



## [DiNardo unveils Trumbull Center plan](#)

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Trumbull Center may soon be ready for its close-up, providing the Planning & Zoning Commission approves plans submitted Friday for a renovation of one of the center's buildings.

The proposal includes an exterior renovation of one of the four main buildings at the center. The building, which houses the O Bar & Grill, Frame Creations and Giove's Pizza Kitchen, also will receive a decorative cupola over the northern end, where Chase Bank will relocate later this year.

Peter DiNardo, a partner in the center's ownership group, said he hoped to get the project onto the commission's October agenda.

"Assuming we receive the appropriate approvals, we can get started immediately," DiNardo said.

In addition to the cupola, plans include decorative dormers, a 30-foot clock tower and upgraded lighting. In addition, DiNardo said he has been meeting with Economic Development Director Deborah Cox to integrate a streetscape design the town plans to start work on within a few weeks.

The streetscape will include a new sidewalk and streetlights, and DiNardo said the center's new look would complement the streetscape.

"The vision is to turn this into a village style shopping center," DiNardo said. "Once we complete this building, we'll go step by step and upgrade the entire property."

Future work might include similar improvements to the building that currently houses Radio Shack and the center's front building, which includes MacKenzie's Pharmacy, among other businesses. The side building housing Frances' pastry shop, Kelly Services

and the Karate-Hanko Ryu martial arts studio, might also receive a covered bridge to connect it with the rest of the center.

Work on the first phase shouldn't take more than two months, DiNardo said.

"We're anxious to get going on the work because, as people know, we've been tied up in litigation for the past few years," he said.

Though the owners' group had been planning upgrades to the site, DiNardo said the plans never got beyond the casual stage.

"It would have been presumptuous to do so before, not to mention possibly a complete waste of time and energy," he said. "But the five-year deadlock is over."

The deadlock, which resulted in numerous businesses leaving the center or closing, began with the death of Richard Aiello in 2004. Aiello had been partners in the center with developers Tom Brennan, Alex Aiello and Serge Mihaly, though Richard Aiello handled the day-to-day operation.

Upon his death, Aiello left his 32% stake to Peter and Leonard DiNardo. Brennan, who also owned a 32% stake, disliked Salvatore DiNardo's management style with the tenants. Salvatore DiNardo is Peter and Leonard's father and not part of the ownership, but Brennan felt Salvatore would influence his sons.

A lengthy court battle ensued. It ended when a five-judge appeals court expelled Brennan from the partnership for "unreasonably" withholding his consent in the group's actions. Since the partnership required 70% ownership approval for any decision, Brennan's 32% share meant he could cause a deadlock and prevent any work at the center.

With the Aug. 18 ruling settling ownership, First Selectman Ray Baldwin and Cox had expressed hope that improvements could finally begin. Less than two months later, they and town residents fed up with the deteriorating conditions at the center, may finally get their wish.

"This is just what we needed," Baldwin said. "If the commission approves the plans by November, we could have a remodeled center by early next year."

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