



TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

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

Department of Planning and Development

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TO: Planning Board Members

FROM: Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planner

DATE: February 6, 2024

RE: **PB 24-03/Crystal Eagle, LLC**
Block: 111; Lot: 108; Zone: B-2
424 Eagle Rock Avenue
Application for Minor Site Plan Approval

INTRODUCTION

The applicant is proposing to modify the layout of site improvements and undertake other modifications on a developed property in the B-2 zone. No variances are required to permit the proposal.

LAND USE

The subject property is an irregularly shaped lot and is 114,469 square feet (2.63 acres) in area. It is located on the south side of Eagle Rock Avenue. The subject property is developed with a one-story building formerly occupied by a bowling alley and parking lots. It is a “flag lot” with a 60-foot wide stem with frontage on Eagle Rock Avenue and the wider portion of the site set back approximately 350 feet from the street. Parking spaces exist along both sides of an access aisle in the property’s stem. The existing access aisle is one-way into the site, with site egress provided through the adjacent property to the east. Site photographs taken on February 2, 2024 are included at the end of this memorandum.



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The area surrounding the subject property is developed with a mix of commercial, office, public, utility, open space and recreational uses. A commercial antenna and ancillary uses, an office building and a diner are located to the northeast; a telecommunications facility and a service station are located to the northwest; Crystal Lake is located to the west; residential uses area located to the southwest, south and southeast; and Eagle Rock Reservation is located to the north across Eagle Rock Avenue.

SUBMISSIONS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SIGNED BY</u>	<u>DATE/REVISION</u>
Property Survey	Douglas B. Smith, PLS	9/18/15
Site Plan (7 sheets)	Anthony Castillo, PE	12/19/23

VARIANCES REQUIRED

SECTION	REQUIRED	EXISTING	PROPOSED
25-7.1 Maximum lot coverage	50%	86.6%	82.1%
25-12.1o. Maximum parking row length without landscaped island	20 spaces	> 20 spaces	38 spaces

DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The subject property is currently developed with a one-story building formerly utilized as a bowling alley. According to the application materials, the floor area of the building is 25,300 square feet. The applicant is proposing to increase the number of parking spaces on the property from 149 spaces to 171 spaces. This total includes six ADA spaces in two locations adjacent to the building, and ten compact spaces. No information is provided regarding electric vehicle charging spaces. The access aisle from the street to the rear portion of the property where the building is located will be converted from one-way to two-way. The site plan proposes to remove existing pavement encroaching on the adjacent properties to the west.

No changes are proposed to the existing building's layout or interior space as part of this application. The applicant indicates that it does not currently have a tenant for the building. Some modifications are proposed to the building's facades, including providing locations for tenant signage as well as new window openings and parapet screening.



The existing freestanding sign along Eagle Rock Avenue is proposed to remain and be refaced.

Landscaping is proposed in various locations on the property, from the driveway at Eagle Rock Avenue, to around the building and parking areas. New exterior lighting is proposed on the building. A trash enclosure is proposed in the southeast corner of the property.

The subject property is located in the B-2 Business zone, which permits a range of commercial and other nonresidential uses. Any use proposed to occupy the building will need to be a permitted use in the B-2 zone, or else use variance approval will be required. The modifications result in two variances being required as listed above.

The connections to the adjacent parking lot to the southeast should be clarified, as there are currently multiple parking aisles that connect to the parking lot on the subject property.

Crystal Lake is located a short distance to the west of the subject property. The following are excerpts from the Township's 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan, which is part of the Master Plan, regarding Crystal Lake:

- Recreation recommendations: "While many of the recreational facilities are well utilized, a few are underutilized. For example, Degnan Park and Crystal Lake, which are not well signed or publicized, could benefit from additional walking and biking paths." (page 46)
- Site Improvement Recommendations: "Build bicycle paths around Crystal Lake Park and around Degnan Park (specifically Vincent's Pond and the Katz Community Center) and integrate them with walking trails/access routes to the parks. Look for funding sources including NJDEP Green Acres and Essex County." (page 47)
- Action Plan (within five years): "Develop a design for Crystal Lake facilities (path, boathouse, swimming beach) and programs. Negotiate for access and parking with neighboring commercial landowners." (page 54)

The applicant should consider whether it would be possible to provide access to Crystal Lake, which is owned by the Township but only accessible at this location through the subject property and the adjacent property to the west.





Two views of entrance driveway



Northwest corner of existing building, with connections to adjacent parking lot on left



Western edge of existing parking area and Crystal Lake