



MEMORANDUM

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

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

Date: *September 15, 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 #2
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 & Variance Application Plans (11 sheets) prepared by Robert M Cunningham, PE with Cunningham Engineering & Design, LLC of Newton, New Jersey and bearing the latest revision of August 25, 2025.
- A set of Proposed Cut and Fill Calculation drawings (5 sheets) prepared by Robert M Cunningham, PE and bearing a latest revision of August 20, 2025.
- A Drainage Report prepared by Robert M. Cunningham, PE and bearing a latest revision date of August 26, 2025. Included with the Drainage Report is a set of Drainage Area Plans (3 sheets) prepared by Robert M. Cunningham, PE and bearing a latest revision date of August 20, 2025.



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- A Steep Slopes Disturbance Report prepared by Robert M. Cunningham, PE dated August 26, 2025.
- A copy of a September 5, 2025 memorandum from John Olivo, PLA with Bosenberg Landscape Architecture of Far Hills, New Jersey to the West Orange Zoning Board of Adjustment which addresses the comments in our April 3, 2025 review memorandum.
- A copy of a September 5, 2025 letter from Joesph Wenzel, Esq. with Friend & Wenzel of Clifton, New Jersey to the West Orange Zoning Board of Adjustment which addresses the comments the Site Plan Review Advisory Board report dated June 17, 2025.
- A copy of a September 5, 2025 letter from Thomas Ricci, Jr., PP and Marcella Traina, PP with Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC of Rutherford, New Jersey to the West Orange Zoning Board of Adjustment which addresses comment #15 in the Site Plan Review Advisory Board report dated June 17, 2025.
- A set of catalog cuts from LSI Industries Inc. for the proposed light fixtures.
- A copy of a Verification of Taxes & Sewer Charges Paid from the Office of the Tax Collector dated September 2, 2025 which states that the taxes on lot 176, block 152.02 are paid until October 31, 2025. In addition, it states that the 2025 sewer charges have been paid in full.
- A copy of a Verification of Taxes & Sewer Charges Paid from the Office of the Tax Collector dated September 2, 2025 which states that the taxes on lot 179, block 152.02 are paid until October 31, 2025. In addition, it further states that there is no sewer on this lot.
- A copy of a Verification of Taxes & Sewer Charges Paid from the Office of the Tax Collector dated September 2, 2025 which states that the taxes on lot 186, block 152.02 are paid until October 31, 2025. In addition, it states that the 2025 sewer charges have been paid in full.

In addition to the above, our office previously received the following information as part of the original submission for this application:

- A set of Tree Removal and Landscape Plans (3 sheets) prepared by John Olivo, LLA with Bosenberg Landscape Architecture 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.
- 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 dated February 5, 2025.
- A completed Application Form.



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- 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 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.

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.



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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. It remains for the Boundary & Topographic Survey drawings to be signed and sealed by the licensed land surveyor preparing same.
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 provide testimony to the Board to demonstrate that the proposed dumpster pad area 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 plans should be revised to include the following details:
 - a. Traffic markings (arrows).
 - b. Bulkhead Wall.
10. 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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11. 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.
12. 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.
13. The Applicant shall prepare a geotechnical analysis addressing the steep slopes as stipulated in §25-28.7b12.
14. The Applicant shall prepare a maintenance plan addressing the steep slopes as stipulated in §25-28.7b15.
15. For steep slopes between 20% and 24.99%, the Ordinance permits 20% disturbance whereas the Applicant proposes to disturb 51.36. In addition, for steep slopes 25% and greater the Ordinance does not permit any disturbance whereas the Applicant proposes to disturb 14.12%. The Applicant should address the Board setting forth the reasons why the proposed disturbance of steep areas should be permitted.
16. Sheet SE-11 includes a turning template for a tandem axle roll-off truck in the rear of the property. This sheet should be revised to demonstrate that adequate maneuvering room is available for the vehicles anticipated to use the parking lot in the front of the property, including emergency vehicles.
17. 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 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.
2. The Applicant has addressed the technical stormwater management comments set forth in our April 3, 2025 review memorandum.



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3. As stipulated in Section 25-29.10(b)(1) of the Ordinance, the design engineer shall prepare a maintenance plan for the stormwater management measures incorporated into the design of a major development. It further stipulates in Section 25-29.10(b)(4) of the Ordinance that the maintenance plan and any future revisions shall be recorded upon the deed of record for each property on which the maintenance described in the maintenance plan must be undertaken. Prior to recording, the form of the deed must be approved by the Board Attorney and our office.

D. LIGHTING COMMENTS

1. The Applicant has submitted manufacturer's catalog cut sheets and ordering information for the light fixtures and poles. We note that this information must be included in the plans.

E. LANDSCAPING COMMENTS

1. The Ordinance requires that a 50-ft landscape buffer be provided between a nonresidential zone use and a residential zone use whereas none is proposed by the Applicant.
2. Per §28-8.C2, replacement trees provided should be NJ native species. It remains for the plans to be revised accordingly.
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. In addition, the plans should be revised to provide an alternative species for proposed PIE JAP (Andromeda) as this species does not tolerate full sun conditions.
4. It remains for the plans to be revised to shift the shrub landscape beds at least three (3) feet from the 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. It remains for the plans to be revised to indicate the disposition of all open areas, such as lawn, stone, mulch, etc., to prevent confusion during construction.
8. It remains for the plans to be revised to depict mulch bed lines on the plans, to prevent confusion during construction.



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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. It remains for the plans to be revised to add a note to indicate above.
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. It remains for the plans to 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. It remains for the plans to be revised to add a note to indicate above.
4. It remains for the plans to be revised 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.