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PRINCIPALS
MARVIN JARMEL, IIDA
MATTHEW B. JARMEL, AIA, MBA
IRWIN H. KIZEL, AIA, PP
RICHARD A. JARMEL, PE

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION
GA278177

42 Okner Parkway
Livingston, NJ 07039

TEL: (973) 994-9669
FAX: (973) 994-4069

www.jarmelkizel.com

February 25, 2026

Ms. Jamilet Baquerizo Vita, Planning Board Secretary
West Orange Planning & Development Department
66 Main Street, Room 214
West Orange, NJ 07052

Re: **Planning Board Application No. PB-25-11**
525 Northfield Avenue
West Orange, NJ 07052
Block# 159.04, Lot# 1.01

Dear Ms. Baquerizo Vite:

This memo has been prepared to address the Environmental Impact Statement waiver requested for the above-mentioned project. The Township Planner requested a memo from the applicants engineer that other than steep slopes, no additional environmental impacts exist on the site. Below is a description of the property, the proposed development and environmental impact related to our development.

The subject property is designated a Lot 1.01 of Block 159.04 on the Township of West Orange Tax Maps. The property consists of 110,205sf. It is located on the northeasterly side of the intersection of Northfield Avenue and Sheridan Avenue. On the east side the project site is the adjoining property owned by the Township of West Orange, which is vacant woodlands. The northern property is bounded by residential properties which fronts on Sheridan Avenue and Masson Place. A segment of Turtle Brook flows east to west and is piped through the subject property. The NJDEP memo previously provided, indicates that the 100-year flood event is contained within the culvert that runs through this property. Therefore, the site is not impacted by the 100-year flood.

There is an existing one & one-half (1-1/2)-story frame and brick building located in the southwest corner of the property. This building, originally built in the 1920s as a restaurant, has been changed and altered over the years. It currently is configured as a restaurant and catering/reception hall. Surrounding the building are parking areas. Access to the existing site is from driveways—one each from Northfield Avenue and Sheridan Avenue. Surrounding the site there is a variety of uses. Across Sheridan Avenue is the St. Cloud Elementary School. To the west there is commercial development with offices, retail sales, and restaurants. To the north, there are several single-family homes located within the R-6 residential zone district. The subject property lies within the Township's B-2 Zone.

The terrain on the project site is very variable. The parking areas immediately behind the main building (on the north and east sides) are relatively level in relation to the building. Behind those parking areas the grade slopes steeply upward to the rear property line. The highest elevations on the site occur immediately around the northeasterly property corner at approximately 450 elevation. The lowest elevation is about 380 and occurs in the southwestern corner of the property at the intersection of Northfield Avenue and Sheridan Place. Do to the abrupt elevation changes and the breaks in the slope, it is felt that the portions of the site were excavated decades ago to support the construction of the Essex

House and parking lot. Therefore, much of the steeper grades appear to have been artificially created over the years.

The area immediately surrounding the existing building is all bituminous pavement except for several planting beds with shrubs and groundcovers. Most of the trees on the site are those that established themselves within the last several decades after most of the "disturbance" activities had ceased. The trees range from saplings just a few inches in diameter to 32-inches in diameter along the northerly property line. The understory consists of sticker bushes and other miscellaneous woody plants. There are no known endangered or other unique plants on the site.

A review of the NJDEP GIS web site indicates that there are no freshwater wetlands on the site or on adjacent properties.

There is an existing 8-inch diameter municipal sanitary sewer running down the northern side of Northfield Avenue. This line flows from east to west, this sewer line eventually discharges into interceptor sewers and then to the treatment plant owned and operated by the Joint Meeting of Essex and Union counties. There are no sewer bans or moratoriums restricting connections into the sewer system at this time.

Northfield Avenue is a major county artery road. Traffic is discussed in greater detail in a separate Traffic Report, and testimony shall be provided.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed development requires to remove all existing buildings, pavement, and site infrastructure for submission of preliminary and final site plans seeking approval to construct a multi-family 105-unit apartment building with an underground parking garage. The proposed building will have (84) one-bedroom units, (16) two-bedroom units and (5) three-bedroom units. The building will also have 1,200sf retail space and 5,784sf of outdoor amenity area. The building will also have a total of (200) at grade parking spaces. The proposed conditions will have a reduction in impervious coverage by approximately 3,265sf. A complete discussion of the proposed drainage, and treatment, along with supporting calculations is found in the Stormwater Management Report previously submitted.

All land that will be disturbed by the proposed construction will be restored through complete re-landscaping of the site. This will be accomplished with deciduous shade and ornamental trees, evergreen trees, evergreen and deciduous shrubs, and lawn ground cover. The plantings will form an attractive buffer along the site's northern and eastern perimeters. In all, 94 trees and 187 plants are proposed to be planted for this site.

The construction of the proposed multifamily building with its associated parking areas, drives, walkways, grading, and utilities would disturb a substantial portion of the site. However, most of this activity would take place on those areas of the site that are extensively already altered, i.e., the area of the existing building and bituminous pavement.

Much of the disturbed terrain is where the major elements of construction is to take place which is moderately to severely sloping, there is a potential for soil erosion once the vegetative cover is removed for construction. Standard soil erosion and sediment control techniques on the steeper slopes would be necessary for this project. An erosion control plan has been prepared as part of the site plans and approval from Huson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation District shall be obtained.

The existing property has already been substantially developed. The project site terrain has been graded and reshaped. As noted above, there are steep slopes along the northern side of the project area, the extent of which may have been exacerbated during the site work for the various structures built here decades ago.

It is intended that this project would modify the existing topography by modifying some of the higher areas of the site. The grading necessary would be done so as to provide positive drainage away from the proposed building. Lowering the terrain provides the opportunity to produce parking area grades compatible with automobile travel and ease of access into driveways. Further, it enables the area immediately around the building to be graded so that there is 360 degree access around the building. Retaining walls will be used to manage grade changes and future erosion, particularly in the northern half of the project.

In conclusion, the proposed project is compatible with the neighborhood and takes place on a parcel of land that has previously been disturbed, the potential environmental impacts would be limited in duration and intensity, particularly in the steep slopes area. The impacts noted in this report with regards to grading in the steep slopes and removal of vegetation are typical for the construction of such projects, in this case residential dwellings. The proposed plantings of trees will form an attractive buffer along the site's northern and eastern perimeters and by planting the tree and constructing a retaining wall will mitigate any future erosion. Therefore, the construction of this project can be built without adversely affecting public health, safety, or welfare.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Very truly yours,

Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony Facchino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anthony" being more prominent than the last name "Facchino".

Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP
Associate Director of Land Planning