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MEMORANDUM

**To: Chairman and Members of the
West Orange Planning Board**

**From: John J. Hess, PE, PP, CME
Planning Board Engineer**

Date: May 16, 2024

**Re: Application No. PB 24-08
GBSJ, LLC t/a Goddard School
Amended Preliminary & Final Site Plan - Review #1
289 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Block 83, Lots 1 & 5.01
Our File: 115.WRP0083.V02**

**CC: Zayibeth Carballo, PE, PLS, PP – Municipal Engineer
George Wheatle Williams, PP - Planning Board Planner
Diana McGovern, Esq. – Planning Board Attorney
GBSJ, LLC - Applicant
Walter E. Hanley, III, Esq. – Applicant's Attorney
Gerard P. Gesario, PE – Applicant's Engineer
Cheryl Schweiker, RA – Applicant's Architect
Stonefield Engineering & Design, LLC – Applicant's Traffic Engineer
Hamal Associates – Applicant's Traffic Engineer**

Our office has received for review the following documents which were submitted in support of the above referenced application for Amended Preliminary & Final Site Plan approval for the above referenced property:

- A set of Amended Preliminary/Final Site Plan drawings (10 sheets) prepared by Gerard P. Gesario, PE with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. of Livingston, New Jersey dated April 1, 2024.
- A set of architectural plans (2 sheets) prepared by Matthew B. Jarmel, RA with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. dated April 2, 2024.
- A print of a Survey of Property (1 sheet) prepared by James Pica, PLS with P² Land Surveying, Inc. of Wayne, New Jersey and bearing a latest revision date of March 27, 2024.
- A Parking Utilization Memorandum prepared by Matthew J. Seckler, PE, PP, PTOE and John R. Corak, PE with Stonefield Engineering & Design, LLC of Rutherford, New Jersey dated October 20, 2023.
- An April 24, 2024 letter from Gerard P. Gesario, PE to the West Orange Planning Board which lists the variances that are requested by the Applicant.



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- An April 30, 2024 letter from Gerard P. Gesario, PE to the West Orange Planning Board which describes the Applicant's proposal to demolish the existing 3 story building and to construct a new 3 story annex building.
- A completed Application Form dated April 5, 2024.
- A completed Site Plan/Subdivision Checklist.
- A completed Sustainability Checklist Form.
- A Verification of Taxes & Sewer Charges Paid from the Office of the Tax Collector dated January 27, 2024 which states that the taxes are paid until April 30, 2024 and the 2023 sewer charges are paid in full.
- A List of Owners within 200 Feet of Block 83, Lots 1 & 5.01 from the Office of the West Orange Tax Assessor dated February 26, 2024.
- A Copy of West Orange Planning Board Resolution of Approval for Application PB 17-04 which was memorialized on August 2, 2017. This resolution granted the Applicant Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan approval to construct a day care center at the site. The day care center would be approximately 8,800 sf in size and would have a maximum of 1136 children.
- A copy of West Orange Planning Board Resolution of Approval for Application PB 23-10 which was memorialized on November 29, 2023. This resolution granted the Applicant Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan approval to expand the existing child care center by modifying and expanding an existing building on an adjoining property (lot 1, block 83).

We have reviewed the information submitted in support of this application and offer the following comments:

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property in question is an irregularly shaped tract which is bounded by Marcella Avenue to the north and east, Mt. Pleasant Avenue to the south and Prospect Avenue to the west. It is located in the B-2 General Business District and has an area of 58,344 sf or approximately 1.34 acres. The property is currently occupied by an existing 3 story building, a 1 story building, two (2) radio towers, two (2) sheds and two (2) paved parking lots. The existing 1 story building is occupied by a childcare center (Goddard School) while the existing 3 story building is occupied by a radio station. Access is provided to the site from Mt. Pleasant Avenue to the south and Marcella Avenue to the east. Also, on-site parking presently exists for 45 vehicles including 2 handicap accessible parking spaces.

On November 29, 2023, the Planning Board memorialized Resolution PB 23-10 which granted the Applicant approval to approval to expand the existing child care center by modifying and expanding the existing building on lot 1, block 83. The proposed work included demolition of the



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existing radio towers and the construction of two (2) 3 story additions to the 3 story building which would accommodate three (3) classrooms, one on each floor.

The Applicant is now seeking Amended Preliminary & Final Site Plan approval to demolish the existing radio tower and the 3 story building occupied by a radio station on lot 1, block 83 and to construct a new 3 story annex building. The building will have a footprint of approximately 2,097 sf and will be occupied by 3 pre-school classrooms, one on each floor. The Applicant also proposes to add a landscape area and to provide a crosswalk across the access drive between the 1 story and the 3 story buildings.

B. DESIGN COMMENTS

1. Based on our review, we find that the following items from the Township's Site Plan/Subdivision Checklist must be addressed:
 - a) Item #25 – *Requested or obtained design waivers or exceptions.*
 - b) Item #52 – *Plans and legal documents for compliance with West Orange COAH Ordinances.*
2. The Applicant has requested the following waivers:
 - a) Item #9 – *Appropriate certification blocks as required by Map Filing Law.*
 - b) Item #10 – *Monumentation as specified by Map Filing Law.*
 - c) Item #13 – *Metes and bounds description showing dimensions, bearings, curve data, length of tangents, radii, arcs, chords and central angles for all centerlines and right-of-way, and centerline curves on streets.*
 - d) Item #34 – *Drainage Area Map.*
 - e) Item #35 – *Drainage Calculations.*
 - f) Item #48 – *Sight triangles.*

We note that the above waivers were previously granted by Resolution PB 23-10.

3. The existing 3 story building had a gross floor area of 6,231 sf whereas the new 3 story building will have a gross floor area of 6,291 sf. In addition, the existing 1 story building has a gross floor area of 8,800 sf. As a result, the 2 buildings will have a gross floor area of 15,091 sf which requires 71 parking spaces.
4. The Applicant has requested a variance from providing the required number of on-site parking spaces. For this project, 45 parking spaces are proposed whereas 71 parking spaces are required. We note that the Planning Board previously granted the Applicant a variance to permit 45 parking spaces whereas 70 parking spaces were required.



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5. The Applicant should address the Board regarding why the decision was made to demolish the existing 3 story building and replace it with a new building.
6. We note that the property in question currently consists of two (2) lots. As a condition of the prior approval granted by the Board, it was required that the lots be consolidated. Therefore, the Applicant must demonstrate that this condition has been addressed.
7. Sheet C300 should be revised to show the sanitary sewer lateral to the new 3 story building.
8. Sheet SA-2.2 of the architectural plans must be revised to delete the references to proposed additions since a new building is now proposed.

The Applicant is hereby advised that any revised plans or other documents submitted to the Board should be accompanied by a cover letter which addresses each of the comments in this review letter and also details any other changes that have been made to the plans as these may not be readily apparent.