

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES
August 3, 2011**

The Township of West Orange Planning Board held a regular meeting on August 3, 2011 at 8:00 P.M., in Council Chambers, 66 Main Street.

Chairman Bagoff called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 P.M. It was announced that notification of this meeting was given to the Township Clerk, the West Orange Chronicle and posted on the Township Bulletin Board on January 13, 2011 in accordance with the requirements of the "Open Public Meetings Act."

PRESENT: Chairman Bagoff, Joanne Carlucci, Jerome Eben, Tekeste Ghebremicael (8:02 P.M.), Gerald Gurland, Vice Chairman Ben Heller, Lee Klein, Jason Lester (8:03 P.M.), Councilwoman Susan McCartney (8:03 P.M.), Ron Weston.

ABSENT: William Wilkes

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Borg, AICP, PP, AIA, Planning Director
Kevin Dillon, Jr., Audio Transcription Service, LLC
Patrick Dwyer, Esq., Board Attorney
Robin Miller, Board Secretary

ROLL CALL

Chairman Bagoff, Joanne Carlucci, Jerome Eben, Tekeste Ghebremicael, Gerald Gurland, Vice Chairman Ben Heller, Lee Klein, Jason Lester, Councilwoman Susan McCartney, Chairman Ron Weston, William Wilkes.

ADOPT MINUTES

The minutes of the July 6, 2011 Planning Board meeting were unanimously adopted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regular Planning Board meeting will be held on September 14, 2011 in Council Chambers at 8:00 P.M.

SWEARING IN

Director Borg was sworn in.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Bagoff welcomed Lee Klein, to the Planning Board. Mr. Klein has been appointed Second Alternate, by Mayor Parisi.

In the matter of Hugh Forfar, PB-09-28, the Board determined that Mr. Forfar has satisfied Condition 12 of the resolution. No further action to be taken.

Chairman Bagoff announced that voting on PB-11-12/Prism Green Associates III, LLC subdivision would be passed on for the moment; and the Board would begin with the courtesy review application for the Essex County/Turtle Back Zoo new Sea Lion and Touch Tank Exhibit.

APPLICATIONS

PB-11-15C/County of Essex/Turtle Back Zoo
Block: 163; Lot: 1; Zone: B-2
560 Northfield Avenue, Turtle Back Zoo
Courtesy site plan for Sea Lion and Touch Tank Exhibit

EXHIBITS

A-1: Rendered Site Plan Context
A-2: Rendered Site Plan
A-3: Lower Level Floor Plan
A-4: West Elevation Exterior
A-5: North Elevation Exterior
A-6: Section Elevation

DISCUSSION

Mr. Eben asked to be recused from this part of the meeting due to his affiliation with Michael Hanrahan, AIA, who is the President of AIANJ. Mr. Eben is an AIANJ Regional Director; he sits on the AIANJ Board with Mr. Hanrahan.

Mark L. Fleder, Esq. of the Roseland law firm Connell Foley was sworn in.

Mr. Fleder introduced himself as the attorney representing Essex County for the Turtle Back Zoo application. Mr. Fleder said the application was part of the zoo's larger Master Plan. Mr. Fleder said that two architects from Clarke Caton Hintz, the firm hired by Essex County to design the new exhibit, were present as experts and confirmed they were licensed architects.

Mr. George Hibbs, AIA, of Clarke Caton Hintz was sworn in.

Mr. Michael Hanrahan, AIA, of Clarke Caton Hintz was sworn in.

Mr. Hibbs and Mr. Hanrahan introduced themselves and stated their qualification. Chairman Bagoff accepted Mr. Hibbs and Mr. Hanrahan as experts.

Mr. Hibbs began his testimony by stating that the new exhibit was different from any other exhibit currently at the zoo, and would be taking the zoo to the next level. Referring to Exhibit A-1, Rendered Site Plan Context, he described the exterior of the exhibit. Mr. Hibbs said that the exhibit would be centrally located; it would be the first thing visitors see when entering the zoo.

Mr. Hibbs described the exterior appearance of the exhibit. Referring to Exhibit A-2, Rendered Site Plan, he said the overall theme of the building would reflect a Northwest California coastal motif. This theme would be reflected in the landscaping and building architecture, and the dock-like structure.

Mr. Hibbs said the building would be divided in to two sections. There would be a low wall to accommodate pedestrian interaction with the exhibit. There will be viewing windows to see the sea lions from an underwater vantage point.

The sea lion exhibit will have a zero elevation pool and beach with heated rocks. The exterior dock feature will allow presentations to visitors by zoo veterinarians and docents. The pool itself will be constructed as zero depth to 10 feet.

The interior and exterior of the exhibit will be 100% handicap accessible.

Mr. Hibbs said the second half of the building would be for back of house functions including extensive mechanical systems, life support systems and water changing systems. Referring to the bottom of the plan, Mr. Hibbs discussed the front door of the building. He said that the exterior façade reinforces all the esthetics of a water themed exhibit.

Mr. Hibbs concluded his testimony; and told the Board that Mr. Hanrahan would now give further testimony regarding the planned exhibit.

Mr. Hanrahan began by referring to Exhibit A-3, Lower Level Floor plan. Mr. Hanrahan said this was the public face of the building. The lower level interior area has been designed to be used as a public function space to hold public events. He said that there would be ample public restrooms to accommodate a large number of visitors.

Mr. Hanrahan said that there would be a holding area for four sea lions, manta rays and sharks; the area would include food preparation station for the animals, and a station for veterinary services.

Mr. Hanrahan said the entire structure would have a fully suppressed fire system; Fire Department connections will be located along the front of the building; and the location will be fully accessible to fire and emergency vehicles.

Mr. Hanrahan concluded his testimony.

Chairman Bagoff asked for questions from the Board.

Councilwoman McCartney wanted to know the details of safety features for visitors. Mr. Hibbs said that the safety features were well incorporated in to the exhibit; they include a dual barrier with cables to block pedestrian traffic from direct contact with the sea lions.

Councilwoman McCartney asked about catering facility for the planned public events space, and if plans had been submitted to the Health Department. Mr. Hibbs advised that the catering food preparation area would only be a food warming space. No food would be prepared on-premises. He said that plans had been submitted to the Health Department for review.

Mr. Weston asked if emergency and fire vehicles would have access all around the perimeter of the exhibit. Mr. Hibbs answered that there were fire hydrants all over the zoo; and that fire hoses would have full reach to any Siamese connections located on zoo grounds. There were gates off the western edge of the Reptile Exhibit that allow emergency vehicles on to the zoo grounds.

Mr. Weston asked what the maximum occupancy was for visitors to the interior public space. Mr. Hanrahan answered that the code was strict; that while the real occupancy number was 600, in reality, for a party or public event, the actual number would be between 100 and 200 people.

Mr. Weston said that since it had become such a popular destination, had the applicants discussed any new parking plans for zoo visitors. Mr. Hanrahan answered that currently the zoo has approximately 1,500 visitors per day. The new exhibit would attract about 150 more visitors per day, which would mean no more than 10 to 20 additional vehicles. He said the zoo complex currently has more than 1,200 parking spaces and can adequately handle the increase.

Mr. Weston asked if the exhibit would be storing special chemicals. Mr. Hanrahan answered that the only chemical to be stored on premise would be salt.

The Board discussed handicap accessibility of the exhibit. Mr. Gurland asked if there would be an elevator in the exhibit and if there was seating inside the building. Mr. Hanrahan answered that there would not be an elevator; and no permanent seating would be inside the venue. He said that the exhibit was designed in a manner that would not necessitate an elevator, and that there would be built in bench seating on the exterior of the exhibit.

Director Borg advised the Board that the Zoo Director, Dr. Jeremy Goodman, as well as other County officials were present, and could answer questions from the Board.

Councilwoman McCartney said that she had received complaints that buses were making illegal left turns from Northfield Avenue on to Cherry Lane. She said in order to avoid confusion, the County needed to install additional signage on Northfield Avenue to direct drivers to the zoo.

Sangeev Varghese, Director, Essex County Public Works and County Engineer was sworn in.

Mr. Varghese advised the Board that signs had been installed earlier in the week on the west side of Northfield Avenue to direct zoo visitors.

There were no questions from the Public Advocate.

Chairman Bagoff asked if there were any questions from the public.

Marilyn English, 97 Ease Avenue, Verona, NJ, wanted to know the cost of the project. Chairman Bagoff explained that this meeting was for a courtesy site plan review only; funding questions were not appropriate for this venue. He advised Ms. English to contact the County Executive for any questions regarding funding.

Robert Rashkes, 35 Oakcrest Road, West Orange, NJ, wanted to know what kind of power would be used in case of an outage. He said he was concerned about noise coming from back up generators. Mr. Hanrahan answered that a gas-fired generator would be used in case of power outage. Mr. Hibbs answered that the generator would be used only in case of emergency and would not be run at any other time; other than for periodic testing by the County for short periods of time. He also said that the animals in the exhibit had adequate water and life support in case of a temporary power outage.

There were no further questions or statements from the public.

Chairman Bagoff called for a vote on the application.

The Board voted on the application as follows:

Motion: Chairman Bagoff
Second: Mr. Lester

Carlucci	Yes	Eben	-	Ghebremicael	Yes
Gurland	Yes	Heller	Yes	Klein	Yes
Lester	Yes	McCartney	Yes	Wilkes	-
Weston	Yes	Bagoff	Yes		

Chairman Bagoff called for a short recess at 8:54 P.M.

Chairman Bagoff reconvened the meeting at 9:05 P.M.

RESOLUTIONS

PB-11-12/Prism Green Associates III, LLC
Block: 155; Lot: 26.02; Zone: OR
475 Prospect Avenue
Major Subdivision with variances.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Bagoff advised the Board that due to late comments from the applicant's attorney, it was necessary for the Board to review the draft resolution with Board attorney Patrick Dwyer, Esq., before voting to adopt the final version.

Mr. Gene Diaz, Principal, Prism Partners, was sworn in.

Mr. Diaz confirmed statements made regarding his direct testimony at the July 6, 2011 regarding the correct square footage of the medical office building, which was 38,000 square feet.

Additionally, Mr. Diaz told the Board that within one week of the July 6 Planning Board meeting, Prism Partners complied with the Board's request to clean up the property and remove all debris from the site. Mr. Diaz advised the Board that a crew had checked the site that morning to make sure it was cleaned up. He offered the Board the opportunity to meet him at the site at any time. Mr. Diaz stated he wanted to go on record reminding the Board that each time they made a request regarding Prism property, Prism complied.

Mr. Dwyer reviewed the resolution with the Board. The Board accepted the revisions as follows:

- Page 2, (1.); to read "4.82 acres";
- Page 2, (4.); to read "38,000 square feet"
- Page 2, (4.); delete "Proposed Lot 26.02A will have its existing 84 parking spaces";
- Page 3, (5.); to read "'minimum side yard setback for parking, lack of frontage on an approved street and maximum impervious coverage."
- Page 5, (11.); to include "subject to the review and approval of the Township Forrester."
- Page 6, (Condition 2); "Storm water and water systems will be a separate maintenance agreement between the two proposed lots.
- Page 6, (Condition 8); to read "for storm water drainage and an easement for utilities in favor of Lot 26.02A."
- Page 6, (Condition 9); to remain in resolution.

The Board voted on the resolution as follows:

Motion: Mr. Ghebremicael
Second: Vice Chairman Heller

Carlucci	Yes	Eben	Yes	Ghebremicael	Yes
Gurland	Yes	Heller	Yes	Klein	-
Lester	-	McCartney	Yes	Wilkes	-
Weston	Yes	Bagoff	Yes		

MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 9:26 P.M.

Minutes adopted September 14, 2011



Robin Miller, Planning Board Secretary

****NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD WILL BE OCTOBER 5, 2011 AT 8:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ****