

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE  
PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES  
March 2, 2011**

The Township of West Orange Planning Board held a regular meeting on March 2, 2011 at 8:00PM, in Council Chambers, 66 Main Street.

Chairman Weston called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05pm. 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:** Vice Chairman Robert Bagoff, Joanne Carlucci, Jerome Eben, Tekeste Ghebremicael, Gerald Gurland, Ben Heller, Susan McCartney and Chairman Ron Weston.

**ABSENT:** Jason Lester and William Wikes

**ALSO PRESENT:** Susan Borg, AICP, PP, AIA, Planning Director  
Leonard Lepore, Township Engineer  
Debbie Dillon, Audio Transcription Service, LLC  
Patrick Dwyer, Esq. Board Attorney  
Rose DeSena, Board Secretary

**ROLL CALL**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next regular Planning Board meeting will be held on April 6, 2011 in Council Chambers at 8:00pm.

**ADOPT MINUTES**

The minutes of the January 12, 2011 Planning Board meeting were unanimously adopted.

**SWEARING IN**

Director Borg was sworn in.  
Director Lepore was sworn in.

**REORGANIZATION**

Appoint Board Secretary – Rose DeSena

**Motion:** Chairman Weston

**Second:** Ms. Carlucci

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

**RESOLUTIONS**

Third Amendment to the Downtown Redevelopment Plan

**Motion:** Chairman Weston

**Second:** Vice Chair Bagoff

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

**Montclair Golf Club/PB-11-02T**  
 Block 151 Lot 1 Zone R-2  
 25 Prospect Avenue  
 West Orange, New Jersey  
 Technical Site Plan

Motion: Chairman Weston

Second: Vice Chair Bagoff

Bagoff	Yes	Eben	-	Gurland	Yes	Lester	A	Wilkes	A
Carlucci	Yes	Gherbremicael	Yes	Heller	Yes	McCartney	Yes	Weston	Yes

**ORDINANCE UNDER REVIEW**

Ordinance #2311-11 an ordinance amending and supplementing Chapter 25 Section 51.1 and 51.2 of the general ordinances of the Township of West Orange entitled “Application Procedures and Administrative Requirements”

Director Borg introduced the ordinance. Mr. Heller asked if the tree removal plan, in the application, has to be signed and sealed by a tree expert. Ms. Borg said not at the present time but eventually they will change the ordinance. Mr. Gurland asked if there is anything in the application that would disturb historic preservation and Ms. Borg replied no. Councilwoman McCartney stated that, at some point in time, green buildings should be addressed in the application also.

The recommendation of this ordinance, to council, was to add the words “**tree replacement plan**”, along with a tree removal plan, in the application (25-51.2(t))

Motion: Chairman Weston

Second: Mr. Gherbremicael

Bagoff	Yes	Eben	Yes	Gurland	Yes	Lester	A	Wilkes	A
Carlucci	Yes	Gherbremicael	Yes	Heller	Yes	McCartney	Yes	Weston	Yes

**DISCUSSION**

Chairman Weston asked the Board members if anyone wished to sit on the Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Committee. Director Borg stated the board meets once a month. Chairman Weston asked the Board members to think about it between now and the next meeting.

**APPLICATIONS**

**PB-11-03C/Essex County Turtle Back Zoo**  
 Block 163 Lot 13 Zone R-1  
 563 Northfield Avenue  
 Courtesy Review

**Exhibits**

**A-1 Plan Set (Reduced)**

**A-2 Aerial Course Layout Plan**

Mark Fleder, attorney -at -law for Connell Foley LLP, and legal representative for Essex County, explained the purpose of the expansion and introduced the first witness, Michael Piga. Mr. Piga stated he was a landscape architect for French & Parello Associates, PA consulting engineers and was a licensed landscape architect in the state of New Jersey. Chairman Weston accepted his qualifications.

Mr. Piga explained to the board the preliminary plans of adding a big cat and elk exhibit to the zoo along with an adventure course. He described the placement of the exhibits and adventure course within the zoo; the adventure course would be on the north side of the property; further down would be the elk exhibit and even further south the big cat exhibit along with adobe style restrooms. Mr. Piga continued to explain each exhibit in detail such as the themes, floor plans, site and building elevations and animal enclosure plans. He also outlined the adventure course stating it would include a suspension bridge and a rope course.

Director Borg asked for the exhibits to be marked. Board attorney, Mr. Dwyer, said to mark the first exhibit plan set as A-1, which included 9 exhibits, and the aerial course layout plan as A-2.

County Executive, Joe Divincenzo Jr., stated the expansion would cost approximately 3 million dollars and they are making the zoo the best it can be. He stated that the bid was won by the Shauger Group and construction would start approximately 4/1 and end 9/1/11. The zip lines would be done by 8/1 and the second phase of the project, the elk exhibit, would start in October or November of this year. Chairman Weston asked how far the zip lines would be setback from Northfield Avenue. He stated according to the plans it was 30' from the busy County road and could they assure screening for the participants safety. County Executive Divincenzo stated that the area would be fenced just like they did for the mini-golf course on Northfield Ave. Chairman Weston recommended to keep the fencing and buffering, for this particular part of the project, in mind.

Chairman Weston questioned if there would be any big cat experts on the premises. Mr. Piga stated that there would be and they have already consulted with these experts who advised them about all the safety measures needed.

Councilman McCartney asked if someone would be there manning the adventure course at all times. Mr. Piga stated that 4-6 people will be there at one time and two people per platform for supervision. Councilwoman McCartney asked if there is presently a restroom at this location and Mr. Piga stated not at the present; this restroom is strictly for convenience. Councilwoman McCartney asked how many trees will be coming down; Mr. Piga stated approximately 52 but they will be replaced.

Mr. Gurland asked what the distance was from Northfield Avenue and the new fence; Mr. Piga stated 200 feet.

Mr. Eben stated that the restrooms must be designed by an architect. Director Borg stated that before the restrooms are built, our building inspector will look at the plans and determine what is needed to meet code. Mr. Piga stated that the plans will be signed by an architect from the modular restroom supplier, prior to final plan submission or construction, and that he has been working with an architect on these plans all along. Mr. Eben asked if there would be any signage; Mr. Piga said yes there would be signs but no flashing signs.

County Executive, Mr. Divincenzo, stated that everything they do meets code and that they work very closely with the building inspector on every project. He also stated that the DCA performs regular periodic inspections of the Zoo facility.

Public advocate, Harvey Grossman, asked what were the conditions for emergency police, fire or EMT personnel having access to the premises. Mr. Piga showed, on the plans, where all emergency vehicles can enter. Mr. Grossman also asked if there were any future plans of developing Cherry Lane across from the archery and County Executive Divincenzo stated not at this time but they are in negotiations with the City of Orange for purchasing the lake and surrounding land.

Chairman Weston opened the floor to the public and asked if there were any questions. Michele Sutton,

33 Oakcrest Road, West Orange stated that she lives close by and asked if a traffic study was done and, if so, what were the results. Mr. Piga said that there was a study done and she could go to the County Public Works building on Bloomfield Avenue and look at it there. County Executive Divincenzo also stated that all traffic concerns are being addressed at the present and county patrol cars are there 24 hours.

Robert Raske, 35 Oakcrest Road, West Orange stated that the last time trees came down, there was a blackout in his neighborhood and will this happen again. Mr. Piga stated that there is an arborist that will come in to determine the strength of the trees and they will not endanger the trees or plants. Mr. Raske asked if the power lines that go into the facility will be relocated; Mr. Piga stated no that they will stay where they are. Mr. Raske asked if the adventure course will have a separate admission and separate parking; Mr. Piga stated that it will have a separate admission but no separate parking. Mr. Raske asked if there were any traffic changes proposed in this application or any acoustical studies; Mr. Piga stated no traffic changes and the acoustical studies are not part of this application.

Victoria Owens, 6 Korwel Court, West Orange, suggested that the blueprints for this project be published in local newspapers so that people can comment on them. Director Borg stated that the Township cannot make them do that. Chairman Weston stated that it could possibly be a friendly request. Ms. Owens wanted to know where the funds are coming from for this project. County Executive Divincenzo said from green acre funding, open space and any revenues that come in from the exhibits. They are projecting approximately 300-350 thousand dollars a year from this project.

Justin Mihalik, 31 Park Lane, Essex Fells commented that Mr. Eben's concerns were valid regarding the restrooms and asked what criteria was used to determine there were enough restrooms. Mr. Piga stated they are increasing the capacity of what is there now and there are not any restrooms in that location where the new exhibits are being built, which is on top of the mountain. Mr. Eben followed up with saying that facilities have to be designed according to the population; it shows 4 stalls for women and 2 stalls/2urinals for men. There is a building code and the restrooms must be designed by an architect for that reason. Chairman Weston mentioned that at some point this will be looked at so it meets code.

Michele Sutton, who previously spoke, stated that, if this was a courtesy hearing, when was the original meeting for this project brought before the public. County Divincenzo stated that they had a press conference in November of last year explaining their plans. He also stated that the public can go to the next Freeholders meeting to express any further concerns about this project.

Suzanne Robinson, 34 Dogwood Drive, commented about the Northfield Avenue screening also.

Chairman Weston closed the public portion of the meeting.

Director Borg requested a resolution, from the Board attorney, documenting that this application was heard.

Chairman Weston made recommendations that the area would be adequately screened and substantially set back from Northfield Avenue and Berm landscaped and to conduct a study, by a licensed architect, regarding the code requirements and fixtures of the restroom facilities. Councilwoman McCartney expressed a concern about signage for the traffic plan. Chairman Weston recommended that the signage for the traffic plan be reviewed again and way-finding signage provided.

Public advocate, Mr. Grossman, commented that the development of the zoo and mini golf course is a very extensive project and suggested that they should send a Township liaison to the county planning meetings. Councilwoman McCartney stated that the Township's building inspector goes to these meetings.

Motion: Chairman Weston

Second: Mr. Gherbremicael

Bagoff	Yes	Eben	No	Gurland	Yes	Lester	A	Wilkes	A
Carlucci	Yes	Gherbremicael	Yes	Heller	Yes	McCartney	Yes	Weston	Yes

Chairman Weston motioned to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Bagoff was second on the motion.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** 9:34 pm.

Minutes adopted on April 6, 2011



Rose DeSena, Planning Board Secretary