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January 28, 2019

Members of the City of Stamford Board of Representatives
Jonathan Jacobson, Chair
Operations Committee
888 Washington Blvd.
Stamford, CT 06901

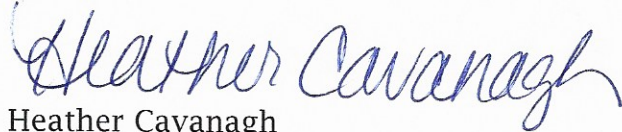
Dear Mr. Jacobson,

On behalf of the Stamford Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, this letter is to inform the Operations Committee that the Stamford Chamber of Commerce representing approximately 800 businesses opposes the proposed commercial development building permit fee increase. The building permit fees for commercial development are currently set at \$16.50 per every \$1,000 of construction verses \$13 per every \$1,000 for residential construction. The initial proposed commercial development building permit fee hike was proposed to be increased in the range of \$18-\$19 but then was approved at \$25 more than a 50% increase. The Chamber Board of Directors are concerned with the impact on the entire City, the high cost of doing business in Stamford, the trickle-down effect on local businesses and ultimately the cost to the consumer.

Over a year ago, The City of Stamford in partnership through The Fairfield County Five sought to drive economic development and stimulate commercial growth within Stamford as well as Fairfield County. This initiative encompasses five-member localities Stamford, Greenwich, Norwalk, Westport, and Fairfield the goal of the collaboration is to attract new companies to lower Fairfield County. The objective and intentions are to showcase the benefits of the five cities including more affordable office space and lower tax rates. What message are we sending to potential new and innovative companies exploring options to start or relocate their companies to Stamford? Approving commercial development building permit fee increases of more than 50% only challenges the objective of The Fairfield County Five. Commercial properties currently pay more than 36% of tax base in the City. Our opinion is that the commercial development building permit fee increases will have ramifications for the long-term growth of Stamford to be competitive to attract and retain businesses.

Ultimately, the costs associated with the increase will affect beyond the development community with effects on the entire City. The increased fees trickle down to subcontractors and vendors who service the commercial projects, and consumers who purchase products and services. The City is still contending with a very high cost of doing business in Stamford as compared to other cities in the Connecticut and the United States. The Chamber of Commerce is supportive of development and investment in Stamford that further stimulates economic growth within the City. As such the Stamford Chamber of Commerce, Board of Director's opposes these increased fees as proposed.

Sincerely,



Heather Cavanagh
President & CEO