



TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

Department of Planning and Development

ROBERT D. PARISI
Mayor

Tel: (973) 325-4108
Fax: (973) 325-6359
Email: zoningboard@westorange.org

DIANA L. CHANDLER
Zoning Board Secretary

TO: Zoning Board Members

FROM: Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planning Director

DATE: July 29, 2022 – *revised September 26, 2022*

RE: **ZB-22-07 - CLPF Essex Green LLC**
Block: 155.21; Lot: 40; Zone: P-C (Planned Commercial)
495 Prospect Avenue

The applicant has submitted additional application materials in response to the initial planning and engineering reviews. This memorandum supplements my original review memorandum dated July 29, 2022. New information is denoted in **bold**, deletions are shown in ~~striketrough~~.

INTRODUCTION/LAND USE

The applicant is proposing modifications to a site plan for the renovation and expansion of the existing Essex Green Shopping Center previously approved by the Zoning Board in 2019, including changes with regard to signage, building layout and the addition of a trash enclosure.

The proposed development approved in 2019 included the construction of three new buildings, expansions and/or renovations to existing buildings, modifications to circulation patterns and parking areas, and construction of various related improvements.

The subject property is located in the P-C Planned Commercial zone. It is centrally located within West Orange in an area developed with a mix of land uses. These include commercial, office, residential, hotel and utility uses. The property is bounded by Prospect Avenue on the east



and by Rooney Circle on the other three sides. Interstate Route 280 is located a short distance north of the property.

SUBMISSIONS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PREPARED BY</u>	<u>DATE/REVISION</u>
Site Plan	Langan Engineering/Michael Fowler	6/30/2022
Site Plan (2019 approval)	Langan Engineering/Michael Fowler	9/20/2019
AMC Pylon Renovation	Signal Sign Co.	6/20/2022
Essex Green South Pylon Monument	Signal Sign Co.	5/11/2022
Essex Green – Dumpster Enclosure	Ailtire Studio LLC/Maria Schuler	8/13/2021
Letter from applicant’s attorney to Township Planning Director	Francis X. Regan, Esq.	9/21/2022
Letter from applicant’s attorney to Zoning Board Engineer	Francis X. Regan, Esq.	9/21/2022
Photographs of existing signs	not indicated	not provided
Dumpster Foundation Plan and Foundation Details	Fluent Design Group, LLC	8/30/2021

VARIANCES REQUIRED

SECTION	REQUIRED	EXISTING	2019 APPROVAL	PROPOSED
25-7.1 minimum space between buildings	150 ft.	50.5 ft. bldg. A to B 30.9 ft. bldg. A to C 50.2 ft. bldg. B to C	65.5 ft. bldg. A to B 12.6 ft. bldg. A to C 17.2 ft. bldg. B to C 0 ft. bldg. C to I	50.5 ft. bldg. A to B 12.6 ft. bldg. A to C 17.2 ft. bldg. B to C 0 ft. bldg. C to I
25-8.4c maximum wall height	6 ft.	N/A	N/A	7 ft. for trash enclosure
25-15.3c.2.(d) maximum number of freestanding signs	1	3 (1 freestanding sign, 2 shopping center signs)	6 (4 monument signs, 2 shopping center signs)	5 (1 freestanding sign, 2 monument signs, 2 shopping center signs)
25-15.3c.2.(d) maximum sign area	50 sq. ft. (freestanding and monument), 150 sq. ft. (shopping center)	126 sq. ft. (freestanding), 236 sq. ft. (shopping center)	192 sq. ft. & 236 sq. ft. (shopping center)	126 sq. ft. (freestanding), 192 sq. ft. & 220 sq. ft. (shopping center)
25-15.3c.2.(d) maximum sign height	16 ft. (freestanding), 8 ft. (monument), 20 ft. (shopping center)	25 ft. (freestanding), 25 ft. (shopping center)	9 ft. (monument), 25 ft. (2 shopping center signs)	25 ft. (freestanding), 9 ft. (monument), 22 ft. and 23 ft. (shopping center)



25-15.3c.2.(d) maximum sign width	6 ft. (freestanding and monument), 15 ft. (shopping center)	15 ft. (freestanding)	15 ft. (freestanding)	15 ft. (freestanding)
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DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The applicant is proposing to modify certain aspects of the previously approved plans for the site, which are as follows.

Trash Enclosure

A trash enclosure/dumpster pad is proposed in the parking area **that was originally approved to be atop Building I (i.e. to the west of Building C). The applicant's attorney indicated "Building I is not proposed for construction at this time thus the proposed trash enclosure will not be located on top of Building I." Testimony should be provided on this issue.** This enclosure is proposed to be 10 feet deep by 20 feet wide. It will consist of 8-inch wide painted CMU (concrete masonry unit) on three sides, with an "owner selected white vinyl dumpster enclosure gate" on the fourth side for access. It is proposed to be seven feet in height, with aluminum coping at the top. A variance is required for the height of the walls.

The plans for this enclosure list the address as "West Orange Township, PA" and should be corrected. **The applicant's attorney stated this will be corrected.**

Building B

Building B is now proposed to maintain its current configuration, instead of being modified as proposed in the plans approved in 2019. In particular, "cut outs" of the building at its south end across from Building A, along the eastern wall across from the proposed realigned northern site driveway and in the northeast corner of the building will not be made, and a portion of the building adjacent to the interior courtyard is no longer proposed to be filled in. **The applicant's attorney indicated "Building B is to remain in its current configuration as necessitated by tenant requirements for space in building," and that building permits were issued subsequent to zoning approval for the changes. This information should be confirmed through testimony.**

It is noted this aspect of the proposal results in the removal of multiple plaza areas proposed as part of the application in 2019. The applicant should indicate whether any new outdoor plaza space is proposed to replace these, as they were cited as beneficial aspects of the application previously approved by the Zoning Board.



The site plan also references “plans by SBLM for proposed plaza area furniture” and “for work from building curb in” for site improvements in the previously proposed plaza area between Buildings A and B. These plans have not been provided.

The applicant’s attorney stated that improvements to the existing plaza have not yet been determined, and that reference to plans for the plaza area furniture is a carryover from the 2019 approved site plan.

Signs

Modifications are proposed to existing freestanding signs along the Prospect Avenue frontage:

- An existing 25-foot tall sign with an area of 127 square feet located at the intersection of Prospect Avenue and Rooney Circle **has been refurbished and the applicant is proposing to add “Essex Green” at the base of the sign, similar to the other existing pylon sign.** ~~is proposed to be removed, and replaced by a 22-foot tall sign with an area of 220 square feet. The proposed new sign would be located to the north of the existing sign location, and would be 50 feet north of Rooney Circle. A monument with “Essex Green” on it would be located below the main portion of the sign, which would contain the names of a number of site tenants.~~
- A 23-foot tall digital shopping center sign with an area of 236 square feet ~~is was~~ **previously** proposed to replace an existing sign to the north of the existing site driveway, **but is no longer proposed, per the applicant’s attorney.** ~~No details were provided for this sign.~~
- A 20-foot tall freestanding sign for AMC Theatres with an area of 126 square feet is proposed to replace an existing sign for AMC Theatres located towards the northern end of the site’s Prospect Avenue frontage. This sign appears to have changeable copy for the theaters.

Current P ~~photographs of the existing north and south shopping center signs have been provided by the applicant~~ ~~are included at the end of this memorandum.~~

There ~~is was~~ a separate application pending before the Board for a freestanding sign for the Burlington store in the interior of the site. **This application was denied.** ~~The applicant should confirm whether this sign is included in the sign count.~~

There is space for what appears to be changeable copy in the AMC pylon sign. The applicant should confirm that this is the case, and if so, clarify whether this portion of the sign is proposed to be an electrically activated changeable sign or one that is changed manually.



Other Changes

Other changes include providing additional ADA spaces in the parking lot to the north of Building B, modifying the number and layout of some parking areas. The total number of parking spaces is proposed to remain at 1,538.

