

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING BOARD

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

Decided: March 6, 2019

Memorialized: March 12, 2019

WHEREAS pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (the “LRHL”) the Planning Board was directed by the West Orange Township Council pursuant to Resolution #266-18 adopted on November 27, 2018 and Resolution #12-19 adopted on January 8, 2019, to conduct a preliminary investigation in order to study the area listed therein and generally described as the 46 Mount Pleasant Avenue Study Area (the “Study Area”) to determine whether it should be designated as an area in need of redevelopment under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law; and

WHEREAS the firm of Heyer Gruel & Associates (“HGA”) was engaged to conduct a study and make recommendations as to whether any or all of the property within the Study Area met the criteria as an area in need of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS HGA did conduct a study and prepare a report dated February 6, 2019 (the “Report”); and

WHEREAS the Planning Board conducted a public hearing at a meeting held on March 6, 2019 after notice;

WHEREAS the Planning Board having received testimony from Susan Gruel, PP and having allowed for questions and comments from all members of the public desiring to be heard, hereby makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. The Board having received the report from HGA and having heard testimony from

Susan Gruel, PP, and having provided an opportunity for public comment, and having deliberated on the matter, hereby finds that there is sufficient information to recommend that the Study Area meets the statutory criteria for designation as an area in need of redevelopment.

2. The Board finds credible the testimony of Susan Gruel who detailed the reasons why the Study Area qualifies under the statute N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5(d). The criteria under subsection “d” are as follows:

Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community.

3. The Board finds there is substantial evidence that the library property suffers from faulty arrangement, obsolescence and an obsolete layout which has a detrimental affect on the general welfare of the community. The original building is 60 years old and the addition is 40 years old. An architectural assessment prepared by Arcari + Iovino Architects in October 2015 identified \$1.6 million in improvements needed to address physical deficiencies, ADA access, electrical upgrades, fire detection and other building systems and site issues. A portion of the façade of the Edison Wing collapsed in 2015. In addition to maintenance and repair work, asbestos containing materials (ACMs) were identified in the building, both friable and non-friable.

4. A study by the Information Policy and Access Center released October 1, 2015

indicated how the function of libraries in an increasingly digital world has changed. Libraries now serve an essential role in offering digital services to people that cannot access them elsewhere. One of the report's conclusions is that "a library's ability to provide these services is closely related to the quality of its infrastructure." The faulty arrangement, obsolete layout and functional obsolescence of building systems and equipment in the West Orange library hinder the facility's ability to provide these services. As noted in the HGA report "without substantial upgrades or reconfiguration, the physical constraints of the building prevent the library from offering the full range of modern tools and programs that promote digital inclusion and provide the services that modern libraries seek to offer the communities they serve." Among the physical constraints are: the main library floor has but one small meeting room and an undersized teen area; the ground floor meeting room is not well positioned to host programs due to its distance from staff and physical separation from the main public portion of the library; and the age of the structure limits the library's ability to provide additional computers, charging stations and other multi-media offerings.

5. The West Orange Public Library Strategic Plan 2016-2019 attached to the HGA Report resulted from a planning process that included patron surveys and assistance of an outside consultant. The discussion of the facility in the Plan indicated that the library space is not sufficient to provide for the new demands, which include additional programming space, meeting rooms, training classes, upgrades to electric and technology needs including charging stations, adequate seating and an overall modernization of the main floor.

6. The Board agrees with the HGA reports findings that the physical deficiencies, obsolescence, faulty arrangement of the existing physical facility and their negative impact upon the type of programming that modern libraries are called to provide result in a deleterious impact upon the general welfare of the community.
7. The HGA report was based upon visits to and observations of the site, photographs of the site, discussions with various stakeholders, review of the West Orange Public Library Strategic Plan 2016-2019, the study by the Information Policy and Access Center released October 1, 2015, the architectural assessment prepared by Arcari + Iovino Architects in October 2015, and the benchmarks provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Board finds there is substantial evidence to support the conclusion in the report that the Study Area qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment.
8. The Board hereby incorporates by reference the HGA Report dated February 6, 2019 with exhibits and the testimony of Susan Gruel at the public hearing held on March 6, 2019.

IT IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Township Council designate the Study Area as an area in need of redevelopment under N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1, et seq.; and
- (ii) That the Township Council consider expanding the Study Area to include additional properties in the same area either now or at some point in the future.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Board has caused this Resolution to be executed by its
Chairman and Secretary on the 12th day of March 2019.



Ron Weston, Chairman



Robin Miller, Secretary

Vote on the Action Taken by the Board

Board Member	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Bagoff		*	*			
Cardoza (Vice Chair)						*
Keigher			*			
Klein			*			
McCartney			*			
Trenk			*			
Wegner			*			
Wilkes			*			
Williams (Alt. #1)			*			
Johnson (Alt. #2)						
Weston (Chair)	*		*			

Vote on the Memorializing Resolution

Board Member	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Bagoff	✓		✓			
Cardoza (Vice Chair)						
Keigher			✓			
Klein			✓			✓
McCartney			✓			
Trenk		✓	✓			
Wegner			✓			
Wilkes			✓			
Williams (Alt. #1)					✓	
Johnson (Alt. #2)						
Weston (Chair)			✓			

