



# TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

415 VALLEY ROAD, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

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## MEMORANDUM

To: West Orange Planning Board

From: Fire Chief Anthony A. Vecchio

Date: August 1, 2024

Subject: West Essex Highlands Development

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It was communicated that some Planning Board members were interested in the opinions of the Township Fire Chief and/or Fire Official as it relates to certain fire-related concerns raised during recent West Essex Highlands development meetings.

Please accept the following as our position in response to some of the question raised.

- Dimensions of the largest piece of equipment on the fleet (to be used for turning radius calculations by the engineers)
  - WOFD Ladder # 1 is 41' 1.5" long and 8' wide. The calculated turning radii are: inside turn: 17' 11", curb to curb: 33' 1", wall to wall: 38' 3"
- When there are several fire trucks on site (say for a large building fire) is there a minimal dimensional requirement so that they can all act together to fight a fire (road width, driveway or parking lot area?)
  - Minimum needed width to support operation of Ladder # 1 and the stabilizer/leveling jacks is 16' as the actual jack spread is 12' from center jack to center jack.
- If a fire is located in a rear of a four-story building and there is no direct access for a truck to get to the rear of a building, are there any special conditions that should be included to assist in the firefighting (and how would the fire be fought? Will hoses reach around a building if the truck can't get there? And if so, is there a limit to the size of a building that would allow for the hoses to extend?)

- Having rear access is ideal, however our traditional tactics include entry through the front door of a residential structure to protect the means of egress for fleeing occupants.
  - Again, we traditionally enter structures from the front door. If hoses are to be deployed to a different location, we carry sufficient lengths on each apparatus to accommodate such a situation. We have the ability to create a “water supply” with large diameter hose to stretch further than we traditionally would.
  - Fire code requirements may call for additional suppression measures to be installed should the size of the building not allow for such FD access (to be determined by Fire Sub-code Official).
- Review of the plans show emergency access from Kuzik Drive and Howell Drive- is that sufficient for emergency access? (in addition to Warner Road)
  - As with any development set back from arterial roadways, response may be delayed but access should not be in question.
- Looking at the vehicle circulation plan as set forth by the Applicant, are there any foreseeable issues for ingress and egress that would prevent the fire department from acting as necessary in response to an emergency (and I understand that there are more than just actual fires that the department responds to such as gas leaks, and other emergencies)
  - While I have not personally reviewed said circulation plan, I cannot confirm anything the plan suggest, however, as stated above, response may be delayed but access should not be in question. If turning radius and approach angle for Ladder # 1 are taken into consideration when preparing the streets plan, access should not be in question.
- When an alarm goes out to other surrounding towns for fire response, are there enough access points?
  - WOFD and our mutual aid partners prefer fires on traffic-free main roads with no exposure buildings, however, that is not the way communities are built and we always adapt as necessary. Sometimes leaving a scene is a challenge due to dead end areas, however we are more concerned with our approach than our departure and we can always back out where necessary.
- There is an area that will be left wooded-are there any firefighting precautions that should be installed in the design to prevent the spread of a forest fire or which will assist in the fighting of that forest fire at the site.
  - I believe there may be fire code requirements as to the distance from the wooded area needed to use an open flame grill, however, that would be a question for the Fire Sub-code Official. There can also be restriction terminology placed in the HOA agreement to enforce certain fire prevention concerns.
- Does the proximity of the proposed building to the ridge line create any difficulties for fire response? If so, how can that be remedied?
  - I cannot think of any challenges other than the potential for personal injury and that may be remedied through properly placed warning signage.