putting it in a condition which may  
10 prove to be overly burdensome, if you will. It might

11 prove that we don't need somebody full-time.

12 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Connors.

13 MR. CONNORS: Just to follow up through  
14 you, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Feldman, we are planning on hiring  
15 a construction manager, I understand, for this project.

16 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Connors,  
17 yes. What we are going to wind up doing probably is  
18 hiring additional help. How we do that, it might be a  
19 contract with perhaps some local architectural firm.  
20 It might be a contract with somebody that would be  
21 essentially a contractor to us that is accountable back  
22 to us, but I guess back to the point, the larger  
23 question, which is, how do you get information? I  
24 think the condition that you have here is well-crafted  
25 in regards to getting information from Blue Back

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1 Square, but I would envision, and you can certainly  
2 refine this, I would envision that one of the Council  
3 committees would have oversight. Take one of your  
4 committees, maybe we can form a brand new committee  
5 that meets as any of the other Council committees would  
6 meet on a weekly or biweekly or a monthly basis. And  
7 at those meetings, the Blue Back Square construction  
8 representative may be in attendance, certainly we would  
9 be in attendance, the person that Mr. Connors is  
10 describing would also be there, and the express intent  
11 would be to provide all information, answer all

12 questions, to encourage the media to be there, and to,  
13 on a regular ongoing basis, provide information. As  
14 you suggest, not down to the level of detail that some  
15 perhaps would need to know, but more on a more global,  
16 more policy discussion that you would -- I think it  
17 would be absolutely critically important for you to be  
18 involved in the initial perhaps six, twelve months of  
19 construction. That's what I would envision and  
20 hopefully you'll find that acceptable.

21 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Connors.

22 MR. CONNORS: I don't mean to gobble  
23 everybody's time here. Just in my eyes with the scope  
24 of this project, it would seem reasonable that we would  
25 have some, either one individual, I would think it

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1 would be one individual rather than a firm that would  
2 be in charge with oversight of this project, and that  
3 person would not just report back policy issues, but  
4 would report back construction phasing, you know, to  
5 the Council. I would think that our own Building  
6 Department would want somebody on-site. I mean, it's a  
7 short period of time. You can contract out to this  
8 person. It would just make sure that everything we  
9 expect from quality of construction to timeliness is  
10 happening, and the Council at that time would know  
11 exactly on a month, or if it has to be every 60 days,  
12 know what's going on with the project.

13 I don't know if that's a condition or if  
14 that's something that we address post, but I would like  
15 to have some feel around the table if people think  
16 that's a good idea or not.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Spada.

18 MR. SPADA: Thank you and you are not  
19 gobbling anybody's time. I think the message that we  
20 are giving you, whether it's in a condition or  
21 direction, is that this body wants to be communicated  
22 with. It's a two-year window. It's not a lot of time.  
23 There may be different people up here, there may be the  
24 same nine, but whoever is sitting up here doesn't want  
25 policy overviews during that two years. I think we are

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1 going to want, at least speaking from my seat, we are  
2 going to want some level of detail. We sat through 50  
3 hours of hearing so we might as well hear what kind of  
4 pipe is going in, and it should be face to face. I  
5 wouldn't be satisfied myself with a memo or a letter.  
6 They ought to have representatives here to speak to it  
7 and if we do form a committee, and I think that's a  
8 terrific idea, it will probably be all nine of us that  
9 are on that committee. So I think the message is, we  
10 want communication if this passes tonight, and we want  
11 it regularly and with some detail.

12 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Connors -- I mean,  
13 Mr. Coursey, excuse me.

14 MR. COURSEY: I thank Mr. Connors for  
15 bringing that up, and I think the question we have  
16 before us is whether or not we want to make this a  
17 condition of approval or maybe we want to come back if  
18 this project is approved at a future meeting and  
19 establish a committee. I would envision the committee,  
20 you know, establishing a committee. It would probably  
21 be the type of interest that you see at Mr. Slifka's  
22 Budget and Finance Committee meetings, so because of  
23 the chairman's polished deliver, but I would think that  
24 we would want to try and set up a separate committee  
25 and not make it a condition of approval and maybe send

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1 it to one of our committees to come up with a  
2 recommendation as to whether we hire, the Town hires  
3 somebody and go in that direction.

4 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Coursey.  
5 Mr. Slifka.

6 MR. SLIFKA: Just to get back to my  
7 original point was, I think all of these are good  
8 suggestions, and I'm not particularly concerned as we  
9 sit here today with perfecting whether it's a  
10 committee, whether we hire somebody. I think those are  
11 things that might have to be taken up at a later date.  
12 My only concern is with whatever form this Council or  
13 future Council comes up with to address it that  
14 somebody from the applicant is at the table when that

15 committee meeting is called. That is the only purpose,  
16 real purpose behind what I was trying to raise. I  
17 don't want it to be an empty chair when we -- after you  
18 go through all that work. So I get back to, what is  
19 the best way to do that?

20 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Alair.

21 MR. ALAIR: If you want the person to be  
22 there, the applicant shall provide a monthly  
23 construction update, or do you want to simply say a  
24 regular construction update so that you could schedule  
25 it on --

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1 MR. SLIFKA: I think it needs to be  
2 open-ended. I think again, it's got to be mirrored to  
3 the one that we did earlier, to be determined by the  
4 Council.

5 MR. ALAIR: So the applicant shall  
6 provide a regular construction update to the Town  
7 Council?

8 MR. SLIFKA: Well, how do we -- at a  
9 schedule to be determined by the Council, I guess  
10 that's what it was.

11 MR. ALAIR: On a regular basis to be  
12 determined by the Council and in a manner to be  
13 determined by the Council.

14 MR. SLIFKA: I agree with that.

15 MR. SPADA: I second.

16                   MAYOR HARRIS: Motion is made and  
17 seconded. Any discussion? Mr. Feldman. I just have  
18 one clarification also because this is not something  
19 that the Town is foreign to, as far as overseeing  
20 construction. We have Mr. Van Winkle and his  
21 department that do our own building construction and  
22 has expertise in the construction process, and I would  
23 expect that either an outside manager or whoever and  
24 with the applicant that Mr. Van Winkle and his  
25 department would be part of this piece.

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1                   MR. FELDMAN: They would. And you are  
2 absolutely right. I hear you loud and clearly, so we  
3 will work it, we really will.

4                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Feldman.  
5 Any further discussion? There being none, all those in  
6 favor.

7                   VOICES: Aye.

8                   MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries,  
9 amendment is adopted. Any further questions?  
10 Mrs. Carpenter.

11                  MS. CARPENTER: Yes, Mr. Mayor. I just  
12 would like to have some more clarification on item  
13 number 5, architectural changes, on page 5. I'm just  
14 very concerned about the aesthetics of the signage,  
15 especially in light of the fact that the proposal is to  
16 have the present Board of Education building become a

17 cinema, and what kind of signage that would involve,  
18 because we have to be very sensitive to this being a  
19 very historical area, and the signage is certainly  
20 going to either increase or decrease the aesthetics.

21 I just want to know what is the process  
22 approval for signage and the involvement of the Council  
23 in that process.

24 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Alair.

25 MR. ALAIR: The way the proposed

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1 condition is phrased, "The Town Planner would be  
2 empowered to improve -- to approve the following  
3 administrative amendments to the approved plans on an  
4 as-needed basis."

5 You will recall that in your, in Section  
6 177-4 of your ordinances, typically administrative  
7 amendments are done on a once per year basis.

8 Unfortunately or fortunately, as this project builds  
9 out, it's anticipated that that signage obviously,  
10 certainly during the first build-out will be needed  
11 more frequently than on a once-per-year basis, so that  
12 the language is on an as-needed basis.

13 "In addition to those other  
14 administrative amendments otherwise permitted pursuant  
15 to Section 177-44, subject to review and approval by  
16 Design Review Advisory Committee."

17 So you are giving DRAC more oversight  
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18 than would normally be the case in an administrative  
19 amendment, and then it says "A, signs which are  
20 consistent with the signage program proposed by the  
21 applicant as part of the application."

22                   You have in the application package a  
23 signage program, that set of plans and sketches and  
24 drawings that they provided to you, so what you would  
25 have is that as your template. They would go to the

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1 Town Planner. They would propose an administrative  
2 amendment to the Special Development District, which  
3 would then need to go before DRAC, be reviewed by DRAC,  
4 assuming it was approved by DRAC, the Town Planner  
5 would then go back into the standard mode, if you will,  
6 for an administrative amendment, which is a letter to  
7 the Council, which the Town Council can either receive  
8 or reject, and in the case of a rejection, it would  
9 have to come back to you for a full amendment to the  
10 Special Development District with a public hearing.

11                   MS. CARPENTER: Thank you.

12                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Alair.

13                   MS. CARPENTER: I just have one more  
14 follow-up question.

15                   MAYOR HARRIS: Mrs. Carpenter.

16                   MS. CARPENTER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

17 In terms of architectural changes, a concern is that if  
18 there are any override or excess to the allotted money,

19 any architectural changes would have to go through the  
20 Council, so we can assume that the proposal that we  
21 received in the architectural materials are not going  
22 to be compromised throughout the process.

23 MR. ALAIR: I'm not sure I followed the  
24 question as it related to the money.

25 MS. CARPENTER: That there would not be

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1 any architectural changes without the Council knowing  
2 that there is architectural changes in terms of  
3 materials or --

4 MR. ALAIR: Oh, yes. First of all, the  
5 materials would have to be consistent, again, with that  
6 building materials booklet that the applicant  
7 submitted, number 1.

8 Number 2, as with signage, any  
9 administrative amendment of any kind has to come back  
10 to the Council for the Council's acceptance or  
11 rejection in letter form, and if it's rejected, it goes  
12 through a full amendment process, Special Development  
13 District amendment process with a hearing and notice.

14 So, no, nothing could be changed in  
15 terms of design without the Council's acknowledgment  
16 and approval either through the administrative process  
17 or through the full SDD amendment process.

18 MS. CARPENTER: Through you, Mr. Mayor.

19 MAYOR HARRIS: Mrs. Carpenter.

20 MS. CARPENTER: I just want to share and  
21 say there be no compromise of materials and that was  
22 just the reason for that question.

23 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you,  
24 Mrs. Carpenter.

25 Mr. Alair. Any further questions? We

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1 have Dr. Thornberry's amendment.

2 MR. ALAIR: So this would be page 5,  
3 Section 4-B, the last sentence, as I understand it, is  
4 to be stricken and replaced with the following: "The  
5 Applicant shall present a report to the Town Council  
6 within one year of such date" -- now such date refers  
7 back to the date of implementation -- "of such date  
8 describing the Applicant's experience in implementing  
9 alternative transportation systems," and you could then  
10 add to that if you so chose, "and identifying which of  
11 such systems, if any, shall be implemented on a  
12 permanent basis."

13 MS. THORNBERRY: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

14 MAYOR HARRIS: Dr. Thornberry.

15 MS. THORNBERRY: That would be agreeable  
16 to me.

17 MAYOR HARRIS: Move the amendment then.

18 MS. THORNBERRY: I so move it.

19 MAYOR HARRIS: Do I have a second?

20 MR. SPADA: I will second that.

21 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion being made and  
22 seconded, any discussion? There being known, all those  
23 in favor.

24 VOICES: Aye.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries,

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1 amendment is adopted.

2 We are still on the SDD application as  
3 amended, as amended, as amended, as amended. Do we  
4 have any other questions or amendments on this document  
5 as this point?

6 I have one, Mr. Alair. The outdoor  
7 displays of merchandise on page 7, although I might  
8 have the older version of this.

9 MR. ALAIR: The bottom of page 7, yes.

10 MAYOR HARRIS: 8-D. One of the key  
11 pieces of this proposal and concerns that we have is,  
12 of course, the way the potential for the new piece of  
13 the Center would mesh with the existing Center and the  
14 synergy and make sure that everyone is successful in  
15 this project. One of the things that the developer  
16 agreed to through the hearing process on the record and  
17 through discussions with the West Hartford Center  
18 Merchants Association was joint marketing. One of the  
19 pieces that the West Hartford Center Merchants  
20 Association does to market itself as West Hartford, we  
21 just recently had, which allows outdoor display of

22 merchandise. I would presume that this is boilerplate  
23 language that's been used before and wouldn't prevent  
24 somehow, you know, law of unintended consequences for  
25 that type of joint marketing and the same type of

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1 street displays to be used in the new Center.

2 MR. ALAIR: This language, just so you  
3 know, came directly from the Home Depot conditions and  
4 was carried forward. As you will recall, of course,  
5 Home Depot is set back -- Home Depot and BJs are set  
6 back within a parking lot. I debated whether there was  
7 logic in keeping this language. It was not  
8 specifically asked for, but as we always do, I used the  
9 Home Depot template in drafting these, and I left it in  
10 for precisely this reason, so that somebody at the  
11 Council could ask whether it makes any sense to keep it  
12 there, and certainly the intention of that last phrase,  
13 "which interferes unreasonably with pedestrian passage  
14 through any public sidewalk" would be intended to say,  
15 you can have this, but you can't interfere with  
16 passage, and that is certainly the standard which we  
17 applied during West Hartford sale days in the rest of  
18 the Center. In fact, in most of the Center, if you'll  
19 recall, the outdoor displays of merchandise are  
20 actually technically behind the public sidewalk.

21 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Alair.  
22 Any further questions, clarifications or amendments?

23 Mr. Connors.

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

25 Just to touch back, I want to know if Mr. Slifka

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1 finished his amendment on having the applicant at  
2 meetings. Just for the record, I mean, I think if this  
3 is approved tonight the Council should, first order of  
4 business at the next meeting, look at the resolution,  
5 refer to a committee that discusses how we are going to  
6 address having oversight at the construction site.

7 So I would expect that -- Mr. Alair  
8 mentioned he could help draft the resolution for that.  
9 Maybe for the next Council meeting, if it's approved  
10 tonight, we can have that ready. Thank you.

11 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.  
12 Any further discussion? I believe Mr. Slifka did  
13 finish his amendment. So we have completed then the  
14 SDD application as amended.

15 The next item, number 2, would be  
16 application for monument permit. Are there any  
17 questions or amendments to this item?

18 Okay. There being none, going on to  
19 number 3, the bond ordinance, any questions or  
20 amendments as to this item? Mrs. Carpenter.

21 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
22 This has been a real area of concern for me. I know in  
23 looking at the \$48.8 million, our goal certainly is to

24 reduce the bond in any way we can, which makes our Town  
25 fiscally healthier. As I look at site improvements,

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1 financing insurance, the library addition, the North  
2 Garage and the South Garage are quite specific with the  
3 amounts; however, the Town Hall renovation, at one  
4 point, was at 9 million dollars, which involved the  
5 consolidation of the Board of Education to the Town  
6 Hall, was reduced to 7 million dollars, and I think  
7 that we have tremendous needs in our community. We  
8 have, you know, pressing needs. We are dealing with  
9 skyrocketing taxes on both the education and Town Hall,  
10 Town services, and I was just questioning really what  
11 was that 7 million dollars going to include. I just  
12 have not seen a plan or any kind of plan for the  
13 consolidation of the Board of Education to the Town  
14 Hall, and my concern is that this renovation project,  
15 we can't think about what's going to happen now. It's  
16 not bringing a group of professionals over here, but  
17 really looking out to the year 2050 and what is that  
18 going to look like, and so I just would like an  
19 explanation as to why that amount seems a little high.  
20 It was at 9, went down to 7 with a plan, and I'm trying  
21 to be more cautious and reasonable in that amount, and  
22 I'm having a hard time with approving that amount.

23 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Feldman.

24 MR. FELDMAN: Well, you are correct,  
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25 there is no plan yet that would give you a better feel

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1 for whether it's 7 million or 6.8 or 6.9 million.  
2 There is a very kind of a general outline of what we'd  
3 like to do, which is certainly to consolidate the two  
4 administrations into this building, with the goal being  
5 to try to put everybody together in this building  
6 within the existing footprint. But there is a number  
7 of questions that flow from that, and until some of  
8 those questions are answered, for instance, one  
9 question might be is there going to be a common public  
10 meeting room. One Council chamber, one board chamber.  
11 So there is a number of questions that need to be  
12 sorted out. When those questions are answered, those  
13 would better dictate what the budget will be.

14                   The 7 million dollars is probably the  
15 best guess. Those who have experience in renovating  
16 buildings like this have made as to what might be done  
17 within the confines of this building plus a small  
18 addition. If we are able to do it all within the  
19 existing confines of the building, obviously we may not  
20 spend the full 7 million dollars, but Mrs. Carpenter,  
21 in fairness to your question, there is incomplete  
22 information, so I can't sit here tonight to say with  
23 any degree of certainty we will spend less on -- I can  
24 tell you this, that the 7 million dollars is an  
25 authorized amount. We can't spend it until we have

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1 subsequent approval from you to appropriate that.  
2 There is usually two steps. There is an authorization  
3 and an appropriation. This is step one. So if we come  
4 back with a plan that says, let's spend 7 million and  
5 you as the Council, nine of you believe, no, we should  
6 only spend 6.5, we can only spend 6.5.

7 My point simply is that we are very  
8 early in this process, both the design, plus the whole  
9 question about the appropriation is still very, very  
10 early. I respect what you are saying, but I'm not sure  
11 that we can certainly manage it the way you would like  
12 us to do it.

13 MAYOR HARRIS: Mrs. Carpenter.

14 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

15 I guess, you know, some kind of  
16 commitment that we are really trying to, as we  
17 consolidate services, it is the best way that we can to  
18 be as efficient as possible and really keeping -- you  
19 know, our goal being to start at kind of ground zero  
20 and trying to, you know, combine spaces without  
21 doing the addition. Again, I'm thinking more not  
22 shortsighted, but thinking the plan that we are going  
23 to have in the year 2050. This is a great opportunity  
24 to begin to do some of those innovative things that  
25 we've always done in terms of combining administrative

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1 staffs.

2 MR. FELDMAN: Sure.

3 MS. CARPENTER: So in my understanding  
4 then, although tonight whether we approve it or not,  
5 this bond issuance will come back to the Council at the  
6 time when the plan is done.

7 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, let me be very  
8 clear.

9 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Feldman.

10 MR. FELDMAN: What you are doing is you  
11 are authorizing, authorizing the maximum amount, the  
12 absolute maximum amount. As it pertains to this  
13 building, the Council, through whatever legislative  
14 means you wish, be it a committee of nine or a  
15 committee -- a subset of that nine, a smaller  
16 committee, in conjunction I assume with Board of  
17 Education members, will work with an architect and  
18 essentially determine how best to spend money to  
19 renovate this building to accommodate the Board of  
20 Education administration as they move into here.  
21 That's yet to be -- you know, that's all coming.

22 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Feldman.  
23 Ms. Carpenter.

24 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: I just also want to pick

1 up on that quickly. We've been working on this  
2 consolidation now for awhile, and there have been  
3 various, as you've outlined, Mr. Feldman, ideas and  
4 that we've always pushed and the commitment has always  
5 been at this table to make sure that we do it in the  
6 least expensive way, but that makes sense to merge the  
7 organizations. They are not to be penny wise and pound  
8 foolish, so it is my understanding that this gives us  
9 the flexibility to do that, and again, we have control  
10 and decision-making going forward, as we have in the  
11 past.

12 MR. FELDMAN: That is correct,  
13 Mr. Mayor.

14 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Connors.

15 MR. CONNORS: Thank you. Just to be  
16 clear, we receive a plan to renovate this building,  
17 it's 5 million, we don't issue a bond for any more than  
18 that?

19 MR. FELDMAN: That's all we are going to  
20 spend is 5 million. Again, you control it. You are  
21 essentially the governor in this.

22 MR. CONNORS: I just want to be clear  
23 that what we spend on the building is the same as what  
24 we would issue the bond for.

25 MR. FELDMAN: Right, exactly.

1 MR. CONNORS: Thank you.

2 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.

3 Any further discussion on item number 3?

4 Item number 4, the Special Services  
5 District, any questions or amendments on that matter?

6 Number 5, resolution authorizing the  
7 execution of a Master Agreement. Any questions?

8 Mrs. Carpenter.

9 MS. CARPENTER: Yes, I have a question.

10 The other major area besides the consolidation of  
11 services that I've really been following closely, and I  
12 think that people really have to heart is when we sell  
13 public property, despite the usage of the Board of  
14 Education building, it's a building that we really --  
15 is very near and dear to us. It's property that, the  
16 walk down South Main Street is one that we've all done  
17 our whole lives, and it's difficult to understand when  
18 Mr. Heapes gives his presentation and said that the  
19 real heart of this Blue Back development truly is the  
20 Board of Education building, and it is the link  
21 between -- will be the link between West Hartford  
22 Center and Blue Back, and yet I understand that that is  
23 the heart of West Hartford, and I also am dealing with  
24 that we are giving that up to the developer, and I  
25 think that's a really difficult decision personally for

1 me to make and through the hearings and all, it was an  
2 issue that I still continue to deal with.

3 I just wanted you, Mr. Feldman, to explain  
4 once again to me why that decision was made so that we  
5 can understand. We know what the present use of that  
6 building has been, the past use of that building. But  
7 I want to understand, going forward, what do you see  
8 being the future use of that building and what drove  
9 you to make the decision in selling that property to  
10 Mr. Heapes as part of his, the Blue Back development?

11 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor and  
12 Mrs. Carpenter, we share a common goal, and I believe  
13 the common goal is to consolidate the Board of  
14 Education administration into this building, and  
15 interestingly, if Blue Back Square should not happen,  
16 just forget Blue Back Square for a moment, we still  
17 share the goal of consolidation. So at some point,  
18 hopefully sooner than later, the Board of Education  
19 vacates 28 South Main Street, moves into this building,  
20 50 South Main Street, we then have an interesting  
21 dilemma because we then have a public building. What  
22 do we do with it?

23 If you look at the building, the  
24 building again was built essentially depression era,  
25 late 1930s, 1937 building. It was built, again, for a

1 different time for a different purpose. It's an office  
2 building, but it's an office building built in an era  
3 when essentially it was okay to have grand central  
4 staircases with big wide staircase in the middle. It's  
5 wide hallways. It's got actually very limited office  
6 space. There is lots of wasted space in that building.  
7 To try to figure out some way to sell it to a private  
8 investor who would use it as an office building, I'm  
9 not sure what the market might be, because there would  
10 be significant cost in renovating it.

11                   Somebody suggested to me at one point,  
12 gee, why don't we use it and maybe it could be a  
13 school. Well, I mean, the pure practical issues  
14 connected, first of all, of making that building a  
15 school, you can think about them as I can, let alone  
16 from safety to playgrounds to just the whole -- it's a  
17 tiny building. To try to put a school in there with a  
18 cafeteria and gymnasium and all the things that  
19 children need and are used to, I'm not sure it's  
20 practical, so it doesn't work as a school.

21                   We don't need office space. As you all  
22 know, we have dramatically reduced our work force over  
23 the years essentially by hundreds and hundreds of  
24 positions. That is why we can to some degree move the  
25 Board of Education to this building, so we don't need

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1 to have an office building because in a few years we  
2 are going to be expanding Town government. If  
3 anything, the Town government continues to shrink. So  
4 we don't need it as an office building; we don't need  
5 it as a school.

6                   Somebody else suggested, gee, use it as  
7 a community center. Well, the hard reality is we don't  
8 have the money to run a community center. We just  
9 don't have that kind of income any longer that would  
10 support a community center, say like Elmwood, and even  
11 if there would be a community center, again, there is  
12 no kind of public area for plays or gymnasiums or any  
13 of the facilities that Elmwood Community Center has so  
14 we are into significant renovation costs.

15                   As we went through all of those issues,  
16 trying to better understand, well, what is the real  
17 purpose of the building in the future, we realized that  
18 we don't have a need for that building. That's  
19 assuming that we share the goal of consolidation. If  
20 we don't share the goal of consolidation that brings  
21 the board over here, then sure the building can be used  
22 for the Board of Education, but if you make that first  
23 decision, which is we will consolidate, the building is  
24 no longer needed for public purpose.

25                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Feldman.

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2 MS. CARPENTER: Just a follow-up  
3 question. Mr. Feldman, could you explain the lease  
4 agreement in the master -- that we've crafted in the  
5 Master Agreement with the Board of Education building?  
6 Is it, in hundred years, are we able to -- are we  
7 selling it or --

8 MR. FELDMAN: Mr. Mayor, I'm going to  
9 ask Mr. Alair certainly, but as he gets to the podium,  
10 it's not a lease; it's a sale. We are selling the  
11 property. There is a reverter after 99 years, and I'll  
12 let Mr. Alair explain it.

13 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you.

14 MR. ALAIR: Mr. Feldman earned his  
15 degree in first year property law, yes, it's a 99-year  
16 reversion or right of reverter in the property, which  
17 in essence says that at year 99, we have the right to  
18 take back the land. It's ours for a buck, for a  
19 dollar, and the fair market value of the improvements  
20 that have been built above it, because after all those  
21 are being ultimately built and paid for by the  
22 developer as they build up, so we would have that  
23 opportunity in 100 years should we get it back or  
24 should we choose to take up that option.

25 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you Mr. Alair.  
2 Anything further, Mrs. Carpenter?

3 MS. CARPENTER: No. No, thank you.

4 MAYOR HARRIS: Any further discussion on  
5 the Master Agreement, questions or amendments?

6 Mr. Connors.

7 MR. CONNORS: Thank you. Mr. Alair, I'm  
8 sorry, through you, Mr. Mayor, I just mentioned in the  
9 condition letter I sent over to you regarding the  
10 financial covenants and the Tri-Party Agreement, and I  
11 would just like to get on the record that we are  
12 planning on going forward with that, and if you can  
13 just give a brief explanation of what that is.

14 MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. Alair.

15 MR. ALAIR: The answer is absolutely.  
16 Mr. Brennan, as you'll recall during the closing hours  
17 of the hearing, and frankly, I don't remember which  
18 night it was, I think it was the second to last night  
19 again, raised a question about having the financial  
20 covenants, if you will, that normally would run in  
21 favor of the developer's lender, also run in favor of  
22 the Town. I reminded you all at that time, and I  
23 believe Mr. Hidalgo also spoke to this, that there will  
24 be a Tri-Party Agreement between the Town and the  
25 developer and the lender ultimately when the lender is

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1 chosen, if you will, by the developer, and the  
2 developer agreed, put on the record that they agreed,  
3 and we certainly intend to take them up on that offer

4 to incorporate into the Tri-Party Agreement a covenant  
5 that all of those same terms, those same financial  
6 guarantees and commitments will run in favor of the  
7 Town as well.

8 MR. CONNORS: Thank you.

9 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.

10 Any further questions or discussions on item number 5?

11 Mr. Alair, if you can just go back for  
12 one second. I'm sorry. This is a general question,  
13 because while we've had, you know, we've been going for  
14 a little while tonight, there are far fewer questions  
15 than we had through the hearing process through those  
16 50 hours, give and take. That still forms the basis of  
17 the record though, so the questions answered on that  
18 day, on those days, multiple days, are a piece of the  
19 legislative intent, and cover questions not answered or  
20 asked tonight.

21 MR. ALAIR: Absolutely. You are acting  
22 tonight on the basis of everything you heard during the  
23 public hearings, including the answers to all of the  
24 questions.

25 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Alair.

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1 Anything further? Well, we've now gone  
2 through each of the individual items. Our next piece  
3 will be general discussion of the proposal, and there  
4 has been a request to take a five-minute break. We

5 will recess and come back in just about five minutes.

6 (Recess taken from 9:33 a.m. to 9:44 p.m.)

7 MAYOR HARRIS: We can go back on the  
8 record.

9 Mr. Alair, if I can just clarify  
10 something for the record. During the recess, a member  
11 of the public came up and was -- made a claim, I guess,  
12 that we didn't have or questioned whether we didn't  
13 have a piece about access for people with disabilities,  
14 and it was my understanding in reading that that we did  
15 have that within the conditions. If you could clarify  
16 that, please.

17 MR. ALAIR: That's correct, Mr. Mayor.  
18 If you'll recall from the hearing, towards the end  
19 there was some discussion. It started with public  
20 comment, and then I believe Mr. Heapes spoke to it  
21 following the conclusion of the public comment, about  
22 access, wheelchair access particularly to Webster Walk,  
23 and the fact that there is, in a couple of locations, a  
24 couple of sets of steps, and there was some significant  
25 discussion, as you'll recall, about could we build a

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1 ramp, how would we do it, it didn't really work. That  
2 was a very broad paraphrase of the testimony. And what  
3 the applicant ultimately committed to doing was looking  
4 at some kind of access feature within Building A, the  
5 existing Board of Ed building probably, but I don't

6 think he was very specific on this, within the area  
7 that's been proposed to be the theater, and how we  
8 address that, because that hasn't been sketched out  
9 yet, and because the theater is a Special Use Permit  
10 use within our zoning ordinances, we provided that in  
11 Section 5-B, in the architectural changes provision, if  
12 you'll recall, we had some conversation about this with  
13 Mrs. Carpenter on the signage, that the Town Planner  
14 would have the ability to approve an administrative  
15 amendment, and I'll quote, "Other minor architectural  
16 changes which do not increase building footprint" -- so  
17 the size of the building could not change; it could not  
18 be pushed into Webster Walk and choke that nice wide  
19 public space that I think was intended -- "including,  
20 but not limited to, accessibility modifications  
21 intended to enhance access to the public spaces."

22 So that language was put in there  
23 specifically to allow for that to happen through the  
24 process as it goes forward, through the Special Use  
25 Permit process in front of TP&Z and through the

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1 administrative amendment process.

2 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Alair.  
3 Now we are onto the general discussion portion of our  
4 meeting tonight. Mr. Slifka.

5 MR. SLIFKA: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
6 Before I begin, there is a lot of people to thank from

7 this process, and I won't belabor the point, but maybe  
8 just list some of them. People have devoted -- all of  
9 these groups of people have devoted several years or  
10 months and certainly many hours to examining this  
11 proposal, evaluating it, sharing their opinions with  
12 us.

13                   We owe a debt of gratitude to our  
14 administration for the devotion they have shown in  
15 evaluating this in advance and then ultimately bringing  
16 it to this Council, to the applicant for their hard  
17 work over probably a three-year period, and I want to  
18 give a special thanks to my fellow members of the  
19 Council and those that are with the TPZ, who sat with  
20 us for those 50 hours of public hearings. You know,  
21 the folks in the TPZ are not elected. They are  
22 appointed, and they were given this evaluation of this  
23 proposal fresh. They were blank slates for sure when  
24 this thing began. You know, the Council has known  
25 about it in various forms, obviously, for several

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1 years, but the TP&Z was brand new, and they didn't ask  
2 for this kind of time commitment, and they undertook  
3 the process with diligence and with dedication, and we  
4 owe them a debt of gratitude as well.

5                   I also want to thank WHC-TV for their  
6 coverage of this, which has been absolutely amazing. I  
7 finally got to catch up on some of what we've been

8 taped over the holiday weekend and such, and they've  
9 put out a tremendous product.

10                   Lastly, I want to thank the members of  
11 the public who came out in whatever form, whether you  
12 came and visited the project at some portion and looked  
13 it over back when the applicant held meetings in the  
14 winter, whether you sent us an e-mail, whether you made  
15 a phone call to us, or whether you came and testified.  
16 We had hundreds of those and many of them are here  
17 again tonight, and I think the passion that's been  
18 demonstrated on all sides of this is tremendous and  
19 however the vote goes, it bodes very well for our  
20 community. I have no problem with someone who  
21 ultimately disagrees with me on something who happens  
22 to feel a passion because as we have considered this  
23 proposal, and it's been popular to comment on the  
24 disagreements that exist by and among members of the  
25 community, and certainly they exist, as they should,

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1 with a project of this magnitude, but as I begin, I  
2 want to establish what I think our points of agreements  
3 are, and forgive me if they are somewhat corny, but we  
4 still have a small Town field here, and I think they  
5 are worth pointing out.

6                   We all love West Hartford, we all want  
7 what is best for West Hartford, and I don't think it's  
8 hyperbole to state that this is the most important vote

9 our Town Council will face in probably a generation, so  
10 rest assured that I and the other eight members of this  
11 body, and those who were on the TP&Z before take this  
12 responsibility on very deeply.

13 Now, a few weeks ago in the public  
14 hearings I posed a question, and I got some  
15 good-natured gibes over it, that stated if Blue Back  
16 Square is built what kind of community would we be?  
17 And the answer to that question, we must first ask  
18 ourselves, what kind of community we are. And I  
19 suspect there is no one answer to this question. Mine  
20 is only one opinion, and that's framed as you'd expect  
21 by my particular experiences, but let me list some of  
22 them.

23 I'm a West Hartford native, a product of  
24 its schools. I'm someone who lived in a larger city  
25 and came home and bought a house near West Hartford

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1 Center. And in just my short lifetime, I've lived  
2 through West Hartford's bedroom community heyday, its  
3 decline, and now its renaissance. So I feel particular  
4 kinship to many of the interest groups and viewpoints  
5 that are concerned about Blue Back's potential impact  
6 on West Hartford's present, its future and in  
7 particular its impact upon the surrounding  
8 neighborhoods.

9 So who are we today? West Hartford, I

10 believe, has two distinct personalities. First, there  
11 is our core identity, the traits that we have  
12 demonstrated for many decades, perhaps as far back as  
13 our founding 150 years ago. I speak of the West  
14 Hartford that values superior schools, topnotch public  
15 services, strong community organizations and beautiful  
16 neighborhoods, the West Hartford of the Noah Webster  
17 House, First Church, the Art League, Bethel Temple,  
18 Faxon Library and Veterans Memorial Rink, the West  
19 Hartford of Bishop's Corner, Elmwood, the Center and  
20 our Historic Districts, Buena Vista, West Hill and  
21 Boulevard, Raymond Road. This is the West Hartford we  
22 must always protect like a family heirloom.

23 But there is a second personality, and  
24 it's a newer one, and that's an identity recently  
25 layered on top of our cherished Town traditions. I

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1 speak of our vibrant entertainment districts, which  
2 have given life to our motto "Where city style meets  
3 village charm." I speak of the West Hartford of  
4 Grant's, the Corner Pug, The Oyster Bar and The Park  
5 Road Playhouse. This is the West Hartford best known  
6 to outsiders, the one often celebrated in the press.  
7 But what our motto really means is that we achieve that  
8 most difficult of goals, combining the best qualities  
9 from urban and suburban living, blending the vibrancy  
10 of an urban community with the educational and public

11 safety values of the stereotypical suburban community.  
12                   So as we consider Blue Back Square, our  
13 mission is clear, to preserve the West Hartford of  
14 today, and to forever insure its success, and in doing  
15 so, the first question to ponder is: Do we need to do  
16 anything at all? The answer to that is yes. And  
17 second, if we must do something, should it be Blue Back  
18 Square? Again, the answer is yes. Why? First I look  
19 to our merchants. Our Town Center is presently  
20 vibrant, but those who believe that our Center  
21 merchants are awash in riches are living a myth. Just  
22 ask the Merchants Association and the Chamber of  
23 Commerce who have heartily endorsed this proposal.  
24                   West Hartford faces increasing  
25 competition from our neighbors who wish to replicate

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1 the West Hartford Center formula. In response, we must  
2 strengthen our Center by bolstering it where it is  
3 weak. The Center is wonderful, yet incomplete,  
4 particularly in the housing department. Blue Back  
5 Square gives us the opportunity to complement and  
6 complete the long-term vision for the Center and to  
7 give more people a reason to visit.  
8                   Next I look at the proposal itself. We  
9 are presented with a world-class developer who wishes  
10 to invest over 100 million dollars in our Town for a  
11 cutting-edge, mixed-use, smart-growth project. For

12 this, the developer will receive no special tax  
13 incentives, no tax abatements and no use of eminent  
14 domain. To be colloquial, the terms just don't get  
15 much better than that. Just look around at other  
16 recent regional developments.

17 I speak with pride when I say that this  
18 project is not Adriaen's Landing, it's not the Shops at  
19 Canton, nor is it the latest addition to Buckland  
20 Hills. In addition to our enhancing our Town Center,  
21 the Town will receive a library expansion, municipal  
22 improvements and a new Town Park. Yes, our  
23 administration endorses the proposal. This should not  
24 be viewed as a negative, nor as a rubber stamp, as some  
25 have alleged. As President Reagan once said, "Trust

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1 but verify." I do and I have for several years now.

2 I think that the vetting and evaluating  
3 of this proposal speaks quite highly of our Town  
4 administration. But I look also to those community  
5 organizations and individuals who have done their own  
6 independent analyses, in addition to the West Hartford  
7 Center merchants and the Chamber of Commerce, who I  
8 already mentioned, West Hartford Public Library, the  
9 Noah Webster House, and Celebrate West Hartford,  
10 amongst others, have also heartily endorsed this  
11 proposal as well as the hundreds of respected residents  
12 who have testified or written in its favor. These are

13 hardly groups who would advocate a plan to destroy our  
14 Town, or as one resident recently observed, would  
15 destroy western civilization.

16 Finally, the tax revenue. Our recent  
17 budget struggles have highlighted the annual challenge  
18 we face in balancing the quality of our services,  
19 particularly the schools, against the tax burden on our  
20 citizens. This challenge will never disappear, so we  
21 must grow our tax base. The tax revenue is not the  
22 reason to support Blue Back, but it is undoubtedly a  
23 good reason.

24 Certainly risks exist with Blue Back as  
25 they do with all projects, but in this instance, the

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1 greatest risk of all is doing nothing. Development and  
2 with it traffic will come to these same parcels should  
3 we reject Blue Back, but it's a matter of control and  
4 degree. Blue Back offers us the greatest opportunity  
5 to shape and control our destiny, and to paraphrase a  
6 resident, to provide us with a future that is better  
7 for everyone, the Town, the Center, the Landlords, the  
8 merchants and the taxpayers. Well-planned growth has  
9 been a hallmark of this Town and Blue Back is the  
10 latest example.

11 Lastly, a word about referenda. Mayor  
12 Harris alluded to this earlier, and I believe that I  
13 speak for all nine Council members when I say that we

14 heartily endorse a referendum on the bond ordinance and  
15 on the sale of public land. I further believe that I  
16 speak for all of us when I say that we've always  
17 expected and hoped that this proposal would proceed to  
18 a referendum if approved. As the mayor outlined, we  
19 are prevented from advocating and instituting that  
20 ourselves by the Charter. Our citizens deserve to be  
21 heard on a project of such importance, and I look  
22 forward to the vote. The developer has taken its case  
23 to us, and now it must further take its case to our  
24 citizens.

25 I count myself fortunate to have been

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1 able to serve my hometown in such an important  
2 crossroads in its history. As a young homeowner, I'm  
3 excited on all fronts to what this development will  
4 bring, enhancing the value of my home, increasing the  
5 tax base to ensure quality education for my future  
6 children and cementing the vibrancy of the Center which  
7 I walk to almost every day.

8 In the end I must answer my own first  
9 question: If we build Blue Back, what kind of  
10 community will we be? Hopefully the same as now,  
11 having adapted to the changing times. All I can offer  
12 to you is my best judgment, and my judgment tells me  
13 that 25 years from now I'll be proud to have backed  
14 Blue Back. Thank you.

15 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Slifka.  
16 Dr. Thornberry.

17 MS. THORNBERRY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
18 I too would like to thank all of the people that have  
19 been involved in this. Deputy Mayor Slifka has really  
20 mentioned almost everyone, and I will not go through  
21 them again, but there are so many people who have given  
22 just hours and hours and in some cases years of their  
23 time to bring it to this final vote today, and we are  
24 most appreciative of their effort.

25 You know, some 40 years ago, West Farms

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1 Mall was supposed to be the death of West Hartford  
2 Center. Instead, the Center changed in response to the  
3 change, and West Hartford Center became the amazing,  
4 vibrant, suburban hub it is today. Other suburbs have  
5 faced a similar problem, and their legislative bodies  
6 have carved out huge hunks of land, condemned them  
7 under eminent domain, whether they were blighted or  
8 not, and have used it to increase their grand list.  
9 This we have never done in West Hartford. This is just  
10 not a part of who we are.

11 It is our Town's vision of innovation  
12 within preservation that brings us Blue Back Square,  
13 and the proposal before us tonight is much improved in  
14 scale, design and traffic control because we required  
15 unprecedented public comment and independent analysis.

16 The people of West Hartford made themselves heard and  
17 the Town and the developer listened.

18 Yes, we as Town Councilors have been  
19 concerned about the same things that everybody else in  
20 Town has been concerned about as well. We've been  
21 concerned about the density, and the developer has  
22 responded. We've been concerned about green space, and  
23 the developer was able to add more. We were concerned  
24 about the traffic, and the developer has responded, and  
25 yes, we have been concerned about the financial

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1 viability, and we have resisted the urge to tinker in  
2 ways that would only compromise the financing of this  
3 project.

4 It was only a month ago that we were  
5 struggling to balance our tax burdens and the quality  
6 of schools and Town services that make West Hartford  
7 Connecticut's model suburban community. The certainty  
8 of the single largest increase in our tax base ever  
9 should be welcome news to everyone.

10 As a Town councilor, I am -- I take  
11 enormous pride in serving on this Town Council with my  
12 eight other colleagues. I've never been so proud about  
13 being a part of something. This has been an enormous  
14 undertaking for us. The part that you see on TV, the  
15 part you don't see. And to every single person, we may  
16 at times disagree on issues and on ways to do things,

17 but to a person, every single member of this Council  
18 has put in their whole heart and every amount of effort  
19 that they have to wrestle with this project, and I  
20 commend them and am very proud to be a part of this  
21 body.

22                   We've heard that this project will  
23 change the character of West Hartford forever. We  
24 heard that it was the end of civilization as we know  
25 it. We heard that we were paving paradise to put up a

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1 parking lot. We also heard that we perhaps are on the  
2 eve of destruction. But when I look at the character  
3 of West Hartford, I never think about where I can go to  
4 eat. I never think about the 24 different ways I can  
5 get a cup of coffee. I don't think about the flower  
6 pots or the tanning salons or the nail places or the  
7 hair places. For me, the character of West Hartford is  
8 and always will be the 61,000 people who live here, and  
9 they are amazing. I've had a wonderful and unique  
10 20-year perspective of getting involved with people and  
11 their political issues in Town, and I can tell you that  
12 from that day through this day, this has been a Town of  
13 enormous energy, involvement, and true caring about  
14 their community and about others who live in it. Thank  
15 you very much.

16                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you,  
17 Dr. Thornberry. Mrs. Carpenter.

18 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you. Again, I  
19 want to thank everyone for taking the time to express  
20 their opinion regarding the Blue Back development. I  
21 spent considerable time walking the site, visiting my  
22 own past, reading documents, listening to your  
23 concerns, reading your comments. West Hartford is  
24 certainly well cared for by our residents and  
25 administrators. We are truly very blessed.

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1 Is Blue Back development a good  
2 investigation for West Hartford? This was the question  
3 that was posed to Council members on the first night of  
4 the hearings. The investment that we are being asked  
5 to make is not solely a financial investment, but it is  
6 an investment in the future of our community. A  
7 70-year old resident writes "I remember the long soda  
8 fountain counter at Maxwell Drugstore on the corner of  
9 Farmington Avenue and North Main. This was a favorite  
10 place for teenagers or a stop after catching a  
11 Hollywood spectacular at the Central Theater just a few  
12 doors away. Yes, at times I wish the Center were the  
13 same as it is -- today as it was when I was young. I  
14 attributed this to wishful thinking or the heydays of  
15 my youth and the tricks of selective memory that shuts  
16 out the unpleasant, recalling only the good."

17 This gentleman intuitively recognized  
18 that change is a law of life, and those who only look

19 to the past and present are certain to miss the future.  
20 The future is about children who at the age of 5 are  
21 growing up in a world that is changing at a rapid pace  
22 as well as empty nesters and professionals who want to  
23 live in nontraditional neighborhoods. In order to make  
24 West Hartford an attractive community to live in, we  
25 must be ready to respond to the changes in lifestyle

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1 that are inevitable. Divesting in public property was  
2 a difficult decision as the Board of Education building  
3 is replete with the history of West Hartford.

4           Finally, after listening to 50 hours of  
5 public comments, reading hundreds of documents,  
6 e-mails, letters, listening to debates, as well as my  
7 own inner voice, I came to the realization that Blue  
8 Back is not about one single issue. It is not about  
9 the transfer of public property, bonding, traffic or  
10 parking. But it is a concept that I came to embrace.  
11 It is a concept that will protect the feel, character  
12 and uniqueness of West Hartford as an attractive,  
13 innovative, residential community. It is intended to  
14 strengthen the physical, economic and social aspects of  
15 our Town. Mixed-use development embraces density,  
16 providing a place for all people in our community to  
17 live, work, learn and play.

18           When this project is complete, the  
19 streets will come alive with children playing, people

20 shopping, people strolling, people talking and making  
21 important social connections. But Blue Back does  
22 require risk. As one woman writes, "Any project of  
23 this magnitude carries with it some risk." The same is  
24 true of certain personal decisions we all make in our  
25 lives. She goes on to say "My husband and I took a

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1 huge risk when we immigrated to West Hartford five  
2 years ago with our two young children." With our  
3 present financial climate and the rising cost of  
4 education and Town services the greatest risk is the  
5 risk that we face in doing nothing. We would be remiss  
6 not to support development that will protect new  
7 revenue streams, expand a state-of-the-art library and  
8 police station, provide employment and increase our  
9 grand list. Town administrators have assured us that  
10 the financial condition of this project will not expose  
11 any taxpayer to financial liability even in the event  
12 of bankruptcy.

13 I believe that Blue Back will  
14 complement, not compete, with the existing Center. The  
15 existing Center will continue to provide a specific  
16 need, especially to those who will continue to prefer  
17 small, family-owned business, single-level parking.

18 New England is a land of steady habits.  
19 The residents of West Hartford are loyal, and they will  
20 continue to be loyal to the business owners who have so

21 faithfully supported the Center as we know it today.  
22 Blue Back will build upon what is already thriving.  
23 Suggestions created by the West Hartford Business  
24 Association must be given careful consideration.  
25 Ongoing communication is critical at every stage of

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1 development. Change is inevitable and adapting to this  
2 change is unavoidable. But how we proceed will either  
3 bring us together as a community or drive us apart.

4                   It became apparent sadly through these  
5 hearings that there is still healing that needs to be  
6 done in our Town. As the hearings progressed, it  
7 became apparent that continued attention needs to be  
8 given to the Elmwood community. The dialogue regarding  
9 aesthetics, traffic and development needs to continue,  
10 and I'm very concerned about the people who spoke at  
11 the public hearing that believed that the process was  
12 flawed. We all remember the sign "Blue Back is  
13 Backwards." Meaningful dialogue was initiated, but was  
14 initiated at the end rather than at the beginning of  
15 the project? Simply put, communication at all levels  
16 of government, Town government, need to improve. And I  
17 too look forward to the outgrowth of the referendum.

18                   Traffic is an ongoing concern. A  
19 resident writes "While I understand that there is an  
20 increase in traffic as a logical outcome of new  
21 development, I do not believe that this project goes

22 far enough in attempting to minimize the impact." I  
23 share the writer's sentiments, and I know we will be  
24 revisiting traffic.

25 For the future economic stability of our

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1 community, we must continually look for ways to  
2 decrease our debt. The 7 million dollar allotted for  
3 the physical consolidation of the Town Hall and Board  
4 of Education is not acceptable, especially when the  
5 needs of our Town are so pressing. There are more  
6 important priorities. Even Dr. Irving testified that  
7 construction to the Town Hall building will destroy  
8 this building's symmetry, blocking all the sunlight and  
9 jamming the building against Burr Street.

10 My goal is not just to physically move,  
11 but to integrate Town and Board services looking  
12 towards models that are not shortsighted, but would  
13 bring us right into the year 2050, but West Hartford  
14 has something that is priceless and is not for sale,  
15 and even outsiders immediately recognize that West  
16 Hartford is a great place with great people.

17 I am supporting this proposal because I  
18 believe at the very heart of Blue Back argument has  
19 less to do with aesthetics, building materials,  
20 density, parking and traffic, but as Toni Gold writes  
21 in her essay "Why Place Matters," it is more to do with  
22 our willingness to invest some of ourselves in places.

23 What has always distinguished West Hartford from other  
24 towns is that we have always been the regional  
25 trendsetter, a beacon of light for surrounding

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1 communities. It is the people of West Hartford who  
2 must decide whether or not they will embrace this  
3 concept and allow a place of -- a sense of place to  
4 emerge, making Blue Back a place where we will develop  
5 a sense of ownership. A sense of stewardship will only  
6 emerge when we allow ourselves to embrace Blue Back  
7 with affection, familiarity and awe. It is only then  
8 that it will rightfully develop into a place in the  
9 ongoing history of West Hartford. Thank you.

10                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you,  
11 Mrs. Carpenter. Mr. Coursey.

12                   MR. COURSEY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
13 First off, before I speak to this application, I would  
14 just like to take a few moments to thank my family and  
15 my wife Mary in particular for shouldering more than  
16 her fair share of the family responsibilities during  
17 the public hearing process. Little did we both realize  
18 back in the fall when we were out waving at cars and  
19 knocking on doors that we would be spending our June  
20 evenings reviewing the Blue Back Square application  
21 instead of spending time with our families.  
22 Nevertheless, I continue to be so proud and honored to  
23 serve on this Council with you people, especially on

24 this issue that is so important to the Town that I just  
25 wanted to thank my family for their time and their

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1 understanding.

2 All of us at the table tonight come to  
3 this application with an appreciation and a pride of  
4 West Hartford Center and a desire to see the Center  
5 continue to prosper. The same can be said for those  
6 who have written, e-mailed, phoned, testified at the  
7 public hearings whether for or against this project.  
8 Everyone wants the Center and the Town of West Hartford  
9 to continue to succeed.

10 The question then becomes: What do we  
11 do tonight to best insure the future of West Hartford  
12 and the West Hartford Center? And make no mistake  
13 about this, this is about the future, it's not about  
14 the past. For myself, I will be enthusiastically  
15 supporting this application. I want to take a moment  
16 to tell you why. First of all, I believe that Blue  
17 Back Square will help keep the Center competitive. We  
18 live in a competitive environment. In business, if you  
19 don't continually improve your product, your business  
20 will suffer and eventually fail. Doing nothing and  
21 hoping that the Center will continue to thrive is a  
22 recipe for failure. Every time you read about the next  
23 retail development in our state, whether it's in  
24 Glastonbury or Avon and Hartford, Canton, South

25 Windsor, everyone states that they want to replicate

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1 West Hartford Center. What they really want to do  
2 though is they want to take our customers.

3                   The primary reason why West Hartford  
4 Center has continued to be such a warm, inviting  
5 atmosphere is because we do have customers. Without  
6 customers and feet on the street, there are no  
7 businesses, and without business, you are left with  
8 nothing. Anecdotally we can look to the years  
9 immediately following the opening of West Farms Mall  
10 when the Center was not prepared for competition and it  
11 suffered. Let's not let that happen again. Adding a  
12 mixed-use project like Blue Back that will bring  
13 retail, residential, office and entertainment uses will  
14 enhance and improve the Center so that it will continue  
15 to thrive.

16                   I also believe that Blue Back Square is  
17 the highest and best use for the site. Under current  
18 zoning regulations, this parcel of land that includes  
19 the car dealership, the condominiums, and the American  
20 Legion Hall could be developed retail without this  
21 Council or the public having any say. I would not like  
22 to see a single-use retailer with a sea of service  
23 parking built on that site, but that is what I'm afraid  
24 will happen if Blue Back Square is not approved tonight  
25 and built. That's not my vision for West Hartford

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1 Center, and I don't believe it's the vision of this  
2 community as well.

3                   Across the country, communities are  
4 saying that they would rather see mixed-use types of  
5 development, like Blue Back, instead of single-use  
6 large parcel retail development. Furthermore, we  
7 should be encouraging the redevelopment of brown  
8 fields, like the car dealership sites, instead of  
9 pushing commercial development further and further  
10 beyond our urban centers on undeveloped green fields.

11                   Someone also stated that the Town should  
12 not give up public land. Well, I can understand their  
13 concerns. Given our desire to consolidate the Town and  
14 Board of Ed under one roof, I cannot see a scenario  
15 where the current Board of Ed building would continue  
16 to work efficiently as a Town facility.

17                   One of my earlier concerns about this  
18 project was that I feared that we would be creating two  
19 separate, disconnected areas that would compete rather  
20 than enhance each other. If I still felt that this was  
21 the case, I'd be voting against this application  
22 tonight. However, I believe that by bringing the  
23 retail experience across the street, across South Main  
24 to the board building, we are creating one connected,  
25 vibrant area.

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1 I also believe that Blue Back will help  
2 the Town achievement many of its long-term goals. We  
3 are going to be able to improve and expand our current  
4 library. We are going to be able to consolidate the  
5 Town and Board of Ed services in one building to  
6 generate more efficient operations and cost savings.  
7 We are going to get a new public space, a new public  
8 green space and park. We are going to be encouraging  
9 investment in the eastern portion of the Center on  
10 underutilized property.

11 We are also going to be adding to our  
12 commercial tax base. By conservative estimates, this  
13 project will generate 2.8 million dollars in added  
14 needed commercial property tax revenue for the Town and  
15 an additional 1.7 million dollars in special services  
16 tax that will more than pay for the Town's bonding on  
17 the project. It's important that this wasn't one of  
18 the first things that I mentioned as a benefit to the  
19 Town. While this is an important benefit, I have never  
20 felt that the additional tax revenue was the most  
21 important benefit. Again, though, I would not be  
22 voting for this application if I did not think it made  
23 financial sense for the Town.

24 Someone also asked, why this  
25 development? The fact is over the last decade the Town

1 Hall has seen a parade of developers anxious to build  
2 on this property. The problem with these past suitors  
3 though is that all have wanted the Town to exercise its  
4 right of eminent domain and taking down these  
5 properties from local property owners, or they wanted  
6 tax relief from the town, or they wanted both.  
7 Mr. Heapes, Mr. Heapes asked for neither.

8 I also wanted to commend Mr. Heapes for his  
9 many months for community involvement and public  
10 outreach long before an application was submitted.  
11 From these many sessions he held with the residents, he  
12 listened to their concerns, and most importantly, you  
13 addressed those concerns by modifying your project.  
14 This is a better project, thanks to the many hours of  
15 community input and discussion, and you have raised the  
16 bar for other developers who want to do business in  
17 West Hartford, and I thank you for that.

18 We all want West Hartford to continue to  
19 be a wonderful place in which to live, work and raise a  
20 family. I, for one, have lived here since I was 3. I  
21 plan on being here a long time and hope that some of my  
22 children will want to return here and also raise their  
23 families here. I'm confident that a year from now when  
24 we look back in pride in knowing that tonight we made  
25 the right decision.

1                   In closing, I too want to thank the  
2 hundreds of residents who took the time to call, write  
3 and e-mail me as well as those who took the time to  
4 attend the community meetings and testify at public  
5 hearings. Again, this is a better project thanks to  
6 community input. Our thanks also goes to Mr. Feldman  
7 and your staff for all the hard work, and I would also  
8 like to thank my fellow Council members. Again, it's a  
9 pleasure serving with you, and I have the utmost  
10 respect for your commitment to public service. Thank  
11 you.

12                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Coursey.  
13                   Mrs. McClay.

14                   MS. McCLAY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
15 First I would like to say that I appreciate the  
16 hundreds and hundreds of resident input that we  
17 received, as we all have spoken about. I read and  
18 listened to everyone's opinion attentively. It is  
19 always difficult when there is dissension among our  
20 fellow citizens. I was struck by a comment from one of  
21 our speakers that it is surprising to see how people  
22 who look at the same information can come to such  
23 different conclusions, but so it is.

24                   We were told to listen to our citizens  
25 and what they want, but in many respects they want

1 differing -- different things. One aspect of our  
2 decision is derived from the public input, but we must  
3 also weigh carefully all the additional and substantial  
4 information that we received in order to come to a  
5 viable decision.

6                   And just for your information, on this  
7 particular project, if we note just the pros and cons,  
8 the majority of the public input was pro. That in  
9 itself was surprising because it is known that it is  
10 usually those who are against something who come out  
11 more often to speak. That is an indication of how  
12 important this development is to all our citizens.

13                   Secondly, I would like to thank those  
14 speakers and writers who indicated their appreciation  
15 of the efforts of our elected and appointed officials  
16 and our Town staff. However, I feel the need to  
17 address some of the disparaging remarks that were  
18 offered by some residents of those -- on those bodies.  
19 As others have also spoken, I also must speak about our  
20 Town administration. I respect and applaud the  
21 incredible due diligence they performed on this  
22 project. Their goal was to get the best deal they  
23 could for West Hartford, and yes, they worked  
24 diligently and extensively with the developer, but that  
25 was on our behalf. We have some very talented

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1 professionals on our staff. They put their expertise  
2 to work every day for this Town. I believe this deal  
3 was no exception. I think it is important to note that  
4 the vast majority of our Town administration overseeing  
5 this project are West Hartford residents and long-time  
6 residents at that. They care deeply for this Town, and  
7 they are committed to it, which brings us to our  
8 Council members and Planning and Zoning members.

9                   We are all residents of the same Town.  
10 West Hartford is our home. The mere fact that we  
11 devote so much of our lives to this volunteer job  
12 indicates our attachment and commitment to West  
13 Hartford. We have no ulterior motives, we just want  
14 West Hartford to remain the best it can be for our  
15 children and our children's children. We have  
16 volunteered to do this job to the best of our ability  
17 and all of us put in a huge amount of effort in every  
18 decision that is made. We do so with sincerity,  
19 prudence and discernment.

20                   And so I come to my own decision, it was  
21 difficult. I thoroughly sympathize with those  
22 residents who don't want to see West Hartford change.  
23 I have lived here over 50 years and expect I'll always  
24 live here; however, in the long run, I knew my decision  
25 had to be what was best for West Hartford, and although

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2 degree, it will also benefit West Hartford to a vast  
3 degree.

4 I am comfortable with the fact that Main  
5 Street will essentially stay the same. I am  
6 comfortable with the fact that the design of the  
7 development is attractive, even striking. I am  
8 comfortable with the fact that the green space,  
9 although reorganized, will actually be more viable to  
10 Town citizens. I accept the fact that the two garages  
11 are very necessary and will benefit the Town.

12 I am very cognizant of the fact that  
13 this particular developer is at the top of his field.  
14 And doesn't West Hartford deserve that? In addition, I  
15 believe him to be not only talented, but honest and  
16 ethical. I trust that I will be proved right. And  
17 finally, I strongly believe that our own Town staff has  
18 devised an agreement that protects and enhances West  
19 Hartford.

20 In addition, most of the groups in Town,  
21 the businesses, profits, nonprofits, professional  
22 organizations, are all in favor of the development.  
23 They recognize the comprehensive, well-thought-out plan  
24 that will enhance West Hartford, and particularly the  
25 Center.

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1 As an aside, I also -- excuse me. As an  
2 aside, I also want to go on record to say that I am

3 strongly in favor of the name "Blue Back Square." It  
4 is clever, imaginative and reflects the unique history  
5 of West Hartford. To tie that in with an historical  
6 corridor called "Webster Walk" will be a distinctive  
7 West Hartford experience.

8                   Ultimately I've come to the conclusion  
9 that the positives of this plan far outweigh any  
10 negatives. I recognize the fact that it would actually  
11 be irresponsible not to approve this development, and  
12 so I will vote yes and look forward to a new and  
13 exciting adventure for West Hartford. May all our  
14 devotion to West Hartford continue and may our future  
15 be prosperous and peaceful. Thank you.

16                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. McClay.  
17                   Mr. Verrengia.

18                   MR. VERRENGIA: Thank you. I would like  
19 to begin by thanking everyone who attended the public  
20 hearings and demonstrated their civic responsibility by  
21 commenting on an issue that will have a significant  
22 impact upon the future of West Hartford. All of your  
23 comments and other correspondence were carefully  
24 considered. Even if my decision is contrary to yours,  
25 it doesn't mean that those opinions weren't important

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1 or otherwise considered, because they were. No one can  
2 expect a project of this magnitude to be perfect.

3                   I would like to reflect upon some of my  
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4 own concerns as well as the concerns shared by many  
5 throughout the hearings. Numerous negative comments  
6 were made regarding the process of this application. I  
7 believe a proactive planning process and the inclusion  
8 of our citizenry from the onset would have reduced the  
9 likelihood of the contentious notion that this  
10 application was a done deal. Many of the important  
11 public interest decisions were made by a select few  
12 early on in the process. Residents are not necessarily  
13 any wiser than the professionals, but they are  
14 stakeholders in public land and preferably should have  
15 been included in the decision-making process from the  
16 outset.

17 West Hartford has prided itself as being  
18 a diverse Town, yet diversity was notably absent  
19 throughout the process. We must strive harder to  
20 include our minority and low-income citizens. I'm  
21 disappointed over the absence of affordable housing.  
22 We need to be more sensitive to insure that our Town  
23 Center is inclusive, not exclusive of our diversified  
24 community.

25 The sale of public land, particularly

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1 the Board of Education building, was difficult to  
2 acquiesce. Although the building is underutilized by  
3 the general public, it is rich with historical value.  
4 The specifics regarding the parking garage operation

5 and metered areas are still inconclusive. What is most  
6 concerning is that the revenue generated by these  
7 sources is tied to the payment of the bond. Not  
8 knowing how the validation system will work or what  
9 type of technology will be installed is unsettling. I  
10 will intend to monitor this area with great interest to  
11 insure that the latest technology is installed in order  
12 to both maximize revenue and insure public safety.

13                   Many of our residents spoke against the  
14 issuance of the financial bonds. Although I'm  
15 confident in the financial piece, I totally respect the  
16 public's right to bring this issue to a referendum. It  
17 is an issue specifically covered in our Town charter  
18 that legally allows our residents to ultimately decide  
19 this matter. The traffic plan requires additional  
20 attention. Even tonight, as the Blue Back decision is  
21 being decided, traffic concerns remain unresolved.  
22 Undoubtedly, more traffic will be generated in the  
23 area. Much has been said about the notion that this  
24 development will attract regional traffic, yet there  
25 was no mention of a regional traffic initiative.

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1                   West Hartford should not bear the cost  
2 of future traffic improvements alone. A coordinated  
3 regional traffic initiative is imperative. A  
4 post-traffic study will be a prerequisite as well as a  
5 determined amount of money put aside by the developer

6 to offset the cost of any post-development  
7 improvements.

8                   The question of density was clearly  
9 communicated by residents and was a major concern of  
10 mine as well. I spent many hours pondering the issue  
11 of density. To grasp the concept of this mixed-use  
12 development, one must not look at density alone. If  
13 density is enhanced by providing people with great  
14 places to live, work, play and learn, then we haven't  
15 built just density, we built a community.

16                   Density gives us the opportunity to  
17 build a community as well as a place where people will  
18 have a chance to talk and congregate. The impact of  
19 this development on our existing Center generated much  
20 discussion. The endorsement of this project by the  
21 West Hartford Chamber of Commerce and the West Hartford  
22 Center business association was impressive. The  
23 development near our existing Center, albeit will make  
24 it larger, I believe will enhance the Center's unique  
25 New England charm. It will place more people closer to

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1 the existing neighborhood shops, add more life to our  
2 Center and broaden our retail and local tax base.

3                   Many people question the need for a  
4 public-private partnership. We don't need to look past  
5 our own borders to see what happens when this  
6 partnership does not exist. The Elmwood section had

7 all the key parcels of land come together and would  
8 have been an excellent location for mixed-use proposals  
9 similar to this one. Instead there was no public  
10 investment and Elmwood is left with a condominium  
11 townhouse complex facing inward surrounded by a fence,  
12 a Walgreen store as its centerpiece and an inefficient  
13 traffic infrastructure.

14                   After giving a tremendous amount of  
15 consideration to all of the stated concerns, none were  
16 so overwhelming for me not to consider this project  
17 going forward. This project is so complex that it is  
18 inviting to take just a piece of it and come up with a  
19 good reason not to support it. But after listening to  
20 countless hours of testimony and reviewing thousands of  
21 related documents, I began to understand how all the  
22 pieces are integrated.

23                   Throughout America, parcels of land  
24 similar to this one are being gobbled by major  
25 retailers who have a pension for box-like stores. What

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1 this developer is proposing is not a retail strip, but  
2 a new community, where people will work, live and play,  
3 a place where people can meet and talk to each other.  
4 Our Town is at a crossroads with respect to meeting our  
5 core principles of providing great schools and  
6 maintaining our public safety. The costs have  
7 skyrocketed and many of our residents cannot afford

8 continued tax increase. Yes, there are risks and costs  
9 incurred when taking action; however, risks are far  
10 less when compared with the long-range cost of  
11 comfortable inaction.

12 My role as a Town councilor is to  
13 maintain a delicate balance that exists between the  
14 financial, social and civic equity of our community.  
15 One of my contingencies is to ensure that neither the  
16 debt nor the expense of Blue Back will become an  
17 additional burden to the taxpayer, much to the  
18 contrary, Mr. Frances stated that if this project was  
19 built as proposed and it was up and running today, the  
20 average taxpayer would have realized nearly a 40  
21 percent reduction in their tax increase.

22 Winston Churchill once wrote, "We shape  
23 our buildings, thereafter they shape us." What has  
24 made West Hartford the envy of this region is our  
25 ability to look past the present and into the future.

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1 As much as I would like to preserve what we have today,  
2 I realize that change is inevitable. We owe it to our  
3 children, grandchildren and future generations to leave  
4 them with the rich tradition of West Hartford. In  
5 order for West Hartford to continue with the tradition  
6 of being fiscally and socially viable in the future,  
7 the support of this application is necessary.

8 To our seniors who have helped shape our  
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9 community for what it is today, I say thank you. To  
10 the developer, Mr. Heapes, and your team, thank you for  
11 your investment in our community. To Mr. Feldman and  
12 your team, thank you for negotiating in the best  
13 interest of the Town. I know from talking to all of  
14 you that in your hearts you truly believe this project  
15 is fiscally sound and it is in the best interest and  
16 the future vitality of the Town. Thank you

17 Finally to my colleagues, I feel honored  
18 to be associated with the quality of people who I'm  
19 surrounded by tonight at this table. Some may disagree  
20 with our decisions, but the one thing that no one can  
21 take away from any of us is our unheralded commitment  
22 to public service and our dedication to the Town that  
23 we have grown to embrace. Thank you.

24 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Verrengia.  
25 Mr. Spada.

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1 MR. SPADA: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

2 I'm getting choked up. I have prepared  
3 remarks, but I have to say Mr. Coursey reminded me as I  
4 got into my car tonight to come here, I told my kids,  
5 my three boys, they said, "Where are you going?" I  
6 said, "I'm going to a Blue Back meeting," and they  
7 started screaming, "No, no more Blue Back." So this  
8 may be it. I want to thank them and my wife.

9 Thank you, Mr. Mayor, good evening. At  
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10 long last each of us has an opportunity to speak about  
11 this proposal called "Blue Back Square."

12                   Before I begin, I'll start by thanking  
13 people. I know people thank them at the end, at the  
14 middle. I'll do mine at the beginning, and there is  
15 quite a few that need to be thanked. First the  
16 applicant, for his professional, articulate and  
17 substantive presentation, the applicant's team of  
18 experts who are with us tonight, all highly skilled in  
19 their fields of expertise. I want to commend the  
20 applicant for their willingness to consider and  
21 implement change to their original application.

22                   Most importantly is their continuing  
23 effort to reach out to our community. Neighborhood and  
24 Town-wide meetings have been conducted, input was  
25 encouraged, and real change occurred prior to an

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1 application ever being submitted. An example I believe  
2 best illustrates their effort to partner with our  
3 community was their Blue Back booth at Celebrate West  
4 Hartford 2004. The developer could have easily  
5 remained on the sidelines during this event, but  
6 instead, with very little to gain and perhaps much to  
7 lose, presented their vision in an open forum and  
8 encouraged dialogue around the project.

9                   Secondly, I want to thank the Town staff  
10 who I consider the A team, Van Winkle, Kraus, Frances,

11 Alair, O'Brien, Limson and many others led by their  
12 Captain Barry Feldman. They all continue to impress us  
13 with their professionalism, dedication, expertise and  
14 commitment to our Town. We don't always agree, but we  
15 never doubt their talent or their loyalty to West  
16 Hartford. Whether someone agrees with this particular  
17 application or not, no one should question the  
18 integrity of our Town staff. They have no  
19 self-interest, just what is best for West Hartford and  
20 their collective opinions.

21                   Next I want to thank both the TP&Z and  
22 this Council. The members and alternates spent many  
23 long nights assuring the process that led to this  
24 evening was adhered to, and the public was given every  
25 opportunity to speak in support or against the

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1 application. I am thankful for the dedication of my  
2 peers, that my peers demonstrated on this issue, and  
3 all issues that come before us. We may disagree  
4 occasionally on policy matters, but there is no debate  
5 regarding our mutual respect for one another and our  
6 commitment each of us has for this Town. Our Town is  
7 blessed to have such talented volunteers.

8                   I also would like to thank Channel 5 for  
9 a job well done, our stenographer, Sandie, who is truly  
10 the hero of all of these. And lastly, I want to thank  
11 the public. The West Hartford citizens lived up to

12 their reputation as active, engaged and articulate.  
13 The intellect and preparation that each speaker offered  
14 was exceptional. We saw props, heard song verses and  
15 were warned about Blue Back Square being the beginning  
16 of the end of modern civilization only in West  
17 Hartford.

18                   There are three issues I'd like to spend  
19 a little time on that are important to me, so Mr.  
20 Mayor, with your permission, the first is the process.  
21 We heard complaints about the process. There have been  
22 public meetings, neighborhood meetings and 50 plus  
23 hours of televised public hearings. Folks were  
24 critical when people were allowed to speak from outside  
25 of West Hartford until the speaker supported their

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1 position and then they were applauded. I believe the  
2 process was an exceptional example of good and fair  
3 government and no apologies are necessary.

4                   Second, the rumors. There was a  
5 suggestion made on the record of rumors of unethical  
6 behavior from members of either the Council or the  
7 TP&Z. I will not dignify the issue except to say that  
8 we all have families and professional reputations to  
9 maintain, and if someone has an accusation, please be  
10 prepared to name names and details, rather than going  
11 on TV and on the record with merely a rumor.

12                   And the third is the watch-your-vote  
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13 comments. Unfortunately, several people suggested to  
14 me be weary of your vote, it will have political  
15 repercussions in the next election. I cannot believe  
16 any of us would ever speculate on political fall-out at  
17 the expense of making the right decision for West  
18 Hartford. If any of us did consider political factors  
19 before we voted, we would deserve to lose our seats. I  
20 am confident the nine of us are voting tonight based  
21 upon what we believe is in the best interest of our  
22 community, not some speculation about voter reaction  
23 and election 16 months away.

24 I feel better. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

25 MR. HARRIS: You're welcome, Mr. Spada.

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1 MR. SPADA: Now for my thoughts, and  
2 I'll move this along, my apologies. Now for my  
3 thoughts on the application before us. With the  
4 enormity of detail reviewed and examined by all of us,  
5 for me this is reduced to one simple question: Does  
6 Blue Back Square strengthen or weaken West Hartford  
7 today and over the next 50 years? The Blue Back Square  
8 proposal is near perfect for West Hartford. The  
9 obvious advantages include, and I apologize for my  
10 repetition from everything that's been said, the  
11 library expansion. What better institute would we want  
12 to expand and improve upon? Street improvements, these  
13 improvements have remained on a wish list that we've

14 been unable to address due to budgetary restraints.  
15 Enhanced tax base, 2.8 million, a new park.

16                   We, for the last few years for me, have  
17 discussed at every budget night the need to find  
18 revenue opportunities. We ask ourselves, how can we  
19 maintain the wonderful services within West Hartford  
20 without whacking the taxes? This development is an  
21 example of those opportunities to increase revenue,  
22 make necessary improvements and improve the cultural  
23 vibrancy.

24                   I've got just three quick sections I'd  
25 like to comment on, and again, I will move quickly

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1 because the hour is late. The finance. Our putting up  
2 48 million in bond money allows the applicant to secure  
3 more favorable interest rate. The Master Agreement is  
4 clear in the obligation the applicant has to pay the  
5 bond cost annually in the form of a special tax and  
6 parking revenues. I do not consider this an investment  
7 of 48 million in taxpayer money. I will not pay one  
8 dollar in cost for this project. The applicant has a  
9 proven track record. They've invested 7 million  
10 dollars to date into this proposal. We have no reason  
11 to believe they will falter on their commitment.

12                   Parking and traffic. No one has a  
13 crystal ball on these matters. The best we can do is  
14 rely on our experts to project the impact. The experts

15 for the Town and applicant have determined that the  
16 impact of the Blue Back Square on parking and traffic  
17 will be manageable. I don't believe any of us are  
18 skilled enough to micromanage this component --  
19 although, Joe, you did a good job with the wand. The  
20 job before us was to ask useful questions, which I  
21 think we as a group have done.

22           The movies. I believe in a successful movie  
23 theater dedicated to the arts genre. It will add  
24 additional vibrancy and culture to our streets and  
25 homes. I do not, however, believe the reducing the

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1 number of screens from five to four should be deemed a  
2 deal breaker. I would encourage the applicant to  
3 consider reducing the number of screens to four. If  
4 not, please consider dedicating one screening room to  
5 community use.

6           In conclusion, the last page, West  
7 Hartford is a point of destination. We say that so  
8 much, but it's true for a myriad of reasons: Our  
9 education system, neighborhoods, parks, youth and the  
10 magic of the Center. We speak of the momentum of West  
11 Hartford Center. Well, momentum suggests motion.  
12 Motion is the opposite of standing still. By not  
13 acting we risk the future of the Center. Doing nothing  
14 in the Center equates to doing harm to the Center.

15           Restaurants and health complex, 70  
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16 condos, street improvements, library renovations, an  
17 arts theater, and an increase to our tax base of 2.8  
18 million annually makes this a fairly easy decision.  
19 Will we have to confront traffic and parking issues?  
20 Sure. But are those reasons to turn away from this  
21 magnificent opportunity? I think not.

22                   Lastly, and I'm going to echo  
23 Dr. Thornberry's comments. Great minds think alike.  
24 Lastly and most importantly, I want to address the  
25 issue of Blue Back Square potentially compromising the

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1 character and soul of our Town, as some folks have  
2 suggested. As much as we love West Hartford Center,  
3 the character and soul of West Hartford can be found  
4 fundamentally within our households. The people of  
5 West Hartford make up the character and the soul, not  
6 building configurations, applicants, street  
7 improvements or traffic issues. These matters might  
8 help describe West Hartford, but they will never define  
9 West Hartford. It is rather the moms, the dads, the  
10 coaches, the grandparents, teachers, the seniors, the  
11 veterans and those that are in need that make up our  
12 soul.

13                   So tonight if you walk outside and onto  
14 the eastern side of our Town Center, you will find  
15 nothing. No activity, no people, no energy, no  
16 commerce. In two years, I imagine, the east side of

17 our Town will be electric, with motion, music, food,  
18 events, movies, and most importantly, people. One  
19 Center, one Town, continuing to always change while  
20 maintaining our character, soul, culture, history and  
21 roots. Blue Back Square represents the bridge to this  
22 most exciting opportunity. Thank you.

23                   MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Spada.

24                   Mr. Connors.

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

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1 First, I'd like to echo my colleagues and thank  
2 everyone who has put their heart and souls into this  
3 project from start until this point that we reached  
4 tonight. That includes Town administration, developer,  
5 obviously the people of West Hartford and my friends on  
6 the TP&Z, and my friends around the table here tonight.

7                   I want to echo Mr. Coursey and Mr. Spada  
8 in terms of the stress it put on the family. When I  
9 stopped home after work to say hi, I had to leave with  
10 a five-year-old hanging onto my pant leg as I tried to  
11 get out the door, who I ultimately had to buy off with  
12 Power Ranger and Spiderman toys. I'm certainly glad  
13 that that portion of this is over.

14                   I was elected to the Council nine years  
15 ago just after the Home Depot was approved and that  
16 hearing process. I said to myself, well, that was  
17 probably the biggest zoning process I've ever seen.

18 It's very unlikely that I'll ever enter into one of  
19 those myself, and as everyone knows around the table  
20 that I was clearly wrong in that assumption, but like  
21 all the zoning decisions we've sat on over the past  
22 eight years, you try to get your arms around it and do  
23 the best you can, and I believe that's what we all did  
24 with this one.

25 I do plan on supporting this

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1 application. I first looked at it prior to the  
2 hearings, prior to the application being submitted, as  
3 wondering what this new addition could do to our  
4 already vibrant business districts across Town, each of  
5 them different, each of them vital to our Town in their  
6 own right. As time went on and it came time to look at  
7 the intricacies of this application, the focus changed  
8 to traffic, aesthetics, parking garages, financing, and  
9 many other facets that we've dealt with over the past  
10 month. After all that, I feel confident that we've  
11 reached a very good end to this process in supporting  
12 this application.

13 As tonight, you sit here and you push up  
14 against the issues that concern you, issues like  
15 completing the residential building, paying for road  
16 improvements post-development, and you try to get the  
17 best comfort level that you can. In any hearing I sat  
18 on, like this, there is just never any guarantees. In

19 life there is never any guarantees, in business there  
20 is never any guarantees, and at some point, you just  
21 have to say you've done your best and you've gotten as  
22 much out of it as you can, and it's time to move  
23 forward. West Hartford has to move forward. I believe  
24 that that is what this project represents.

25                   There are so many good parts of this

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1 project, and I think that the parts that someone said  
2 earlier is not so much the issue, but what it makes as  
3 a whole. The residential piece. People are dying to  
4 move into West Hartford at this point. People are  
5 dying to move into the neighborhoods around West  
6 Hartford. Folks that have outlived the use of their  
7 bigger homes are looking to stay in West Hartford, but  
8 right now there aren't that many places to do it. This  
9 residential component of this development will put  
10 people in places they want to live, on the ground, in  
11 the Center where the shops and businesses need them.

12                   The office. People these days, I think,  
13 are looking for very safe, accessible places to work.  
14 Moving away from the skyscrapers of the cities. They  
15 want to have a place where they can drive up, park  
16 their car, go into their office. With something like  
17 this, they are able to leave at lunchtime, leave at  
18 night, and do something else in the area where they  
19 work.

20 I think one of the other ripple effects  
21 of this is I think it will increase the demand of our  
22 rental property in Town, especially around the Center,  
23 up and down Farmington Avenue.

24 When I was younger and had the  
25 opportunity to spend time in places like West Hartford

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1 Center to have a coffee or a drink on a Saturday  
2 afternoon, this is exactly the type -- West Hartford is  
3 exactly the type of place I wanted to do it in. At  
4 that point in time, West Hartford Center was not what  
5 it is today. West Hartford Center with the addition of  
6 Blue Back Square will just make that place a place  
7 where a lot of people in those situations want to be.  
8 I'm assuming at some point in my life, not in the too  
9 distant future, I'll be able to enjoy those areas  
10 again.

11 And another positive, I think, moving  
12 the Board of Ed and the Town Hall together will  
13 eliminate the us and them kind of mentality that  
14 sometimes evolves during budget cycles and other issues  
15 involving, you know, money and things like that.  
16 Having us in the same building I think is important to  
17 move that relationship along to a better place.

18 But this development hasn't come -- this  
19 decision hasn't come easy. You know, there is people  
20 on either side of this issue that I know well and

21 respect very much, and it's a hard decision when you  
22 are going a different way than what they believe and  
23 you know that they are sincere and honest and  
24 passionate about their beliefs. In my neighborhood  
25 alone, I have my next-door neighbor who is very excited

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1 about this development and down the street there are  
2 other people who are not. And so it makes it  
3 difficult.

4                   One thing about the people that oppose  
5 developments like this, they ask the challenging  
6 questions that help us get the right answers as we move  
7 forward in this process. They help us get to the place  
8 we want to be to make sure the decision we make is the  
9 right one for our community. I think we've gotten  
10 there tonight.

11                   The next phase of this -- as I said,  
12 this is not over -- would be the referendum. And I'm  
13 sure we will have one. I support having one. I think  
14 it's important that with a project of this magnitude  
15 the people in Town, the voters in Town get an  
16 opportunity to weigh in themselves, what's the right  
17 answer for this development. And I personally, to help  
18 that along, would probably sign that petition because I  
19 think it's that important.

20                   So in closing, again, I'd like to thank  
21 everybody that played a part in this, and I look

22 forward to this process to move forward. Thank you.

23 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Connors.

24 My colleagues have thanked pretty much

25 everybody. I did some of the thanking, too, at

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1 beginning. A few people that I would like to add that  
2 weren't thanked, first of all, Timothy Brennan, our  
3 zoning alternate, who although is not voting tonight  
4 sat through those 50 hours of public hearings and did a  
5 wonderful service to our Town. I'd also like to thank  
6 our outside counsel Robinson & Cole and the other  
7 experts that we retained to give us information, to  
8 analyze the situation, and help us reach this decision.

9 This has been an extremely tough, to say  
10 the least, but thought-provoking and exciting process.  
11 No matter what was going to be decided tonight, yes,  
12 no, whatever happens going in the future, there will be  
13 a major impact on the future of our community.

14 There are few decisions that I've made  
15 personally or professionally which have required as  
16 much focus, attention, hard work, stamina, and at times  
17 anguish. Despite this, I feel privileged that I've  
18 been blessed with the opportunity, with a chance to  
19 make an impact on my community, the place where my  
20 family moved 50 years ago and still lives, the place  
21 where I grew up. This is what people elected us to do.  
22 This is what representative democracy in our great

23 nation is all about.

24 All of us at this table and in our  
25 community start from the same point, I believe. We all

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1 I love this Town and want to do the right thing for our  
2 future. The differences among us involve the direction  
3 that we travel to accomplish this. I start my analysis  
4 and have throughout this process with one simple  
5 question: How do we preserve and build upon the  
6 successes that we have achieved? My answer is one that  
7 has been repeated generation after generation after  
8 generation by the citizens and businesses of West  
9 Hartford. We must be willing to take some reasonable  
10 risks so that we can move forward. As Will Rogers  
11 remarked, "If you are just sitting on the tracks,  
12 you'll get run over."

13 I want to go back and quickly illustrate  
14 through some historical examples that while this  
15 project is large, this discussion that we've had, some  
16 of the controversy, what we've been going through in  
17 Town is nothing new.

18 First of all, let's flashback to the  
19 1920s, picture North Main Street, Route 44, Albany  
20 Avenue, what we now call Bishop's Corner. We had a new  
21 Town Manager, actually the first Council Manager  
22 government in New England, one of the first in the  
23 nation. That Town Manager, Ben Miller, saw a potential

24 for commercial development to move our Town forward at  
25 that area of Bishop's Corner and decided that it would

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1 be appropriate with the elected Leaders to widen North  
2 Main Street to accommodate a better, more effective  
3 commercial district.

4                   Well, one resident, Seth Griswold, who  
5 owned the southwest corner got an injunction and halted  
6 the project. Luckily for the Town, a businessman who  
7 operated Welch's Inn, David Welch on the southeast  
8 corner, which is now the Mobil Station, disagreed. And  
9 not only did he sell the land to the Town, he didn't do  
10 that, he gave the land to the Town for the expansion,  
11 and he stated "I believe this corner holds the key to  
12 part of West Hartford's future."

13                   Now, you may disagree with the 1950s  
14 configuration of Bishop's Corner. That's actually  
15 something that we are trying to move away from and get  
16 back to that thousands and thousands of years of this  
17 traditional mixed-use growth, but what you can't deny  
18 is that Bishop's Corner did become a vital commercial  
19 Center in our Town.

20                   Second example, 1950, a proposal to  
21 build Frank Lloyd Wright's theater in the rounds, at  
22 the corner of South Main Street and Sedgwick. A  
23 colonel organized a group of citizens and neighbors and  
24 together they formed the Sedgwick Road Association.

25 They denounced the proposal and called it as having a

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1 veneer of culture spread upon it, the commercial  
2 enterprise that would create a whale of a traffic jam.  
3 Traffic comes into play.

4                   Well, what would have been, what could  
5 have been a distinctive landmark both in the  
6 architectural and the theatrical world, which would  
7 have remarkably fit in with that foresight to the  
8 culture that we have here in West Hartford today, was  
9 denied. The theater moved to Dallas and now we have  
10 the SNET building on that corner.

11                   Finally, it's been mentioned here, Home  
12 Depot. When Home Depot came under consideration, the  
13 sky was falling; traffic, it was going to be horrible;  
14 there is no way the community could survive. Well,  
15 what happened? They also said people wouldn't use the  
16 store, I think, too. What happened? Traffic  
17 improvements were made. They not only made the traffic  
18 in the area better, but it was the catalyst to the  
19 commercial rebirth of that area.

20                   Now, we don't want to overemphasize the  
21 history because while we analyze Blue Back Square in  
22 the light of our past community experience, our  
23 responsibility today is to make a decision based upon  
24 the merits of the proposal, and despite what Will  
25 Rogers said, we should not move down the tracks if the

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1 direction is improper. We should not move just for the  
2 sake of moving. But how do we know? How do we do  
3 this? It's pretty simple. It requires us to do what  
4 we do in our lives all the time, to balance things. We  
5 have to look at what we can gain against what we have  
6 to lose.

7 I've concluded that we have much more to  
8 gain than to lose, and that's why I wholeheartedly  
9 support the Blue Back Square proposal. I'm going to  
10 quickly go over some of the issues that have been  
11 raised, and I apologize at the late hour, but I feel as  
12 though I need to explain myself on the record.

13 First, the financial stability issue,  
14 really connected with the bond issue. First of all,  
15 it's a myth that must be dispelled. We are not giving  
16 away public funds. Quite the opposite. Quite the  
17 opposite. The applicants, as you would expect, and I  
18 don't fault them for doing so, came to us and said,  
19 give us tax breaks, give us financial incentives to  
20 come. What we said, as a Council, and what the  
21 administration said is, sorry, we don't do that. We  
22 don't do that in West Hartford. And while we would  
23 like to build a public-private partnership with you, we  
24 are not going to go down that road. Let's figure out  
25 another way.

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1                   What we are doing with this 48 million  
2 dollar bond issue is not giving away public dollars.  
3 It's, as someone at the table said, allowing someone,  
4 essentially the developer, to borrow our interest rate.  
5 We are a AAA community. We can borrow at around 4  
6 percent now. In the private market, it would be twice  
7 as much to go out and borrow that type of money.

8                   The important thing also is, what do we  
9 get for that? What we are getting is public  
10 improvements, public space, sidewalks, roads, sewers,  
11 lighting, parking. And moreover, we don't even issue  
12 these bonds until everything is built and is running.  
13 It's up, it's a turnkey operation.

14                   Finally, the financial model. How do  
15 these bonds get paid back? Not by residential taxpayer  
16 dollars. Two sources: The parking revenue, which the  
17 borrowing of our interest rate allows the Town to  
18 obtain; and a Special Services District, a tax upon a  
19 tax. So within the Blue Back Square development, those  
20 that own property and lease will pay an extra amount  
21 per square foot to help finance these public  
22 improvements that our entire Town will be able to take  
23 advantage of.

24                   I believe from looking at this again and  
25 again and again that financial model is sound. But you

1 don't even have to take my word for it, why don't we  
2 ask Wall Street, why don't we ask the experts. The  
3 bond rating agencies have stated that the model is  
4 sound, so sound that from their snapshot, it doesn't  
5 even look like it will count towards our regular debt  
6 in the future when analyzing the financial stability of  
7 the Town. But let's assume it even did.

8                   Let's go down the road, the parade of  
9 horribles. Bankruptcy, nobody comes, nobody parks, it  
10 stays the same way it is now with beautiful buildings  
11 there. Hard to believe, but let's assume that. Even  
12 if that occurs, even if that occurs, what the bond  
13 rating agencies have said is since we are such a stable  
14 community, since our financial management has been so  
15 consistent and so conservative, add that debt onto our  
16 per capita debt, add it onto the percentage of debt  
17 compared to our budget and still we maintain our AAA  
18 bond rate. Risk, fairly minimal. What do we get? 2.8  
19 million dollars in estimation of new real property  
20 taxes from this development. It doesn't even count  
21 that Special Services District tax, which part will go  
22 for 20 years to pay back the bonds, but that we will  
23 have for the future, and there is actually the  
24 potential to have some of that in the 20-year period.

25                   Now, as my colleagues have said, none of

1 us would just do this for taxes. As a matter of fact,  
2 that's one of the problems with our system, and as I'll  
3 quickly illustrate later, that's one of the problems  
4 with Connecticut, our tax structure and our  
5 development. A lot of towns make decisions based on  
6 those types of issues. We won't do this, but  
7 nonetheless, it is a benefit. It will help us keep the  
8 quality of our education and our services, and I want  
9 to add, too, that the 2.8 million dollar estimate  
10 doesn't even include the residual value that this  
11 development will add to the commercial property and the  
12 residential properties surrounding Blue Back Square.

13                   Another real important issue, and I know  
14 it has been to all of us, the existing Center. We  
15 don't want to, in any way, move down those tracks and  
16 destroy what we have, but the fact is when you look at  
17 it, it makes our Center stronger, and it will make our  
18 Center stronger. It will fit well. There has been  
19 commitments to market together with the Board of  
20 Education property. There will be a physical  
21 connection. Talks are under way to help pedestrian  
22 flow go from Memorial Road through LaSalle with the  
23 potential of actually having vehicular traffic some  
24 day, there will be a connection here.

25                   We do this at a time when we have some

1 control. We are working with a developer. Remember,  
2 this started as a private property deal; this wasn't  
3 the Town. Developer after developer after developer  
4 went to Mrs. Grody trying to purchase the main piece of  
5 this property. It didn't happen. But finally, a  
6 reputable applicant with financial wherewithal, with  
7 skill, came up and was able to cut the deal to start  
8 this off, and then they were able to assemble the  
9 parcels around, and said, let's talk to the Town, what  
10 can we do? What can we do together to build this  
11 public-private partnership?

12                   This will help us do a couple of things.  
13 It strengthens the Center, as I say, because I think it  
14 brings back some uses that made the Center successful  
15 when I was growing up. Destination retail, Sage Allen.  
16 Entertain, we had the Central Theater and the bowling  
17 alley. It also fulfills a 30-year plan that our  
18 elected leaders and the community has participated in  
19 developing to make sure that we fully utilize that  
20 piece of the Center, a piece of the Center that even  
21 when the car dealerships were there was viewed to be  
22 three decades ago as being underutilized.

23                   Finally, we add a larger residential  
24 component, more people there, more foot traffic, and a  
25 type of residential living that we don't have in many

1 parts of West Hartford, if at all really, and  
2 definitely not in West Hartford Center, and I find the  
3 most telling piece of this, that the West Hartford  
4 Center business association and the West Hartford  
5 Chamber of Commerce, those that have the most to lose,  
6 are on board with this. I look forward to it as  
7 strengthening the Center, creating jobs and keeping us  
8 on the cutting edge.

9                   Town property. Never just sell Town  
10 property. It's a very important thing. I know we've  
11 all struggled over this. It's one of the hardest  
12 pieces in some way about this proposal. And there may  
13 have been times in our past that we should not have  
14 sold Town property, but that doesn't mean never. Bad  
15 experience shouldn't mean that we cut our nose off to  
16 spite our face.

17                   A myth that I want to dispel here, keep  
18 on hearing, time after time again, that we are giving  
19 away public property, giving away. Well, actually we  
20 are not. We are getting about 12.1 million dollars for  
21 property that has been appraised at 10.8 million  
22 dollars. In my estimation, I wish I had the  
23 wherewithal to give property away in that sense, myself  
24 personally. And when we finish this, with these  
25 dollars, we are going to get things, some things we've

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1 been working hard for: The consolidation, continued  
2 efforts to that final piece to move the Board of Ed  
3 into Town Hall; the long-accomplished expansion of the  
4 library. My dad was on the library board over a decade  
5 ago, and they were talking about how can we expand the  
6 library. Now we will have the wherewithal to do it  
7 without further burdening our taxpayers.

8                   The other thing that I want to say about  
9 the Town property is it's a key component here, because  
10 again, the Board of Ed building is that key piece that  
11 will connect the new development with the existing  
12 Center and historically again the Town always moves on.  
13 People might not know this, but the Prudential Realty  
14 building on the corner of North Main Street and  
15 Farmington Avenue was at one point our library and then  
16 our senior center. People drive by that and don't even  
17 know it. It's a beautiful building, preserved well, as  
18 our Board of Ed will be by the applicant, and they  
19 drive by it and they love West Hartford Center, and  
20 they love the Town.

21                   Quaint New England Town, it's true.  
22 Blue Back Square will intensify the Center and give it  
23 a somewhat more urban feel. And while some  
24 neighborhoods in West Hartford have that more New  
25 England type of a feel to it, we really aren't a quaint

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2 I can tell you, I took a couple of days off after the  
3 hearings, and this is not a quaint New England Town.  
4 It's a beautiful Town. It's a New England Town, but  
5 when you look at population density, development  
6 density, demographic makeups, the challenges we face,  
7 we are far from a quaint New England Town.

8 I would say Blue Back Square is doing  
9 less to change that, but to recognize what West  
10 Hartford really is, and again, don't just ask me about  
11 that. What West Hartford is is why successful  
12 developers want to develop here; it's why successful  
13 investors want to invest here, and it's why major  
14 financial institutions, known for their conservative  
15 practices, are willing to lend here in West Hartford on  
16 projects such as Blue Back Square.

17 Traffic. Of course, there will be  
18 additional cars. We know that. There is somewhat of a  
19 cost here, and I guess I in some ways take it, as  
20 someone said, from a little different perspective,  
21 having lived in other places and cities and see what  
22 real traffic is. But that's a crucial issue. I'm in  
23 traffic here, and I understand that. Every  
24 development, as we said, Home Depot, the Frank Lloyd  
25 Wright Theater, traffic, traffic traffic. That's

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1 always the mantra you hear in zoning hearings, and it's  
2 important, but we have been shown that the impact of

3 traffic can be minimized by the traffic improvements,  
4 many of which, specifically the I-84 ramp improvements,  
5 are improvements that we have been longing to have done  
6 for years. It's going to be done, paid for by the  
7 applicant to the tune of several million dollars.

8                   Now, we've had experts talk about this.  
9 There's been some uncertainty. But I do trust our  
10 administration, in particular Mr. Kraus, who knows our  
11 roads better than everyone else, and as we've said, we  
12 are having a further study done, and we are setting  
13 aside money to make sure that that works.

14                   Finally, green space. If you look at  
15 the loss of green space, it's really the swath of green  
16 space between Town Hall and the police station. There  
17 is actually, I don't know the percentage, I don't  
18 recall it offhand, but there is green space being  
19 added, so the net loss actually is not huge when it  
20 comes to the green space. I take this issue very  
21 seriously, but we have to remember, we are not  
22 developing one of our parks. We are not clear-cutting  
23 a forest. We are taking a relatively small swath of  
24 green space, something that's never been a symbol of  
25 West Hartford. It's not on the sesqui centennial thing;

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1 it's not on the other pins; it's not on any coffee mugs  
2 I've seen; it's not on anything. It's nice, it's  
3 utilized at times, but it's not a symbol of West

4 Hartford.

5 I am here a lot on weekends doing work.  
6 I know that neighbors walk their dogs, and there is  
7 frisbee and there is stuff going on there, but the use  
8 is very -- less intense than people will make it to  
9 believe. We are going to gain a new pocket park down  
10 in that area where some of those same activities by  
11 those local residents can occur, and we are gaining a  
12 larger park in what is now a parking lot bordering  
13 Trout Brook.

14 In short, it's not a perfect world. Do  
15 I love every single piece of this? Are there things  
16 that I personally would change? Yeah. I'm sure there  
17 are. But we have to take it in some ways as it comes.  
18 We have to trust that the negotiations that went on and  
19 the changes that were made prior to the application did  
20 add more benefit to our community. You ask 100 people  
21 about this, you get 100 different opinions. While I am  
22 perfectly willing to try to talk about public process.  
23 We did have numerous open houses, numerous neighborhood  
24 meetings, a lot of input. I saw more citizen input  
25 here by 10, 20, 30, 40 fold than I had seen before.

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1 I'd like to see someone devise a system to design this  
2 horse by committee. It's kind of like democracy.  
3 People always complain about American democracy, but  
4 they find it very hard to design a system that's

5 better. It's a discussion though that I'm willing to  
6 have.

7 In short, I think that the upside far  
8 outweighs the downside. I think we need to move on as  
9 a community, to continue the discussion, and as I said  
10 in my opening remarks, at the outset of this special  
11 meeting, I fully support the people's right to vote on  
12 this and respect that right and will be out there  
13 talking about this with my fellow citizens.

14 Thank you for giving me the time and  
15 opportunity to serve and to make my statement tonight,  
16 and now I will call for a vote on the various items on  
17 the agenda.

18 First of all, what I need to do is  
19 entertain a motion to divide the questions so that we  
20 can take items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 up separately.

21 MR SLIFKA: So moved.

22 MR. SPADA: Second.

23 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion has been made and  
24 seconded. All those in favor.

25 VOICES: Aye.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Opposed. Motion carries.  
2 Number 1, Mr. Slifka.

3 MR. SLIFKA: Application for Special  
4 Development District approvals in connection with Blue  
5 Back Square Development, 33, 61, 65, 69, 72, 90 and 103

6 Raymond Road, 20, 28 and 50 South Main Street and 96  
7 Memorial Road, the property, amendment of SDD number  
8 36, creation of new SDDs, zoning changes from SDD/BC to  
9 SDD/CBDH and from CBDH to SDD/CBDH, and approval of  
10 development plan. I move adoption.

11 MR. SPADA: Second.

12 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion made and seconded.  
13 Kudos to Mr. Slifka for being able to do that.

14 MR. SLIFKA: Becoming an engineer after  
15 this.

16 MAYOR HARRIS: Scout Man Slifka.  
17 Any discussion? A roll call, please,  
18 Mr. Cronin.

19 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. Carpenter.

20 MS. CARPENTER: Yes.

21 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Connors.

22 MR. CONNORS: Yes.

23 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Coursey.

24 MR. COURSEY: Yes.

25 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Harris.

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1 MAYOR HARRIS: Yes.

2 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. McClay.

3 MS. McCLAY: Yes.

4 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Slifka.

5 MR. SLIFKA: Yes.

6 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Spada.

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7 MR. SPADA: Yes.  
8 MS. CRONIN: Dr. Thornberry.  
9 MS. THORNBERRY: Yes.  
10 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Verrengia.  
11 MR. VERRENGIA: Yes.  
12 MS. CRONIN: Unanimously approved.  
13 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin.  
14 Number 2, Mr. Slifka.  
15 MR. SLIFKA: Application for monument  
16 permit relocation of Noah Webster statute, I move  
17 adoption.  
18 MR. SPADA: Second.  
19 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion has been made and  
20 seconded. Any discussion? There being none, a roll  
21 call please, Mrs. Cronin.  
22 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. Carpenter.  
23 MS. CARPENTER: Yes.  
24 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Connors.  
25 MR. CONNORS: Yes.

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1 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Coursey.  
2 MR. COURSEY: Yes.  
3 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Harris.  
4 MAYOR HARRIS: Yes.  
5 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. McClay.  
6 MS. McCLAY: Yes.  
7 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Slifka.

8 MR. SLIFKA: Yes.  
9 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Spada.  
10 MR. SPADA: Yes.  
11 MS. CRONIN: Dr. Thornberry.  
12 MS. THORBERRY: Yes.  
13 MS. CRONIN: And Mr. Verrengia.  
14 MR. VERRENGIA: Yes.  
15 MS. CRONIN: Unanimously adopted.  
16 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin.  
17 Number 3, Mr. Slifka.  
18 MR. SLIFKA: Ordinance making  
19 appropriations aggregating \$48,821,543 for Town  
20 projects and public improvements related to the Blue  
21 Back Square project and authorizing the issuance of  
22 \$48,821,543 bonds of the Town to meet set  
23 appropriations and pending the issuance thereof the  
24 making of temporary borrowings for such purposes  
25 declaring the Town's official intent to reimburse

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1 expenditures from such borrowings, I move adoption.  
2 MR. SPADA: Second the motion.  
3 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion been made and  
4 seconded. Any discussion? There being known, a roll  
5 call, please, Mrs. Cronin.  
6 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. Carpenter.  
7 MS. CARPENTER: Yes.  
8 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Connors.

041714f2  
9 MR. CONNORS: Yes.  
10 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Coursey.  
11 MR. COURSEY: Yes.  
12 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Harris.  
13 MAYOR HARRIS: Yes.  
14 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. McClay.  
15 MS. McCLAY: Yes.  
16 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Slifka.  
17 MR. SLIFKA: Yes.  
18 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Spada.  
19 MR. SPADA: Yes.  
20 MS. CRONIN: Dr. Thornberry.  
21 MS. THORBERRY: Yes.  
22 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Verrengia.  
23 MR. VERRENGIA: Yes.  
24 MS. CRONIN: Unanimously adopted.  
25 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin

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1 number 4.

2 MR. SLIFKA: Ordinance establishing a  
3 Special Services District for a portion of West  
4 Hartford Center, I move adoption.

5 MR. SPADA: Second.

6 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion made and seconded.

7 Any discussion? There being none, roll call, please,  
8 Mrs. Cronin.

9 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. Carpenter.

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10 MS. CARPENTER: Yes.  
11 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Connors.  
12 MR. CONNORS: Yes.  
13 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Coursey.  
14 MR. COURSEY: Yes.  
15 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Harris.  
16 MAYOR HARRIS: Yes.  
17 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. McClay.  
18 MS. McCLAY: Yes.  
19 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Slifka.  
20 MR. SLIFKA: Yes.  
21 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Spada.  
22 MR. SPADA: Yes.  
23 MS. CRONIN: Dr. Thornberry.  
24 MS. THORNBERRY: Yes.  
25 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Verrengia.

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1 MR. VERRENGIA: Yes.  
2 MS. CRONIN: Unanimously adopted.  
3 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin.  
4 Number 5.  
5 MR. SLIFKA: Resolution authorizing the  
6 execution of a Master Agreement between the Town of  
7 West Hartford and Blue Back Square, LLC, which provides  
8 inter alia for the conveyance of real estate by the  
9 Town of West Hartford to Blue Back Square, LLC, a  
10 portion of 20 through 28 South Main Street and a

11 portion of 50 South Main Street, 103 Raymond Road,  
12 provides for the construction of certain improvements  
13 upon land owned or to be owned by the Town, provides  
14 for the conveyance of real estate by Blue Back Square,  
15 LLC to the Town of West Hartford a portion of 33  
16 Raymond Road, and provides for the execution of certain  
17 easements, licenses, and leases between Blue Back  
18 Square, LLC and the Town of West Hartford to allow for  
19 the efficient operation of their respective real estate  
20 uses. I move adoption.

21 MR. SPADA: I second.

22 MAYOR HARRIS: Motion has been made and  
23 seconded. Any discussion? There being none, a roll  
24 call, please.

25 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. Carpenter.

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1 MS. CARPENTER: Yes.

2 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Connors.

3 MR. CONNORS: Yes.

4 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Coursey.

5 MR. COURSEY: Yes.

6 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Harris.

7 MAYOR HARRIS: Yes.

8 MS. CRONIN: Mrs. McClay.

9 MS. McCLAY: Yes.

10 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Slifka.

11 MR. SLIFKA: Yes.

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12 MS. CRONIN: Mr. Spada.  
13 MR. SPADA: Yes.  
14 MS. CRONIN: Dr. Thornberry.  
15 MS. THORNBERRY: Yes.  
16 MS. CRONIN: And Mr. Verrengia.  
17 MR. VERRENGIA: Yes.  
18 MS. CRONIN: Unanimously adopted.  
19 MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin.  
20 Thank you to everybody at the table and everyone that  
21 has tuned in tonight again. Thank you to Channel 5 for  
22 covering this and covering all of our government  
23 meetings. If there is no other discussion at the  
24 table, I'll adjourn this special meeting.  
25 (Meeting adjourned at 11:12 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

2 I hereby certify that the foregoing 141 pages are  
3 a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of  
4 my original stenotype notes taken of the Special  
5 Meeting of the West Hartford Town Council, which was  
6 held at West Hartford Town Hall, Council Chambers, 50  
7 South Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut, on July  
8 14, 2004.

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Sandra V. Semevolos RMR, CRR

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Certi fied Court Reporter

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