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Winstanley Enterprises' collaboration/persistence keys to restoring brownfield site to Elmwood Plaza

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After more than five years of planning and negotiations, demolition of the dilapidated building and removal of environmental contaminants at the former Industrial Safety Site in the Elmwood section of West Hartford are finally complete. New steel, bricks and mortar are rising to soon become Elmwood Plaza, a community retail center anchored by a 40,000 s/f Stop & Shop Supermarket/gas station and Crazy Bruce's Liquors, and home to The John Boyle Decorating Center, Hair Cuttery, Farmington Bank, and other retailers.

"It took the efforts of an incredibly dynamic team of professionals, the Town of West Hartford, Elmwood community groups, the state DEP and DOT, the EPA, and very motivated tenants to pull this incredibly complex project together," said Adam Winstanley, principal of Winstanley Enterprises LLC, owner of the property. "Without their collaboration and persistence, this redevelopment could never have happened. I commend the efforts of West Hartford town officials, the DEP and EPA, the Elmwood community, and our professional team whose creativity and determination overcame so many hurdles along the way. While others had given up long ago, our team persisted. They have been amazing to work with, and I'm thrilled to see Elmwood Plaza finally become a reality."

Formerly 176 Newington Rd., the 14-acre site had suffered severe environmental contamination after 70+ years of heavy industrial uses. The 150,000 s/f, 1940s era manufacturing building was run-down and riddled with asbestos and PCBs. Since the property had more than one previous owner, it had been difficult to ascertain who was financially responsible to clean up the heavily contaminated site under federal and Connecticut environmental laws.

After three years of starts and stops to develop the property by former owners, Winstanley recognized its potential in 2008 and contacted attorneys James Joseph, Jorie Andrews and Alan Kosloff of Levy & Drone, PC in Farmington, to help assemble the best team to navigate this complex project. The professional consulting team also included Matt Wittmer of Phase Zero Design (architectural), John Insall of Stantec Consulting Services (environmental), Russ Johnson of Meehan & Goodin, PC (civil engineering), Tim Crowl of Haley & Aldrich (geotechnical), George Logan of Rema Ecological (soil sciences), and Mike Newton of KBE Building Corporation (general contractor), as well as Mike Ainsworth of HRP Associates Inc. (environmental consultant for Jacobs Vehicle Systems).

Over the next two years, the team focused on its vision of re-weaving this troubled property back into the community. The first challenge was to clean up the site. After scores of meetings with former site owners to negotiate the purchase and cleanup responsibilities, the State Department Environmental Protection and Federal Environmental Protection Agency to develop an acceptable remediation plan, with the Town of West Hartford Economic Development, Engineering and Planning & Zoning, and Inland Wetland & Watercourses Departments to create an acceptable

design, with the state Traffic Commission and Department of Transportation for workable access, with Elmwood community groups for input and acceptance of the retail center plan, and with Stop & Shop Supermarkets and Crazy Bruce's to negotiate anchor leases, site remediation finally began in August 2009. Record-breaking, harsh rains this winter in January and February posed unexpected challenges with site flooding issues, but the team creatively kept the project on track. Hard construction began in May 2010 under an incredibly aggressive construction schedule, which will have Elmwood Plaza open for business in November 2010.

"What a great satisfaction it is to see such a severely troubled site be returned to service the Elmwood community," Winstanley said with a smile, "and with no public funding needed. I especially extend my thanks to Mila Limson, West Hartford town planner, David Kraus, Town of West Hartford engineer, Rob Rowson, West Hartford director of community services, to attorneys Jim Joseph and Jorie Andrews of Levy & Droney, our project manager, Bob Way of Winstanley Construction Management, and to all our talented consultants for their commendable efforts in making Elmwood Plaza a reality."

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