

**MINUTES
TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
September 7, 2022 7:30 P.M.**

The Township of West Orange Planning Board held its regular meeting on September 7, 2022 at 7:30PM via virtual ZOOM videoconference.

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* asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Planning Board regular meeting will be held **October 12, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.**

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Dr. Robert Bagoff; Mr. Jerry Guarino;
Mr. Christopher Morgan, Sr;
Mr. Ken Alper; Mr. Peter Smeraldo; Mr. William Wilkes; Council
President Susan McCartney; Mr. Sal Jensen
Mr. Lee Klein; Mr. John McNair; Mr. John Cardoza

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Kevin Conyngham, Esq., (For Diana McGovern, Planning Board
Attorney)
Spach Trahan (substitute for Paul Grygiel, Town Planner);
Sarabraj Thapar, Esq., Public Advocate
Jamilet Baquerizo Vite, Acting Planning Board Secretary;

MINUTES & RESOLUTIONS

(Approved 9/7/2022)

- [PB-22-06 - Umude - 59-61 Edgewood Avenue Minor Subdivision Resolution](#)

Motion: Dr. Bagoff

Second: Mr. Guarino

Alper:	Y	McNair:	Y
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	---	Smeraldo:	Y
Guarino:	Y	Wilkes:	Y
Jensen (Alt. 1):	---	Yes ; Absent	
Klein:	Y		
McCartney:	Y		

- [PB-22-07 WO Senior Housing LLC- Resolution](#)

(Approved 9/7/2022)

Motion: Dr. Bagoff

Second: Mr. Smeraldo

Alper:	Y	McNair:	Y
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	---	Smeraldo:	Y
Guarino:	Y	Wilkes:	Y
Jensen (Alt. 1):	---	Yes ; Absent	
Klein:	Y		
McCartney:	Y		

- [8/3/2022 West Orange Planning Board Meeting Minutes](#)

Motion: Dr. Bagoff

Second: Council president McCartney

Alper:	Y	McNair:	Y
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	---	Smeraldo:	Y

Guarino:	Y	Wilkes:	Y
Jensen (Alt. 1):	---	Yes ; Absent	
Klein:	Y		
McCartney:	Y		

SWEARING IN

- The Township Professional *Ms. Spach Trahan (Proxy)*, Township Planner was sworn in.

COURTESY REVIEW APPLICATIONS DISCUSSION

PRESENTATION

Dr. Bagoff explained that the purpose of a courtesy review is to provide information to the board and the applicant is a governmental authority. The Planning Board will ensure that the applicant fulfills all the requirements of the zone plan. The board does not grant or deny the application, the members of the board only hear, offer modifications and/or ask questions.

APPLICATIONS/ORDINANCE REVIEW

1. PB-22-09 Essex County/TBZ 560 Northfield Avenue Block: 163 Lot: 1 Zone: R-1

To remove the existing aquarium and old alligator structure. To construct a new Komodo Dragon Exhibit building and to the American Alligator exhibit building. All construction will be located in the center of the zoo.

PRESENTATION

Mark Fleder, Esq. entered his appearance on the record and presented the first witnesses that is going to be testifying for this application. Mr. Michael Piga, who is a landscape architect in the State of New Jersey that has been licensed for about 20 years, was sworn in and his credential were accepted by the board. Mr. Piga started explaining the project at the Turtle Back Zoo, which is going to be called “The Isle of Giants.” It will have two different reptiles in each location, one will be the American alligator and the other will be the Komodo Dragon. Mr. Fleder asked Mr. Piga what is at the zoo currently that is intended to be replaced. Mr. Piga answered that there is a small American alligator exhibit and across from it there is an old aquarium that is not in use. He also included that these existing facilities will be demolished. Mr. Fleder showed exhibits showing the proposed new exhibits. Mr. Fleder asked an approximate square footage of the proposed new exhibits with the current exhibits. Mr. Piga said that the current exhibits are about 12,000 square feet and the two new buildings will be approximately 19,050 square feet. Mr. Fleder also asked if trees are going to be removed. Mr. Piga responded by saying that there are approximately six trees that are 8 inches in diameter that will be removed and in which they will be

replaced. Mr. Fleder asked Mr. Piga about where will the storm water go. Mr. Piga said that there is an existing storm system in the center of the zoo and that is where the new exhibits will be connected. In the site plan Mr. Piga explained that the existing alligator pool will be modified, in which a viewing window will be added to the west side, so people will be able to see the alligator floating in the water and on the right side of the pool they will be pushing the existing glass window to have more space and give people different views of the animal. To the south of the pool will be the new American alligator facility building, which it will have indoor viewing for wintertime. And around it going to be an asphalt walkway for pedestrians, which is between 10 to 12 feet. To the north of the pool there is an existing equipment room that will remain. To the west side the Komodo Dragon habit building will be place, the trainers will have access to the rear from the south and on the north side there will a pool area with an outdoor exhibit area and a sitting area. Public will have no access to go inside the Komodo Dragon facility.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mr. Guarino asked if there is going to be any additional shrubbery added to the new exhibits. Mr. Piga answered yes that there will be new landscaping around the exhibit. Mr. Klein asked if the area is ADA accessible and if garbage cans will be available. Mr. Piga said yes. Mr. Klein also asked if any shades or umbrellas will be provided for the guest. Mr. Piga answered no.

Council president McCartney asked about the enhanced landscaping plan. Mr. Piga said that the landscaping plans will have plants that are part of the Komodo Dragon and American alligator habitat including bamboo.

NO PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONS

NO PUBLIC ADVOCATE QUESTIONS

NO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

NO PUBLIC COMMENT*

PRESENTATION

Mr. Fleder presented his second witness Lorrie Sciabarasi, which credentials were accepted by the board. Ms. Sciabarasi started her testimony explaining where the new exhibits will be located. She is explaining that the materials and elements that are going to be used in the American alligator building are rustic wood pieces and stone based siding and the Komodo Dragon will have a South Asian theme in the background and stone siding. The building on the right is the alligator facility, the keepers will enter through the back of the building where the public will have access to the indoor exhibit, in which there will be a keeper alley with a secure door. After the keeper space, it is going to be a holding space or a transfer space, where the animal can go from the outdoor exhibit to the indoor exhibit. And just outside the doors there will be a utility room with mechanical equipment. To the left the Komodo Dragon exhibit will be situated, there will be double doors where the keeper will have access to the Komodo Dragon. Mr. Fleder asked how height is the American alligator and Komodo Dragon building. Ms. Sciabarasi said that both are about 18.5 feet tall with flat roof.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mr. Wilkes asked how many animals will be in each exhibit. Ms. Sciabarasi said that there will be one American Alligator and one Komodo Dragon.

Mr. Smeraldo mentioned that a wolf escaped from the Cleveland Zoo, so he asked if the double security doors ensure safety to the public, so the animals cannot escape. Ms. Sciabarasi responded yes.

Mr. Jensen asked if more animals are going to be added to the exhibit. Ms. Sciabarasi said that to her knowledge only one American alligator and one Komodo Dragon will be in each exhibit and if in the future is decided to have more than one the Komodo Dragon has enough space for two.

NO PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONS

NO PUBLIC ADVOCATE QUESTIONS

NO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

NO PUBLIC COMMENT*

Motion: Dr. Bagoff

Second: Mr. Smeraldo

Alper:	Y	McNair:	Y
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	---	Smeraldo:	Y
Guarino:	Y	Wilkes:	Y
Jensen (Alt 1):	---	Yes ; Absent	
Klein:	Y		
McCartney:	Y		

Note:

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Meeting adjourned at 8:02PM by *Mr. Klein*, seconded by *Chairman Bagoff*.

ADOPTED:

Jamilet Baquerizo Vite,
Acting Planning Board Secretary