

Exhibit “A”



Open Space and Recreation Commission

April 30, 2023

To: West Orange Township Council,

Town Council Members:

At the April 20, 2023 Open Space and Recreation Commission monthly meeting, the Commissioners voted 5-0 unanimously, to request the Township Council to approve a resolution to secure an appraisal of The Essex Equestrian Center. For the Council to even consider such an acquisition, this appraisal is part of the process required in evaluating the property for the Township to consider expending Open Space funds for the purchase.

The property located at 12-22 Woodland Avenue in West Orange, NJ consists of block 152.02 lots 176,179 and 186. The property is identified in The Open Space and Recreation Plan Updated November 11, 2019, as a property worthy of preservation. Its purchase will maintain community character and recreational opportunities for the Township. The Open Space Commission would like to preserve what we consider a historically significant site. The Essex Equestrian Center closed at the end of 2022. It was the only operating Equestrian Center operating in Essex County.

The Township has a willing seller – Verona resident Larry Hall. I have also spoken to outlying experienced Equestrian Center operators who have expressed interest in operating the Center here in West Orange. One such operator would be willing to actually invest in the property and run it as an Equestrian Center with a long-term 15-year contract in return. We believe this is equally beneficial to the operator and to West Orange taxpayers.

Such rental income would make up for the loss of \$103,203.00 in property taxes currently being paid. The property is zoned residential. Seeking an appraisal to start this process could potentially save it from being developed and if at the end of the lease a new operator cannot be found, an Open Space & Recreation funded site means West Orange would still have a new local park with the potential for indoor and outdoor revenue-generating recreational opportunities.

Thank You,
Joseph McCartney
Chair, West Orange Open Space and Recreation Commission