

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
September 5, 2018**

The Township of West Orange Planning Board held a regular meeting on September 5, 2018 at 7:30 P.M. in the Council Chamber, 66 Main Street, West Orange, New Jersey.

Chairman Bagoff called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 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 Bagoff requested all persons stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Planning Board regular meeting will be October 3, 2018 in the Council Chamber at 7:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Bagoff
John Cardoza
Captain Michael Keigher (7:35 P.M.)
Lee Klein
Council President Susan McCartney
Kenneth McPherson
Andrew Trenk
Vice Chairman Ron Weston
William Wilkes II (7:36 P.M.)

ABSENT: Gary Wegner

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

PRESENTATION

Chairman Bagoff presented former Board member Mr. Tekeste Ghebremicael with a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Mayor Robert D. Parisi in recognition of Mr. Ghebremicael's retirement from the Planning Board after fourteen years of continuous service.

ADOPT MINUTES

The minutes of the July 11, 2018 and August 1, 2018 Planning Board meetings were unanimously adopted.

SWEARING IN

Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planner

APPLICATION(S)

PB-18-06C/Essex County/Turtle Back Zoo/Otter Exhibit Renovation

Block: 163; Lot: 1; Zone: R-1

560 Northfield Avenue

Courtesy Review Application for renovation of the Otter Exhibit at Turtle Back Zoo.

PB-18-07C/Essex County/Turtle Back Zoo/New Parking Deck and Train Ride Depot

Block: 163; Lot: 1; Zone: R-1

560 Northfield Avenue

Courtesy Review Application for construction of a new parking deck and new train ride depot Turtle Back Zoo.

APPLICANT EXHIBITS:

- A-1:** Site Plans prepared by Comito Associates PC, (13 sheets)
- A-2:** Colorized Site Plan of Parking Deck/Train House prepared by Comito & Associates PC
- A-3:** Rendering of Train Depot prepared by Comito & Associates PC
- A-4:** Rendering of Parking Deck prepared by Comito & Associates PC
- A-5:** Rendering of Parking Deck/Train Depot
- A-6:** Enlarged Aerial View of Turtle Back Zoo prepared by French & Parrello Associates, dated 7/9/18
- A-7:** Conceptual Elevation of River Otter Exhibit prepared by French & Parrello Associates, dated 3/21/18
- A-8:** Conceptual Site Plan for River Otter Exhibit prepared by French & Parrello Associates, dated 5/7/18
- A-9:** Conceptual Elevation B of River Otter Exhibit prepared by French & Parrello Associates, dated 5/22/18
- A-10:** Conceptual Elevation C of River Otter Exhibit prepared by French & Parrello Associates, dated 3/21/18
- A-11:** Conceptual Access Layout for New Parking Deck prepared by French & Parrello Associates, dated 9/5/18

DISCUSSION:

Mark L. Fleder, Esq., Connell Foley LLP, legal counsel to Essex County, introduced the Courtesy Review applications as provided by statute. Mr. Fleder requested permission for both Applications to be heard together.

Michael J. Piga, LLA, French & Parrello Associates PA, was sworn in, stated his credentials, and was accepted by the Board to be a New Jersey licensed professional in landscape architecture. Referring to Exhibit A-6, Mr. Piga described the current layout of Turtle Back Zoo; he noted the existing River Otter Exhibit was located at the center of the Zoo. The proposed project was essentially a rehabilitation of the existing exhibit. Improvements would include expanding the existing pool, more viewing areas for visitors, additional landscaping, and new lighting. Referring to Exhibit A-8, Mr. Piga stated the current pool size would be doubled to 7,000 gallons of water, there would be new landscaping installed within the space and fencing would be installed to the rear of the exhibit, and an area for trainers to store their equipment. Referring to Exhibit A-10, Mr. Piga stated a seamless glass window would be installed to create additional public viewing of the otters. No existing trees would be removed and additional trees would be planted. Mr. Piga concluded his testimony.

The Board questioned Mr. Piga on his testimony. Council President McCartney asked for clarification about the size of the pool and the landscaping. Mr. Piga stated the existing pool would increase from 2,000 gallons to 7,000 gallons. Additional landscaping would be added to the exhibit to give it a more rustic appearance. Captain Keigher stated he had visited the site and thought the exhibit would be an improvement to the Zoo. Mr. Trenk asked Mr. Piga to confirm the physical footprint of the exhibit would remain the same. Mr. Piga answered in the affirmative. Vice Chairman Weston asked if the impervious coverage would increase; had the Applicant considered installing pervious pavers for the site. Mr. Piga stated the project would pave over the existing asphalt; there would be no new impervious coverage; pervious pavers had not been considered for the project. Vice Chairman Weston asked for clarification regarding new lighting; Mr. Piga stated there would be no new exterior lighting; new LED lighting would be installed in the interior of the exhibit. Mr. Cardoza asked if the number of otters would increase; Mr. Piga answered in the negative. Mr. McPherson voiced concern regarding the on-site storm water management; Mr. Piga stated the issue had been addressed.

The Public Advocate had no questions for Mr. Piga.

The following members of the Public approached the podium to question Mr. Piga:

Judy Rosenthal, Millburn, NJ

Evelyn Coleman, West Orange, NJ

The Public had no further questions for Mr. Piga.

Chairman Bagoff asked the Public if they had comments on the Application.

The following member of the Public approached the podium and was sworn in under oath:

Judy Rosenthal Millburn, NJ

There were no further comments from the Public on Application PB-18-06C/Renovations to Otter Exhibit.

The Board deliberated. Vice Chairman Weston noted the application was for improvements to an existing exhibit; it was not an expansion. Chairman Bagoff stated that under the law the County was presenting the applications as a courtesy; it was the goal of the Board to hear the applications and make recommendations for the County to consider. He stated the County did listen to the Board and had agreed to recommendations to the best of their ability. He thanked the Public for their questions and comments.

Mr. Grygiel stated the Board was tasked with hearing the County applications to confirm consistency with the Township's Master Plan; the law stated the County was required to submit the courtesy applications because of the use of public monies.

Chairman Bagoff announced the next application, PB-18-07C/Essex County/Turtle Back Zoo/Parking Deck and Train Depot. Addressing Mr. Fleder, Chairman Bagoff stated the Board had previously requested the County provide an updated Zoo Master Plan and a traffic study; he noted the importance of a traffic study in light of the proposed new parking deck. Mr. Fleder stated the County had advised the Board at the beginning of the year that it had commissioned an updated Zoo Master Plan report; a draft was completed but was not yet in its final form; the County expected its completion within the next few months. He stated it was a multi-faceted undertaking; a zoo with live animals was subject to many regulations. The report would address storm water, sidewalks, and restroom facilities. He stated the Master Plan for the Zoo would address vehicle and pedestrian traffic and maintenance vehicle access on the Zoo property. He stated the County had undertaken a separate traffic study; it would address access to the Zoo property to include Northfield Avenue and Cherry Lane.

Mr. Fleder stated the application was a combination of two projects; modifications to the existing miniature train operation on the Zoo property to include moving the route of the train tracks and build a structure for train storage and repairs; and the construction of a new parking deck.

Chairman Bagoff thanked Mr. Fleder for the information regarding the status of the Zoo Master Plan and traffic study. He stated the Township was updating its Master Plan and welcomed input from the County. He acknowledged and thanked Michael Kerr, Director of Turtle Back Zoo, for assisting the Board members who visit the Zoo to view proposed exhibits.

Darrell Alvarez, PE, RA, Comito Associates PC, was sworn in, stated his credentials, and was accepted by the Board to be a New Jersey licensed professional in architecture and engineering. Referring to Exhibit A-2, Mr. Alvarez described the scope of the project to incorporate a new parking facility within the confines of the zoo property. He stated the new garage would be located in the area where there was currently a maintenance and storage structure. To make room for the new parking deck the existing maintenance structure would be moved and the existing train path would be reconfigured. He stated the length of the new path would be almost identical to the existing attraction. He stated the existing train station would be re-designed to feature an "Old Western Town" theme.

Mr. Alvarez stated flood plain consideration had been included in the location and design of the new parking deck. The deck would be five levels with the option of adding a sixth level at a later date. He stated the deck would hold approximately 500 parking spaces; he stated that currently there were approximately 1,100 parking spaces on-site. The new deck would increase on-site parking by approximately fifty-percent. He stated the existing entrance on Northfield Avenue was two-way. He stated that the current two-lane exit on to Northfield Avenue from the west side of property permitted a right turn and left turn on to Northfield Avenue. The County was proposing widening the driveway to permit a third lane to permit a right turn entrance on to property; approximately 8 or 9 existing ground parking spaces would be eliminated to accommodate the new lane. Referring to Exhibit A-1, Mr. Alvarez described the proposed train house, train track improvements and new parking deck. He stated vehicles would not have access to the first level of the parking deck. The first level would be used mainly for maintenance equipment storage, hay storage, Christmas lights storage, charging stations for the golf carts, freezer and refrigerator units, a private storage area for special event equipment, and administrative staff and security offices and restrooms. He stated the location of the parking deck was convenient to the main entrance to the Zoo, closer than the existing parking decks. He stated there would be a paved access driveway for maintenance vehicles. He stated he agreed with the Board's concern regarding storm water management; he described the proposed underground percolating retention system. He stated the new facility would create less run-off than currently existed.

Referring to Exhibit A-3, Mr. Alvarez described the proposed improvements to the Train House. He stated the proposed materials would be low maintenance with a cedar type finish to create a rustic barn look. The attraction would include an old mine shaft feature, blacksmith, sheriff office, and coalminer feature. The features would help block the view of the maintenance yard.

Referring to Exhibit A-4, Mr. Alvarez stated the design of the parking garage was similar to the existing Parking Deck #2; including a glass entry level for security reasons and transparency, pre-cast aluminum railings, and galvanized architectural poles. Referring to Exhibit A-5, he stated the rendering was a view of the parking garage from across the reservoir. In response to question from Mr. Fleder, Mr. Alvarez stated the County proposed starting the improvements before the end of the year; the first improvement would be to move the train house.

Mr. Fleder stated there would be further testimony regarding the proposed changes to the existing driveway, currently a two-lane exit. In response to question from Mr. Fleder, Mr. Alvarez confirmed the driveway improvements would be completed prior to the new parking deck. Mr. Alvarez concluded his testimony.

The Board questioned Mr. Alvarez on his testimony.

Council President McCartney asked for clarification regarding the parking deck lighting, security, screening on the side of the reservoir, trash enclosures, the current footprint of the area, and the amount of land to be disturbed. Mr. Alvarez stated the first level of the parking deck would be screened on the side facing the reservoir. The parking deck would be open and visible on three sides; the stair tower would be lighted and visible. Referring to Sheet SP-3.0, Overall Site Plan, he stated the current footprint included a couple of maintenance buildings, a portion of the train tracks, the existing train house, dumpsters, refrigerator units, trash areas, and truck boxes used for storage. He noted that there was currently maintenance vehicle movement in the area. With the exception of the trash areas and greenhouse, all units would be relocated to the parking structure; the maintenance area would not be visible. He stated there would be fencing to restrict Public access to the area. He stated there would be a considerable amount of landscaping. He reiterated the location of the new train depot, the new theme structures and new path for train tracks.

Captain Keigher stated he had also wanted clarification on the original footprint and the area of disturbance; he asked for further clarification regarding storm water management. Mr. Alvarez detailed the path of the sheet flow would be down to the reservoir; he stated the proposed grading was important – the area appearance would remain consistent to its current look; the water would flow in exactly the same fashion. He described how the parking structure plan would capture, retain, percolate the storm water, and control the discharge. He stated the proposed plan would discharge less storm water than currently discharged.

Mr. Trenk asked for clarification regarding proposed landscaping. Mr. Alvarez stated Mr. Piga could offer testimony regarding the landscaping details.

Vice Chairman Weston asked for clarification regarding the proposed plastic mesh on the west façade of the parking garage; he stated he supposed it would be similar to the screening on Northfield Avenue that included animal and athletic images. He asked if a natural green, planted wall be considered to add to the natural character of the Reservation, rather than another attraction. He opined there was a great opportunity to be environmentally sensitive without spending too much money. Mr. Alvarez stated that green walls were extremely expensive to be maintained. He stated the goal was to create an attractive and low-maintenance screen. In response, Vice Chairman suggested that a green color mesh be considered to blend in with the natural character of the reservation. Mr. Alvarez stated that the green color mesh might not look good due to size required to screen

the area; the County wanted something with more character. Vice Chairman Weston asked for clarification regarding the proposed lighting for the garage; would the lighting be internal only; he voiced concern about lighting spillage in the area of the reservoir. Mr. Alvarez stated there would be both internal and external lighting; wall mounted exterior fixtures would be installed at the entrances and exits; he stated the lights would be for the immediate area but would have some spillage; but he did not know exactly how much. Vice Chairman Weston stated the structure would be over 240 feet long and approximately 50 feet from the reservoir; he reiterated his concern about light spillage. Vice Chairman Weston asked for clarification regarding the types of materials to be stored in the ground level storage area; he asked Mr. Alvarez to confirm the storage would conform to all building code specifications. Mr. Alvarez stated the issue had already been discussed with the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Mr. Klein asked how the County had chosen the proposed location for the parking deck, and how was it determined that 516 additional parking spaces were necessary; he wondered if the County knew if the proposed parking deck would be manageable since there was not an updated Zoo Master Plan or traffic study. He asked if the County knew if the proposed configuration of the driveway ingress/egress configuration would be adequate to accommodate the additional 516 vehicles entering and exiting the site. He stated Parking Deck #2 had been erected on top of an existing parking lot; he asked Mr. Alvarez how the new site had been chosen; was there a reason why the new location would not be erected on top of the existing ground parking lot. He asked if a study had been done to look at the driveway, would the two (2) means of egress remain sufficient. Mr. Alvarez stated there was currently a core (parking) area from the existing main entrance to the reservoir; he stated the core area would be overwhelmed with the addition of another parking structure. Mr. Alvarez stated the County conveyed the requirement was for a minimum number of 516 parking spaces. Mr. Fleder stated it was the County and the Zoo management that expressed the need for a minimum of 516 parking spaces; he stated that part of the goal was to eliminate or severely limit the use of off-site parking and shuttle bus arrangements. He stated he would try to get a better answer from the County; but overall, the decision was made to erect a parking structure to accommodate a meaningful number of vehicles. He stated that French & Parrello would provide further testimony about the driveway. Mr. Klein asked if the proposed drainage could be reconfigured so that run-off did not go in to the reservoir; he voiced concern that the parking deck would create a large impervious area that did not currently exist. Mr. Alvarez gave a recapitulation of the drainage; he stated there would be less run-off with the new system than that of current conditions.

Mr. Wilkes stated that without a completed traffic study, he was concerned about the additional number of vehicles on-site. He asked for clarification regarding the ground level parking spaces to be eliminated. Mr. Alvarez stated the parking spaces adjacent to the (Arena) building would be eliminated to create a third lane for the driveway. Mr. Wilkes asked how vehicles would enter the parking structure; where would the handicap spaces be located; where would the elevator be located. Mr. Alvarez explained the vehicles would

enter a ramp directly to the second level of the parking structure; handicap spaces would be available on all levels; the structure would be entirely ADA compliant.

Mr. Cardoza asked if there would be total net gain of over 500 new on-site parking spaces, including the spaces removed for the additional driveway lane. Mr. Alvarez stated there were currently 1,157 parking spaces, after the renovation there would be a total of 1,635 parking spaces for a net gain of 478 parking spaces. Mr. Cardoza asked for clarification regarding the length of the re-routed train path; would the path be shortened; would the wait and ride times for passengers remain the same; would there be additional changes to the train route at a future date. Mr. Alvarez stated the path would not be shortened; he stated the new path length was approximately equivalent to the existing path. Mr. Alvarez stated the patron wait/ride time would remain the same. Mr. Alvarez stated he was not aware of any future changes to the train route. Mr. Cardoza asked Mr. Alvarez to confirm there was not a space or walkway around the exterior of the parking structure other than for maintenance accessibility. Mr. Alvarez answered in the affirmative; he stated the plan was to keep the area clear and accessible only to maintenance personnel. He noted that located behind the feature wall there would also be above ground 550-gallon capacity gas tanks for the operation of maintenance vehicles. He stated the plastic coated mesh on the metal frame would provide adequate circulation of heat, air and space. Mr. Cardoza asked for further clarification regarding the light spillage from the parking structure. Mr. Alvarez stated it was not a bright light; he stated the lighting inside the structure would be brighter than the outside lighting; outside lighting would be sufficient to provide enough light to walk around the facility. Mr. Cardoza asked if the proposed north and west elevations were finalized. Mr. Alvarez stated the north and west elevations were only conceptual.

Mr. Klein voiced concern about only one lane in/one lane out of the parking structure; he voiced concern about exiting the structure in an emergency situation. Mr. Alvarez stated that in case of an emergency, both lanes could be used to exit the structure.

Vice Chairman Weston asked for clarification regarding the fuel tanks; how close would they be to the reservoir; how would they be contained. Mr. Alvarez stated the tanks would be further than 150 feet away from the reservoir; they would be within a double wall self-contained above ground structure.

Council President McCartney asked if the applicant had considered the need for emergency blue light buttons. Mr. Alvarez stated it had not been considered; security personnel would be on site.

In response to inquiry from Chairman Bagoff, Mr. Alvarez confirmed the parking spaces to be eliminated had previously been designated parking spaces for Sheriff Department vehicles.

Mr. Grygiel had no further questions for Mr. Alvarez; he stated all his questions had been answered during Board questioning.

Harvey Grossman, Esq., Public Advocate, stated his questions were in reference to the memorandum report from the Township Fire Official (Deputy Chief Fred Kingston, dated 8/10/18). Mr. Grossman asked if the West Orange Fire Department would response to the site in the case of an emergency. Mr. Alvarez stated he was unable to answer. Mr. Grossman asked if there was a plan for handling fire emergencies. Mr. Alvarez stated that all levels of the parking structure would be equipped with a stand-pipe system for fire department connection; all code requirements would be implemented. Mr. Grossman asked if the applicant had provided a fire safety plan to the West Orange Fire Department. Mr. Alvarez stated that would be an issue to address with the Zoo administration. Mr. Grossman requested the Board identify the Fire Official's memorandum as an Exhibit item; the Board acknowledged it as Exhibit PA-1. Mr. Grossman stated the report made several recommendations; he asked if Mr. Alvarez had read the report and if the recommendations would be incorporated in to the project. Mr. Alvarez stated he had read the report; he stated the plan would incorporate all necessary code requirements. He stated the recommendation by the Fire Official to outfit the parking structure with a dry piped sprinkler suppression system was not required by code, and would not be installed. Mr. Grossman requested the Board recommend to the County that all recommendations discussed in the Fire Official's memorandum be included in the project as a condition of approval.

The following members of the Public approached the podium to question Mr. Alvarez:

Robert Rashkes, 35 Oak Crest Road, West Orange

Evelyn Coleman, Hickory Road, West Orange, NJ

Judy Rosenthal, Millburn, NJ

Sally Malanga, 57 Ridge Road, West Orange, NJ

Joyce Rudin, Woodland Avenue, West Orange, NJ

Dennis Percher, Maplewood, NJ

The Public had no further questions for Mr. Alvarez.

Chairman Bagoff announced a brief recess at approximately 9:48 P.M. He reconvened the meeting at approximately 9:58 P.M.

Mr. Fleder stated that the services of Mr. Piga's firm, French & Parrello Associates, had also been retained for the train depot and parking deck project. He recalled Mr. Piga to the podium to offer testimony regarding the subject of tree removal and replacement for the project. Chairman Bagoff stated Mr. Piga was still under oath and would continue testimony as a licensed landscape architect. In response to questions from Mr. Fleder, Mr.

Piga stated he had visited the area of the train tracks and had worked on the proposed landscaping. Referring to Sheet SP-3.1, Mr. Piga identified the vicinity of the new train tracks. He stated approximately 20 trees would be removed. He stated approximately 100 replacement trees (conifer and citrus) would be planted near the train tracks/ maintenance areas. In response to question from Mr. Fleder, Mr. Piga stated approximately 50-55 trees would be removed in the area of the proposed parking structure; he stated the specimens were in very poor condition; they were Norway Spruce and Norway Maples. Mr. Piga stated the County has requested landscaping around the garage area to include approximately 25-30 replacement trees, some to be located near the front of the parking structure. He stated the landscaping plan was currently in its preliminary stage. Mr. Piga concluded his testimony.

Council President McCartney voiced concern there would be more trees removed than replaced. Mr. Piga stated the goal was to create a “rustic woodsy area”; there would be an abundance of new landscaping.

Vice Chairman Weston asked Mr. Piga to confirm the landscaping plan would include planting one tree for every one tree removed. Mr. Piga answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Klein stated there was previous discussion about the possibility of installing a “living wall”. He asked Mr. Piga if he had experience with that type of landscape installation. Mr. Piga stated he would not recommend planting any type of ivy; he stated English Ivy was highly invasive. He stated vines and ivy were deciduous; they would not screen the parking structure in the winter.

The Public Advocate had no questions for Mr. Piga.

The following members of the Public approached the podium to question Mr. Piga:

Judy Rosenthal, Millburn, NJ

Sally Malanga, 57 Ridge Road, West Orange, NJ

Dennis Percher, Maplewood, NJ

Robert Rashkes, 35 Oak Crest Road, West Orange, NJ

Joyce Rudin, Woodland Avenue, West Orange, NJ

The Public had no further questions for Mr. Piga.

Mr. Fleder called his next witness to the podium. Andrew L. French, PE, Senior Vice President, French & Parrello Associates, PA, was sworn in, stated his professional credentials, and was accepted by the Board to be a professional engineer licensed in the State of New Jersey. In reply to inquiry from Mr. Fleder, Mr. French stated the County had retained his firm to prepare the plans for widening improvement of the existing driveway on

the west side of the Arena. He stated that currently the driveway had two "exit-only" lanes on to Northfield Avenue. In reply to question from Mr. Fleder, Mr. French confirmed his firm had prepared Exhibit A-11, (Conceptual Access Layout for New Parking Deck). Mr. French stated Exhibit A-11 was an aerial drawing of the existing conditions of the driveway on the west side of the Arena with the exits on to Northfield Avenue. The proposed improvements would maintain the two exit lanes, one right and one left, and to create an entrance in to the Zoo by widening the driveway. Mr. French stated there was currently a traffic signal at the driveway. Mr. French stated that on a Saturday, his firm had conducted traffic counts at the three intersections that enter and exit Turtle Back Zoo. Mr. French stated the existing main entrance and the existing exit lanes on the east side of the Zoo would remain unchanged. The two exit lanes on the west side would remain; that intersection would be improved with the addition of an entry lane. Mr. French stated his firm had worked with the County to develop the location of the new ingress lane. Mr. French opined the proposed preliminary design would sufficiently accommodate on-site vehicular traffic. He stated the purpose of the project was to minimize or eliminate overflow parking on days with excessive visitor attendance. He opined the project would result in safer conditions for vehicles and pedestrians. Mr. French stated there would be signage and traffic signal improvements to accommodate the traffic new movements. Mr. French concluded his testimony.

Chairman Bagoff requested Mr. Klein represent the Board in questioning Mr. French on his testimony. Mr. Klein asked on what (Saturday) date and time were the traffic counts conducted. Mr. French stated he did not have the exact date, but it was during the month August. He stated that typically, traffic counts were conducted during peak hours, but he did not know the exact time of day his firm had conducted the traffic counts. Mr. Klein asked for about the proposed directional/informational signage. He opined the current signage, traffic cones, and County staff that directed traffic were ineffectual. He asked how the County would manage traffic. Mr. French stated that during normal operation, the traffic would function fine. On days with heavy traffic volume, County staff would be present to direct traffic; traffic would be managed in an open-ended manner. Mr. Klein asked Mr. French if he would ask the County to consider having his firm prepare a traffic management plan. Mr. French stated that to the best of its ability, the County does incorporate traffic management on high volume days. Mr. Klein asked if an analysis of the proposed 40% increase in parked cars had yet been completed to determine the level of service on the high volume days. Mr. French stated an analysis had not been completed. He stated that if required, the County would alter the timing of the signals to incorporate the traffic movements on the high volume days. He stated evaluations were still being considered. Mr. Klein opined that he, a professional traffic engineer, would have done the traffic study first to determine the number of parking spaces in the proposed garage. He asked if an analysis of the driveway traffic volume had been studied. Mr. French answered no. Mr. Klein voiced concern that the additional 40% increase had not been considered when the initial traffic count was done.

The following members of the Public approached the podium to question Mr. French:

Joyce Rudin, Woodland Avenue, West Orange, NJ

Robert Rashkes, 35 Oak Crest Road, West Orange, NJ

Dennis Percher, Maplewood, NJ

Sally Malanga, 57 Ridge Road, West Orange, NJ

Judy Rosenthal, Millburn, NJ

Chairman Bagoff asked the Public if they had comments on the Application.

The following members of the Public approached the podium and were sworn in under oath:

Judy Rosenthal, Millburn, NJ

Harvey Grossman, Esq., Public Advocate

Robert Rashkes, 35 Oak Crest Road, West Orange, NJ

Dennis Percher, Maplewood, NJ

Sally Malanga, 57 Ridge Road, West Orange, NJ

Joyce Rudin, Woodland Avenue, West Orange, NJ

There were no further comments from the Public.

Chairman Bagoff closed the public hearing; the Board deliberated.

Chairman Bagoff recommended the Memorandum from Deputy Fire Chief Kingston dated August 10, 2018, be included in its entirety as a recommendation to the County. Vice Chairman Weston requested the Board restate its past recommendation that the County provide an updated Zoo Master Plan and Traffic Study prior to any further expansion at the Zoo. He recommended the County provide a Traffic Management Plan per Mr. Klein's suggestion. He suggested the County look for natural planting alternatives to the screening of the west wall of the parking structure. Vice Chairman Weston stated that the County presented the applications for Courtesy Review; if the Board did not hear the applications, the Township would have no input; he acknowledged the County did implement many of the Board's recommendations. He stated the Zoo complex was a major asset to the community; however, he recognized the area was at a near tipping point with all the exhibits, amusements, and traffic. Chairman Bagoff recommended the County submit a landscaping plan that identified the tree species for removal and species to be replanted.

Council President McCartney stated she saw an immediate need to address the traffic going east and west on Northfield Avenue. She stated there was a need for a Traffic Impact Study. She stated she had requested better signage during previous hearings. She stated that as part of the traffic management plan, signage was a necessity at the new intersection. She requested repairing the streetlight at the Education Center. She requested the installation of the emergency blue light buttons as with previous applications. Captain Keigher recommended a Traffic Management Plan be implemented working with the County Sheriff’s Department and the West Orange Police Department. He recommended the County provide the West Orange Police Department their Emergency Management Plan.

Recommendations:

1. Applicant should complete and submit a Master Plan for the Turtle Back Zoo before making any more capital improvements. Applicant should incorporate Complete Streets Planning policy which has been adopted by both the County of Essex and by the Township of West Orange into the Turtle Back Zoo Master Plan and all future improvements;
2. Applicant should complete and submit a Traffic Study for the Turtle Back Zoo including appropriate signage before making any more capital improvements to the Zoo property.
3. Provide a Traffic Management Plan which explains how traffic will be managed on heavy use days.
4. The western façade of the new parking garage should be covered with a natural “green” wall or other sustainable screening to visually buffer the garage from the reservoir area, rather than the proposed mesh.
5. Repair the street traffic light at the Zoo entrance.
6. Provide a Landscaping Plan which should include a tree removal/tree replacement plan. Tree replacement should be with trees having similar or greater DBH than trees being removed.
7. Comply with all of the comments of the West Orange Fire Department in its memo by Deputy Chief Fred Kingston dated August 10, 2018.
8. Install blue-light emergency station in or near the new parking deck.
9. Work with the West Orange Police Department in handling traffic issues along the Northfield Avenue corridor.
10. Utilize pervious pavers or other approaches to reducing stormwater drainage for all improvements on the Zoo property.

The Board voted on Application PB-18-06C as follows:

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Vice Chairman Weston

Cardoza:	Yes	Trenk:	Yes
Keigher:	Yes	Wegner:	Absent
Klein:	Yes	Weston:	Yes

McCartney: Yes	Wilkes: Yes
McPherson: Yes	Bagoff: Yes

The Board voted on Application PB-18-07C as follows:

Motion: Vice Chairman Weston

Second: Chairman Bagoff

Cardoza: Yes	Trenk: Yes
Keigher: Yes	Wegner: Absent
Klein: Yes	Weston: Yes
McCartney: Yes	Wilkes: Yes
McPherson: Yes	Bagoff: Yes

Chairman Bagoff announced the discussion on the Master Plan Reexamination would be carried to the next regular meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 11:06 P.M.

Minutes adopted February 6, 2019.

Robin Miller, Secretary
Township of West Orange Planning Board

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD WILL BE
WEDNESDAY MARCH 6, 2019 AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.**