

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE  
PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 30, 2019**

The Township of West Orange Planning Board held a Special Master Plan Reexamination Meeting on October 30, 2019, at 7:30 P.M. in the Council Chamber, 66 Main Street, West Orange, New Jersey.

Chairman Weston called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 P.M. He announced that notification of the meeting was given to the Township Clerk, and posted on the Township Bulletin Board, sent to the West Orange Chronicle and the Star Ledger, and posted on the Township's website calendar. This meeting has been properly noticed to the public in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. No new matters will start after 10:30 P.M.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Weston requested all persons stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next Planning Board regular meeting will be November 4, 2019 in the Council Chamber at 7:30 P.M.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Robert Bagoff  
Vice Chairman John Cardoza  
Lee Klein  
Councilwoman Susan McCartney  
Andrew Trenk  
Gary Wegner  
Chairman Ron Weston  
Tammy Williams  
Everett M. Johnson

**ABSENT:** Captain Michael Keigher  
William Wilkes II

**ALSO PRESENT:** Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planner  
Patrick J. Dwyer, Esq., Board Attorney  
Harvey Grossman, Esq., Public Advocate

**SWEARING IN**

Township Professionals:  
Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planner

## **RESOLUTION(S)**

None

## **APPLICATION(S)**

None

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **Township of West Orange Master Plan Reexamination Third Community Meeting & Open Space and Recreation Plan Presentation**

## **EXHIBITS:**

1. Agenda and Master Plan Reexamination Report Outline with Plan Element Recommendations, dated 10/30/2019 (8-page document)
2. Draft Recommended Zoning Amendments Map, dated 10/30/2019
3. Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan 2019 UPDATE, dated 9/10/2019

## **DISCUSSION:**

Chairman Weston gave a brief introduction of the Master Plan Reexamination Process, which started at the beginning of 2019 and is targeted to rap this up by the end of 2019. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Master Plan public meeting, following prior meetings dedicated to the topic in March and May of this year. Chairman Weston turned over the meeting to Paul Grygiel to lead the mater plan presentation.

Mr. Grygiel noted that the State of NJ Municipal Land Use Law requires reexamination updates to the master plan at least every 10 years; West Orange's last Master Plan reexamination report was adopted in 2010, so we are right on schedule to adopt this update by 2020.

Mr. Grygiel explained the purpose, scope and requirements of the Master Plan Reexamination report, which includes statutory sections of reexamination, plus topical planning elements. He gave a brief presentation of draft plan outline using PowerPoint. The four (4) Principles to focus on for 2019 update include: encourage appropriate residential development; properly locate public, commercial /retail and residential and service uses; protect natural features and environmental resources; maintain the appropriate scale of the community.

Mr. Grygiel noted the eight elements of the master plan, which includes: Land Use; Circulation; Economic Development; Historic Preservation; Community Facilities, Utilities and Recycling; Housing; Open Space and Recreation; and Sustainability.

Joe McCartney, Chairman of the Open Space and Recreation Commission, gave a brief presentation of the Township of West Orange Open Space and Recreation Plan Update DRAFT using PowerPoint.

Mr. McCartney noted open space trust fund has generated \$5 million since 2001, \$2.5 million of which was generated by the Township Open Space Trust Fund. He displayed the 2019 Open Space color-coded Map 1 in the plan. There has been 1,341 acres of open space protected- preserved land in West Orange, representing 17.5% of the Township area.

Designated open space and recreation land has included; Crystal Lake addition 296 Prospect (4.61 acres); Mayapple Hill Reservation Extension (52 acres); Mount Pleasant Avenue Preserve (4.71 acres); The Rock 577 at Mt. Pleasant Ave (6.36 acres); 7 Belgrade Terrace. (0.23 acres); Wiley Terrace (1.61 acres); Tennis court rehab Degnan Park, Colgate Park; Development of Ridgeway Park; Lafayette Park.

Mr. McCartney reviewed the Greenways and Blueways Preservation Priorities, including linking of the municipality's natural, recreational, and cultural resources. It is an update to the Township's 2010 Plan and reaffirms the Township's commitment to protecting the landscape, which shapes the community--blueway corridors, greenways, forested landscapes, and trails were discussed.

A few key recommendations for the Open Space and Recreation Plan include the following:

- Adopt the OSRP Plan update as part of the 2019 Master Plan Update
- Submit the OSRP Plan update to the Green acres program at the NJDEP
- Consider the acquisition of the Ridge Road properties
- Establish a Recreation Center Committee for a new indoor recreation and community center
- Organize "corner to corner"

Chairman Weston commented on whether the OSRP addresses further expansion of the Essex County Turtle Back Zoo, since there has be concern about whether the zoo is developing too much of the reservation open space. He noted that he had issued a letter to the Essex County Attorney Mr. Fleder and the County Executive reminding them of their promise to submit the Zoo Master Plan as soon as it is completed. The response indicated that the zoo master plan should be complete by the end of 2019.

Mike Brick, WO Environmental Commission chairman raised concern about preservation of the tree canopy and noted the environmental commission's interest in working with the open space commission and planning board to strengthen guidelines for tree removal.

Mr. Grygiel continued presentation of Master Plan topics and proposed recommendations. Discussed geographic areas including: Main Street/Valley, Pleasantdale, St. Cloud, Eagle Rock/Prospect, Essex Green business districts. He noted the Rock Spring Golf Course property recently acquired by the Township would need to be considered, with maintaining of significant open space component plus other uses.

Mr. Grygiel outlined possible changes for commercial zones to address retail market changes including increase higher demand for medical offices, physical therapy, fitness centers and health clubs. Consider limited medical in P-C zone, accessory drive-thru for banks, pharmacies, and fast food, which increasingly come up as variances in applications.

Consider growing trends with microbreweries, distilleries, wine tasting in certain areas; also medical cannabis production and/or sales may be a good fit in industrial and commercial areas. At the master plan level there is acknowledgement of what is trending around the state for these uses and the state law have changed

Council President Gerry Garino spoke on behalf of the Pedestrian Safety Commission and Downtown Alliance. He noted the Complete Street progress being made and noted that 50% of the Rutgers Study recommendations were being implemented and more “share the road” safety improvements are planned.

A member of the public advocated for created green solutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century including, garden on the top of buildings, and terraces within the building, bio-swales waterways, for mixed-use residential, recreation and work developments.

Jerry Eben commented about multi family housing bulk and setback dimensions being the main driving force of properties like Essex Green. He expressed disappointment that suggestions were made for Essex Green application at the Zoning Board, but none of them were accepted.

Public Advocate, Harvey Grossman, noted that every parking lot is a potential park. He advocated that underground parking lots with a park above, similar to Military Park in Newark would be a good solution for the Township Hall parking lot. Chairman Weston acknowledged that such underground park garages are used in dense urban cities; however, their extremely high cost per square foot does not lend them to be used in suburban locations.

Chairman Weston asked Mr. Grygiel and Mr. McCartney to proceed with finalizing the Master Plan Reexam and Open Space and Recreation Plan to complete before the end of 2019. The Chairman noted that continuation of the Master Plan Update would be carried to the next regular meeting.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** at approximately 9:15 P.M.

Minutes adopted January 8, 2019.

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Ronald C. Weston, Chairman  
Township of West Orange Planning Board