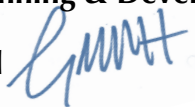


MEMORANDUM

TO: Township of West Orange Planning Board

CC: Jamilet Baquerizo Vite, Planning Board Secretary
Geniece Gary-Adams, Director of Planning & Development

FR: Gerard M. Haizel, PP, AICP, Principal 

RE: Site Plan Review Advisory Board (SPRAB) Report
PB-25-02 – 111 Prospect Avenue
Block 151, Lots 17.01

DT: April 9, 2025

Attendance:

Kenneth McPherson, Esq. – Attorney for the Applicant
Mike Petry, PP, PP, AIA – Applicant's Architect
Sean Delay – Applicant's Architect
Lee D. Klein, PP – Planning Board Member
Robin Miller – Zoning Board Member
Captain Joe Matullo – Fire Department
Michale A. Fonzino, Director of Health & Welfare
Thomas Biondi, Construction Official
Geniece Gary-Adams, Director of Planning & Development/Zoning Official
Zayibeth Carbello, PE, Director of Engineering/Municipal Engineer
Walt Kipp, Township Forester
Jamilet Baquerizo Vite, Planning Board Secretary
Phil Scott, PE, CME - Matrix New World Engineering, Planning Board Engineer
Gerard M. Haizel, PP, AICP - Nishuane Group, Planning Board Planner

The Township of West Orange Site Plan Review Advisory Board (SPRAB) held a meeting on April 8, 2025. At this meeting, the SPRAB reviewed the above referenced application with the applicant's attorney and architect.

The applicant proposes extensive rehabilitation of the subject site, which contains the former Manor restaurant and catering facility, with the intent of continuing this use. The scope of the project includes the reconstruction of the existing driveway, walking paths and valet parking area, as well as renovations to the interior of the main building. Construction

of a Porte-Cochere, installation of a new community garden and extensive landscaping are also included as a part of the proposed scope of work.

The proposed development on the site will require the granting of a variance, for the following condition:

- Exceeding the Maximum Permitted Impervious Coverage

The following site plan and design details were discussed at the SPRAB meeting:

⇒ Parking

- The applicant stated that a significant portion of the proposed site work will include the rehabilitation and reconfiguration of the existing parking lot B, which is located at the front of the site, between the ingress and egress from Prospect Avenue. The lot will generally be squared off with longer parking aisles. The reconfiguration will result in an increase in the number of parking stalls and a reduction in the impervious coverage on the site. The lighting and the drainage in and around the parking lot will also be addressed to improve a long occurring issue with drainage around the entry to the main building.
- The required level of parking for the facility is based on the occupancy level established in an application previously before the Board (see resolution for PB-13-09), when the maximum occupancy was set at 1,404 persons and required parking set at 434 spaces. It should be noted here that the 434-spaces is the previously approved minimum number of spaces and is not directly attributable to the occupancy level for which an additional 34-spaces would be required.
- The applicant stated their intent to seek an increase in the maximum permitted occupancy, based on the increased on-site parking that will result from the reconfiguration of Lot B. The applicant proposes to increase the maximum permitted occupancy by applying the permitted parking ratio, one (1) parking space for every three (3) seats. Based on this ratio, with a total of 471-spaces provided a maximum occupancy of 1,413-persons would be permitted.
- The applicant was questioned about their decision to base the number of EV-equipped parking stalls and ADA-compliant stalls on the number of spaces in parking Lot B only, particularly when Lot B is designated primarily for valet parking. Would it not have made more sense to also incorporate the Lot C, which is designated as the “public parking lot?” The applicant responded that for facilities such as this, the focus is more on encouraging the use of valet parking over self-parking, which is why Lot B was prioritized.

- It was brought to the applicant's attention that, based on the size of the parking area on the site, the proposed site plan may need to be reviewed by the Township's Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board.
- As a part of the Lot B rehabilitation and reconfiguration, the driveway between the main building entry area and the egress onto Prospect Avenue will be realigned and regraded to improve the access onto Prospect Avenue. As it currently exists, the gradient creates a blind spot at the egress, making getting onto Prospect Avenue somewhat precarious. As part of the proposed scope of work, the driveway will be substantially regraded to reduce the gradient will be reduced, which will allow for better visibility from the egress onto Prospect Avenue.
- The applicant was asked about of amount of ground disturbance that would be required to achieve the desired regrading and was advised that a soil disturbance permit may be required dependent on the level of disturbance. The applicant agreed to show the level of disturbance on their plans.

⇒ Improved ADA-Accessibility

- As part of the proposed scope of work on the site, the front courtyard, which is located between the existing fountains in the front yard and the front façade of the main building, will be completely demolished and reconstructed at a higher elevation so as to provide a seamless access in and out of the main building. The applicant explained that currently a mobility-challenged person would have to travel from the main entry on the western side of the building and around to the front, to access the courtyard. A water infiltration issue that has been occurring on the front façade will also be addressed at the same time.
- All the walkways around the grounds of the facility will be demolished and reconstructed, to improve mobility. Overall grading will be redone and the existing steps on the walkway between the front entry and the rear of the main building will be replace by regrading in this area.

⇒ Water Service

- The applicant stated that the site is currently served by a well but will be connected to the municipal service as part of this project, at which time the municipal service will become the primary service for domestic and fire use, and the well will serve as a backup. This transition will occur before the facility is operational. The applicant was advised that they will need to review this action with the DEP and any required permits attained.

- The applicant stated that the FDC that serves the facility is currently located off-site on Seaman Road. The applicant advised that as part of the scope of this application, the FDC will be relocated to an on-site location.

⇒ Tree Removal

- The applicant was asked to address the required tree removal and replacement plan. The applicant detailed the circumstances under which several on-site trees were cut down without the requisite approvals. The applicant stated that the trees that were cutdown have since been replaced. The location and type of trees that have been replaced are denoted on the "Tree Replacement Plan" which is included on the provided site plans, on sheet TR-2.

⇒ Community Garden

- The applicant stated that pursuant to a settlement agreement related to the removal of trees on the site, they will establish a community garden at the rear area of the site. They explained that this garden will be under the oversight of the facility's chef and kitchen staff. The proposed garden, which will be open from April through November, will produce vegetables, herbs and other produce that will be used in the facility's kitchen. The garden will also incorporate programming, which will be open to community groups.

The Applicant's professional team will make modifications to their submission, based on the input and discussions with the Township and Board Professionals.