

**RESOLUTION
of the
PLANNING BOARD OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE**

Heard: December 6, 2017
Case Nos.: PB-17-10C & PB-17-09C
County of Essex/Turtle Back Zoo

WHEREAS, pursuant to Municipal Land Use Law §40:55D-31 the Board has heard proposed capital improvement projects by the County of Essex for construction of certain improvements at the Turtle Back Zoo which is on County owned property located at 560 Northfield Avenue, West Orange, NJ, said premises being designated on the municipal tax map as Block 163, Lot 1; and

WHEREAS, the Board having heard the presentation and having performed its review pursuant to MLUL 40:55D-31 hereby makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

1. The Board accepted into evidence the following Exhibits:
 - A-1 Aerial View
 - A-2 Conceptual Site Plan
 - A-3 Ground Floor Plan for Leopard Building
 - A-4 Exterior Elevations
 - A-5 Site Plan
 - A-6 Rendering
2. Michael Piga, L.A., of French & Parrello was sworn and qualified as a landscape architect. He testified regarding the proposed improvements to the Leopard Exhibit which included expanding the existing 950-square foot building by approximately 1,365 square feet, resulting in a new building footprint of 2,320 square feet. The addition to the building would add six new dens and a trainer's

hallway. Exterior changes include a new 12-foot wide walkway and a “small modular block retaining wall.”

3. Lorrie Sciabarasi, RA was sworn and qualified as an expert in architecture. Ms. Sciabarasi testified regarding the proposed expansion. She testified that the purchase of the expansion was to provide more space for the animals. The proposed improvements would be in accordance with the American Zoological Association’s Standards.
4. Ms. Sciabarasi then testified regarding proposed improvements to the main entrance of the zoo. She stated that the existing space between the towers would be demolished and Applicant would be adding five (5) new ticket booths to create better pedestrian circulation. The zoo would also be adding a 1,800 square foot group sales office with three (3) additional ticket booths. The proposed new building would result in a reduction of 26 parking spaces.
5. During public comment neighbors expressed concern about traffic and parking issues around the zoo complex.

WHEREAS, the Board having heard the presentation and having performed its review pursuant to MLUL 40:55D-31 hereby makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

1. The County of Essex proposes construction of a new main entranceway, as well as an expansion of the Leopard Exhibit on the premises in accordance with drawings by Comito and Associates and French and Parrello Associates.
2. The Board finds that the proposed project and capital improvements are not contrary to the Master Plan of the Township of West Orange.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the Township of West Orange that it finds that the proposed projects and capital improvements are not inconsistent with the West Orange Master Plan. The Board makes the following comments and recommendations to the Applicant:

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. Given the growth in number of visitors and reduction of parking spaces proposed, additional parking should be added on the Zoo property;
3. Applicant to install a cage around the proposed ladder on the side of the Leonard Exhibit as required by Code;
4. Applicant should install directional signage on roadways surrounding the Turtle Back Zoo property to better direct traffic to and from the facility.

Certified to be a true copy of the Resolution adopted on the 3rd day of January 2018.



Robin Miller, Secretary
Township of West Orange Planning Board

Vote on the Action Taken by the Board

Board Member	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Cardoza (2 nd Alt.)			*			
Eben			*			
Ghebremicael						*
Keigher			*			
Klein (Vice Chair)						*
McCartney			*			
Trenk			*			
Wegner (1 st Alt.)			*			
Weston	*		*			
Wilkes						*
Bagoff (Chair)		*	*			

Vote on the Memorializing Resolution

Board Member	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Cardoza (1 st Alt.)			*			
Eben						
Ghebremicael						
Keigher						*
Klein						
McCartney			*			
Trenk			*			
Wegner			*			
Weston (Vice Chair)	*		*			
Wilkes						
Bagoff (Chair)		*	*			