



**Consulting & Municipal
ENGINEERS**

849 W. Bay Avenue, Suite 16
Barnegat, NJ 08005
732.410.2650 ☎
www.cmeusa1.com 🌐

MEMORANDUM

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

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

Date: *April 3, 2025*

Re: *Application No. ZB-25-02
Montclair Stables, LLC
Preliminary & Final Site Plan with 'C' and 'D' Variances,
Soil Removal Permit and Tree Removal Permit - Review #1
12-22 Woodland Avenue
Block 152.02, Lots 176, 176 and 186
Our File: 115.WRZ0152.V06*

CC: *Geniece Gary-Adams – Zoning Official
Zayibeth Carballo, PE, PLS, PP – Municipal Engineer
Steven Warner, Esq. – Zoning Board Attorney
George Wheatle Williams, PP – Zoning Board Planner
Montclair Stables, LLC – Applicant
Joesph M. Wenzel, Esq. – Applicant's Attorney
Robert Cunningham, PE – Applicant's Engineer
Matthew J. Seckler, PE, PP, PTOE – Applicant's Planner
John Olivo, LLA - Applicant's Landscape Architect*

Our office has received for review the following documents which were submitted in support of the above referenced application for Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval with 'C' and 'D' Variances, Soil Removal Permit and Tree Removal Permit:

- A set of Site Plan and Variance Application Plans (10 sheets) prepared by Robert M Cunningham, PE with Cunningham Engineering & Design, LLC of Newton, New Jersey dated January 10, 2025.
- A set of Tree Removal and Landscape Plans (3 sheets) prepared by John Olivo, LLA with Bosenberg Landscape Architecture of Far Hills, New Jersey dated December 27, 2024.
- A set of unsigned Boundary & Topographic Survey drawings (2 sheets) prepared by Wayne Ingram, PLS with French and Parrello Associates of Hackettstown, New Jersey dated August 2, 2023.

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NJ CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION NO. 24GA28359000
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- A set of Proposed Cut and Fill Calculation drawings (5 sheets) prepared by Robert M Cunningham, PE dated January 10, 2025.
- An unsigned Drainage Report prepared by Robert M. Cunningham, PE dated January 10, 2025. Included with the Drainage Report is a set of Drainage Area Plans (2 sheets) prepared by Robert M. Cunningham, PE dated January 10, 2025.
- A Planning Report prepared by Matthew J. Seckler, PE, PP, PTOE, Thomas Ricci, Jr., PP and Marcella Traina, PP with Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC of Rutherford, New Jersey dated February 5, 2025.
- A completed Application Form.
- A completed application for Tree Removal and Replacement Permit dated January 17, 2025.
- An undated Proposal prepared by Friend & Wenzel, LLC of Clifton, New Jersey which describes the proposed application, details the variances that are requested by the Applicant and sets forth the reasons why the requested variances should be granted.
- A completed Site Plan/Subdivision Checklist.
- A completed Sustainability Checklist Form.
- A copy of a Certificate of Formation for Montclair Stables LLC issued by the New Jersey Department of the Treasury effective July 21, 2023 and a Certificate of Amendment issued by the New Jersey Department of the Treasury on August 7, 2023.
- A copy of a January 6, 2025 statement from the Office of the Tax Collector which states that the taxes on lot 176, block 152.02 are paid until January 31, 2025. In addition, it further states that the 2024 sewer charges have been paid.
- A copy of a January 6, 2025 statement from the Office of the Tax Collector which states that the taxes on lot 179, block 152.02 are paid until January 31, 2025. In addition, it further states that the 2024 sewer charges have been paid.
- A copy of a January 6, 2025 statement from the Office of the Tax Collector which states that the taxes on lot 186, block 152.02 are paid until January 31, 2025. In addition, it further states that the 2024 sewer charges have been paid.
- A copy of a List of Property Owners within 200 feet of Block 152.02, Lots 176, 179 and 186 prepared by the Office of the Assessor dated December 17, 2024.
- Copies of the following Zoning Board of Adjustment Resolutions of Approval for the property in question:
 - Zoning Board Case No. ZB-99-25 which was memorialized on May 18, 2000.
 - Zoning Board Case No. ZB-04-34 which was memorialized on November 18, 2004.



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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 fronts on the southerly side of Woodland Avenue and the northerly side of Nicholas Avenue approximately 200 ft east of the intersection with Terrace Avenue. The property has an area of 150,302 sf or approximately 3.45 acres. The property consists of three (3) lots, Lots 176, 179 & 186, Block 152.02. Lots 176 & 179 are located in the R-5 Residential Zone while Lot 186 is located in the R-1 Residential Zone. The property is currently occupied by a horse riding and training facility. The existing improvements at the site include a 1-story building, an indoor riding ring, a 2-story frame dwelling, an outdoor sand riding ring, an asphalt parking lot, a gravel drive and a gazebo.

The Applicant now is seeking Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan approval with 'C' and 'D' Variances, Soil Removal Permit and Tree Removal Permit to remove the 2-story frame dwelling, outdoor sand riding ring, asphalt parking lot and gazebo and construct a new 145' x 235' riding ring, an asphalt parking lot containing eleven (11) parking spaces including 2 handicap accessible parking spaces and new grass paddocks. Access to the new parking lot will be provided via a one-way in and one-way out driveway from Woodland Avenue. In addition, access will be provided to the existing 1-story building and indoor riding ring via a proposed DGA driveway within the Nicholas Avenue right-of-way. The stormwater runoff from the new parking lot will be collected and piped to an existing storm manhole in Woodland Avenue.

B. DESIGN COMMENTS

1. Based on our review of the submitted documents, we request that the following additional information be submitted as stipulated on the Site Plan/Subdivision Checklist:
 - a) Item #20 – *Copy and/or delineation of any existing or proposed deed restrictions or covenants.*
 - b) Item #23 – *List of required regulatory approvals or permits.*
 - c) Item #24 – *List of variances required or requested.*
 - d) Item #25 – *List of design waivers required or requested.*
 - e) Item #31 – *Contours to extend at least 200' beyond subject property.*
 - f) Item #46 – *Soil Waste Management Plan.*
 - g) Item #52 – *Plans and legal documents for compliance with West Orange COAH Ordinance.*
4. The Boundary & Topographic Survey drawings must be signed and sealed by the licensed land surveyor preparing same.



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5. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the proposed hours of operation at the site.
6. The Applicant should provide testimony to the Board to demonstrate that the proposed parking at the site will be adequate for its proposed use.
7. The Applicant should address the Board regarding their plans to provide a trash enclosure at the site. In addition, the Applicant must demonstrate that the trash enclosure has adequate capacity to accommodate the trash and recyclables that are anticipated at the site.
8. The Boundary & Topographic Survey drawings show an exclusive easement in the rear of Lots 176 and 179. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the purpose of this easement and whether any of the proposed improvements will be in conflict with this easement.
9. The Plan View at Handicap Ramp detail on sheet SE-7 states "see site plan sheet SE-3 for locations". However, sheet SE-3 does not call out any handicap ramps. Sheet SE-3 should be revised to identify the locations where handicap ramps are required..
10. The Nicholas Avenue Security Gates detail on sheet SE-7 states that the width varies, see plan. However, sheet SE-3 does not call out the proposed width of the westerly gate. Therefore, SE-3 must be revised accordingly.
11. The plans should be revised to include the following details:
 - a. Paver sidewalks
 - b. Traffic striping and markings
 - c. Handicap parking signage
12. Sheet SE-3 should be revised to include a dimension for the handicap access aisle.
13. On sheet SE-3 of the site plans, the "Const full height conc. Curb & paver sidewalk, match exist." Callout should be revised to replace with Belgium block curbing to match the existing curbing.
14. The Applicant is to demonstrate that the proposed sight lines shown on sheet SE-3 of the site plans comply with AASHTO standards.
15. It shows on sheet SE-4 that 2 handicap spaces are proposed in the new parking lot. The plans should be revised to show that one of these parking spaces will be van-accessible.
16. The Applicant should address the Board regarding their plans to provide a make-ready electric vehicle parking space at the site. We note that §25-12.6.d.2 in the Land Use Regulations stipulates that at least 1 make-ready electric vehicle parking space be installed as a condition of preliminary site plan approval for an application involving a parking lot.



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17. The plans should be revised to provide an ADA accessible route from the handicap parking spaces to an accessible entrance to the building.
18. Sheet SE-3 shows that the egress driveway intersects Woodland Avenue at an obtuse angle. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the feasibility of improving the alignment of the egress driveway at this location.
19. We note that the portion of Nicholas Avenue in front of the site is currently an unimproved paper street. A portion of Nicholas Avenue is currently improved for a distance of approximately 160 ft to the east from the intersection with Terrace Avenue. In addition, a driveway currently exists from the end of pavement to the site.

The Applicant proposes to extend the existing driveway within the right-of-way to provide access from the site to the intersection with Cannon Street. The proposed driveway will be 12 ft wide and will provide for one-way traffic. In addition, the Applicant proposes to install gates at each end of the driveway. In our opinion, the proposal to gate a portion of the existing right-of-way of Nicholas Avenue requires approval from the Township Council.
20. It shows on the Proposed Cut & Fill Calculation drawings that slopes of 25% or more exist within the Nicholas Avenue right-of-way where the new driveway is proposed. Therefore, the Applicant must submit the steep slope information required by §25-28.7 of the Ordinance.
21. Sheet SE-4 should be revised to show the proposed grading of the riding ring.
22. Sheet SE-4 should be revised to show the proposed grading surrounding the proposed parking lot.
23. There is a discrepancy between sheet SE-4 and the "Precast Doghouse Manhole" detail on sheet SE-7 regarding the size of the existing storm pipe within Woodland Avenue. This discrepancy must be resolved.
24. The Applicant should submit a truck turning template to the Board to demonstrate that adequate maneuvering room is available for the vehicles anticipated to use the site including trash trucks, emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles.
25. As a condition of any approval granted by the Board, it is our recommendation that the Applicant be required to consolidate the three (3) existing lots. Prior to recording, a copy of the proposed Deed of Consolidation must be submitted to the Board for review and approval by the Board Attorney and our office. In addition, the proposed lot number for the consolidated parcel must be approved in writing by the West Orange Tax Assessor.

C. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

1. The Applicant is proposing a 15" RCP to convey stormwater from the proposed parking lot to a proposed doghouse manhole in Woodland Avenue. Sheet SE-4 should be revised to show the length and slope of this pipe and the proposed invert elevations in the doghouse manhole.



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2. Sheet SE-4 of the site plans should be revised to show invert elevations and slopes of the leader drains. In addition, cleanout should be provided at the ends of the leader drains with corresponding details.
3. The Applicant is proposing an 8" PVC leader drain under the existing building. The Applicant must provide testimony to the Board regarding the reasoning of this location of the roof leader
4. Sheet SE-4 notes that the area of new clearing and disturbance will be 36,686 sf whereas our office has calculated the area of disturbance to be 88,540 sf. This discrepancy must be resolved.
5. The proposed development will result in the disturbance of more than 1 acre. As a result, this project is classified as a Major Development and is subject to the stormwater management requirements set forth in §25-29.4 of the Ordinance.
6. The plans show that there will not be an increase of one-quarter acres or more of regulated motor vehicle surface coverage at the site. Therefore, the required water quality standards have been met by the Applicant. In addition, the project is delineated on the State Plan Policy Map as being located in the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA-1). Therefore, the project is exempt from complying with the groundwater recharge requirements of the Ordinance.
7. The Applicant must demonstrate that the proposed improvements meet the stormwater runoff quantity standards as set forth in §25-29.4q of the Ordinance.
8. The Applicant must demonstrate that the proposed stormwater piping, including the roof leaders are sized appropriately.
9. The last paragraph on page 2 of the Drainage Report references a lower level being constructed over a crawl space and set one foot above the flood hazard area design flood elevation. Our office questions if this paragraph is relevant to this project.
10. The Drainage Areas maps must be revised to show a point of discharge and time of concentration path for each drainage area.

D. LIGHTING COMMENTS

1. Per § 25-14.1D, illumination at ground level shall not exceed 0.3 footcandle at any property line abutting a residential zone. The plans should be revised to reduce footcandles near the northwest corner of the property.
2. Revise the plans to provide manufacturer's catalog cut sheets and ordering information for all light fixtures and poles, for further review.
3. Revise the 'Pole Light Detail', sheet 7 of 10, to indicate a concrete strength of 4,500 PSI. Currently, the plan indicates 3,500 PSI.



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E. LANDSCAPING COMMENTS

1. Per §25-11.3A, a 50-ft. landscape buffer should be provided between a nonresidential zone use and a residential zone use. Currently, the proposed buffer width does not comply. The plans should be revised or a variance requested.
2. Per § 28-8.C2, replacements tree provided should be NJ native species. The plans should be revised to comply.
3. Per § 25-24.2b1(c)(4), a substantial buffer should be provided around parking areas. Currently, a single row of PIE JAP (Andromeda) is proposed. Testimony should be provided on the adequacy of the proposed plantings.
4. Revise the plans to shift shrub landscape beds at least three (3) feet from edge of curbs to reduce damage from vehicles, snow clearing operations, and road salt spray.
5. It appears there is an empty parking lot island located at the northwest end of the proposed parking lot. Our office recommends one (1) shade tree within the island, to enhance site aesthetics.
6. It appears that nine (9) Keteleeri Chinese Juniper are proposed within the existing paver walkway located near the northeast corner of the property. Clarify that pavers are to be removed to install the proposed landscape bed.
7. The Applicant has proposed forty (40) CAR BET (Columnar European Hornbeam) depicted as shrubs. Clarify if the intention is to maintain these trees as a formal hedge or plans should be revised to provide an alternative species.
8. Our office has concerns with the on-center spacing for proposed THU GR2 (Green Giant Arborvitae), due to reduced air circulation which can lead to fungal diseases, competition for resources, as well as limited space to properly mature.
9. Revise the plans to provide an alternative species for proposed PIE JAP (Andromeda) as this species does not tolerate full sun conditions.
10. Revise the plans to indicate the disposition of all open areas, such as lawn, stone, mulch, etc., to prevent confusion during construction.
11. Revise the plans to depict mulch bed lines on the plans, to prevent confusion during construction.
12. Revise the plans to provide a note that a two (2) year replacement guarantee for all plant material is required.

F. TREE REMOVAL AND INVENTORY PLAN

1. Per § 28-24A, no one shall cut or remove any trees without first obtaining a tree removal and replacement permit from the township. The plans should be revised to add a note to indicate above.



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2. Per § 28-4A.2, all tree removal and replacement permits issued shall be posted on the tree(s) to be removed and in the property owner's front door/window. The plans should be revised to add a note to indicate above.
3. Per § 28-8, if any replacement tree planted fails to thrive, or dies within two years, it shall be replaced by the property owner within six months and the same shall be viable for an additional two (2) years. The plans should be revised to add a note to indicate above.
4. Revise the plans to provide a detail of the proposed tree protection fence.

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.