

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING BOARD

_____)	FINDINGS OF FACT
In the Matter of the Application of)	and
The Trustees of Princeton University)	CONCLUSIONS OF LAW
(Baseball Ballpark) for Preliminary and)	
Final Major Site Plan Approval with)	File No. PB24-08
Waivers)	Approval Granted:
_____)	November 6, 2024

Be it resolved by the Planning Board of the Township of West Windsor (“the Board”) that the action of this Board on November 6, 2024 in this matter is hereby memorialized by the adoption of this written decision setting forth the Board's findings and conclusions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Subject site. The subject site is located within the northerly portion of the Township, to the north of the intersection of Washington Road and US Route 1. The site has a collective area of approximately 208.97 acres (9,102,862 square feet) and is irregular in shape. It is generally bounded by Washington Road to the southwest, US Route 1 to the southeast, and Harrison Street to the northeast.

The site previously received GDP approval from the Township for the development of the Lake Campus. While the subject site comprises 208.97 acres, only 198.652 acres were initially incorporated in the GDP due to certain acreage being located outside the E District at the time of the GDP approval. Amended GDP approval (PB 18-09 Amended) was subsequently granted which increased the GDP area to 208.97 acres, which was the result of: one area being dedicated to the NJDEP in December 2022; one area being added due to the vacation of Eden Way; and another area being added due to a rezoning by the Township to the E District

in February 2021. The approved GDP consists of a total of 500 units of housing for post-doctorate and graduate students as well as a maximum of 985,000 square feet of nonresidential uses, which are to consist of: education, administrative, collaboration, and research facilities; athletic facilities and campus recreation; support, maintenance, and utilities facilities; and campus retail, service, and amenities.

Since the time the GDP was adopted, the Applicant has received site plan approvals for the site:

- a. Lake Campus South (PB 20-12), which consists of the Tiger Cub facility building, a parking garage, a softball stadium, and recreation fields.
- b. Lake Campus North (PB 20-13) which consists of 379 graduate student housing units, a 180,262 square foot racquet center, an operations area, and rugby and flexible recreation fields.
- c. A campus operations building (PB 22-06) to support the University's nursery operations.

With regard to the proposed application, the project area is located in the northerly portion of Block 3, Lot 1.0113, to the south of Tiger Trail. As noted in the application materials, the project area is not presently developed with any buildings. However, a "geo-exchange bore field with 344 geo-exchange bores and 4 vaults is currently being constructed on the site under a separate zoning permit and will be completed prior to the start of construction of the Ballpark."

2. Proposed plan. The Applicant seeks preliminary and final site plan approval as well as design waiver relief for the development of a baseball ballpark. The proposed ballpark is designed to contain 463 fixed seats and will incorporate: bullpens; a netted batting tunnel; fencing; a scoreboard; speakers and sound speakers; a solid-surface batter's eye; foul poles; light poles; and dugouts with bathrooms. In addition, the concourse level will contain restrooms and

utility rooms, and the press level will contain offices for coaching staff, meeting space, and a press box.

In addition to the ballpark, the applicant proposes pedestrian walkways to provide connections to the adjoining racquet center and to the parking garage to the west. Other improvements include a storage and maintenance building attached to the ballpark, two flag poles, and a subsurface stormwater system.

RELIEF SOUGHT

3. The Applicant seeks preliminary and final major site plan approval in order to construct the improvements set forth in paragraph 2, described with more specificity in the plans, testimony, exhibits, and other submissions. Four design waivers and three submission waivers are also sought.

The light stanchions for the baseball and softball fields necessitate 12 variances, all of which were granted in the General Development Plan approval for the Lake Campus.

NOTICE AND HEARING

4. Proof of notice and publication was filed and found to be satisfactory.

5. The notice stated that the hearing would be held at the meeting scheduled for November 6, 2024. It was heard at the hearing, at which the Applicant and all other parties were given the opportunity to present evidence and to be heard.

PLANS AND OTHER SUBMISSIONS

6. At the hearing, the Board considered the following plans and reports submitted by the Applicant:

a. Set of plans entitled "Princeton University - Princeton University Baseball Ballpark - West Windsor Township Preliminary/ Final Major Site Plan Application - Baseball Ballpark - Lot 1. 0113, Block 3 - West Windsor Township, Mercer County, NJ", consisting of two volumes (numbered 1 and 2) both dated July 8, 2024, revised through October 9, 2024, with:

- Volume 1 comprising a Cover Sheet, the Site Civil (Vladimir Wojno-Oranski, PE - Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. - 25 sheets) and Landscaping portions (James Corner, LLA - James Corner Field Operations - 9 sheets); and
- Volume 2 comprising a Cover Sheet, the Stormwater Management plans (Sandra A. Brock, PE - Nitsch Engineering, Inc. - 9 sheets), the "Turf Drawings" (Tony W. Diggan, PE - Kimley- Horn and Associates - 7 sheets), the Electrical Site Plan (Jaime Castro, PE - Henderson Engineers, Inc. - 1 sheet), the Site Fire Protection Plan (1 sheet) and the Architectural drawings (Andres Ulises Cortes, R.A. - Agencie Group Architecture+ Engineering - 9 sheets)

Neither of the volumes bears the title block of any firm, but all identify the following schedule of design team member firms:

- Architect of Record - Pendulum Studio, LLC
- Associate Architects - Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC and Agencie Architecture & Engineering, PC
- Cost Estimating - Ellana, Inc.
- Structural Engineer - Thornton Tomasetti
- MEP, Fire/ Life Safety - Henderson Engineers
- Landscape Architects - James Corner Field Operations
- Stormwater Design - Nitsch Engineering, Inc.
- Playing Field Design - Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
- Civil Engineer - Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
- Geotechnical Engineer - Carlin- Simpson and Associates, LLC

- Environmental/ Sustainability - Atelier Ten
- Traffic and Parking - BFJ Planning.
- Owner's Land Use Attorney - Faegre Drinker Biddle& Reath, LLP

b. Report entitled "Parking and Traffic Report" prepared by BFJ Planning (Georges Jacquemart, PE, PP, FAICP) dated October 4, 2024;

c. Report in the form of a letter from Carlin Simpson Associates to Pendulum referenced "Report on Subsurface Soil and Foundation Investigation— Proposed Baseball Stadium— Princeton University" dated December 5, 2023;

d. Report entitled "Environmental Impact Statement - Lake Campus Development Baseball Ballpark - Princeton University, West Windsor Township, Mercer County, New Jersey" prepared by VHB Engineering, Surveying, Landscape Architecture and Geology, P. C. dated July 2024;

e. Document entitled "West Windsor Township Major Site Plan Application - Lake Campus South - Stormwater Operations and Maintenance Plan", prepared by Nitsch Engineering, Inc. dated February 3, 2020, revised through June 28, 2024 to include Baseball Ballpark;

f. Report entitled "West Windsor Township Major Site Plan Application - Baseball Ballpark at Meadows Neighborhood, Lake Campus - Stormwater Report" prepared by Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (Sandra A. Brock, P. E.) dated July 8, 2024, revised through October 1, 2024;

- g. Application documents, including:
- Application form with Rider;
 - Site Plan Checklist;
 - Green Development Checklist;
 - Environmental Impact Worksheet;
 - List of Waivers;

- Various Deed Restrictions and Conservation Easements impacting the property; and
- Major Development Stormwater Summary Sheet

MUNICIPAL REPORTS

7. At the hearing, the Board considered the following reports prepared by municipal officials and bodies and consultants to the Board:

- Memorandum from Francis A. Guzik, P.E., CME to the Board, dated October 25, 2024 with later annotations from the Applicant
- Memorandum from David Novak, P.P., A.I.C.P to the Planning Board and West Windsor Division of Land Use, dated October 24, 2024 with later annotations from the Applicant
- Memorandum from Ed Snieckus, Jr. LLA, P.P., ASLA to the Planning Board and West Windsor Division of Land Use, dated October 24, 2024 with later annotations from the Applicant
- Memorandum from Quazi Masood, P.E., PTOE and William R. Dougherty, PTOE to the Board, dated October 25, 2024 with later annotations from the Applicant
- Memorandum from Chief Timothy M. Lynch to the Technical Review Committee, dated October 28, 2024 with later annotations from the Applicant

APPLICANTS' EXHIBITS

8. At the hearing, the Board considered the following exhibits that were introduced by the Applicant as evidence during the course of the hearing:

- Exhibit A-1 – Slide deck with 44 slides entitled “Princeton University Baseball Ballpark; Preliminary and Final Site Plan; West Windsor Planning Board; November 6, 2024

- Exhibit A-2 – The five reports from the municipal staff with annotations from the Applicant

TESTIMONY AND PUBLIC INPUT

9. The testimony presented by and on behalf of the Applicant and advice by Board consultants were given by the following persons:

Christopher DeGrezia, Esq., represented the Applicant. Ron McCoy, the University Architect; Tsutomu Bessho, its landscape architect; and Sandy Brock, P.E. the civil engineer for the project, testified on the Applicant's behalf.

The following municipal staff and professionals gave advice to the Board at the hearing:

Francis A. Guzik, P.E., the Township Engineer; Ed Snieckus, L.L.A., P.P. ASLA; and Gerald J. Muller, Esq.

10. The statements of the members of the public made during the course of the hearing may be summarized as follows: Sylvia Ascarelli testified. She asked that the University continue the Washington Road bike path over Route 1 to a pedestrian crossing for the traffic signal at Fisher Place. Kristin Appelget, a representative of the University, indicated that the University intends to do so when DOT completes the proposed Route 1 widening. Staff pointed out that NJDOT has indicated that it will undertake the widening project for a number of years, but its current schedule for construction is unknown.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS RE: PRELIMINARY AND FINAL MAJOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL

11. The proposed plan is well conceived, with the baseball ballpark well oriented vis-a-vis the sun and located so as to maximize pedestrian access and, through parking in the parking

garage, vehicular access. The pertinent improvements, including pedestrian walkways, stormwater management, BMPs, landscaping, lighting and other amenities, relate well to the ballpark and surrounding uses. The conditions will enhance the site plan elements. Signage for the facility will be part of a future application.

12. Conclusion re site plan approval. The Board finds that, with the conditions imposed and waivers granted, the Applicant has met all Township site plan standards. Preliminary and final major site plan approval, accordingly, is granted.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS RE: WAIVERS

13. The Applicant has applied for four design waivers and three submission checklist waivers. The waivers and the Board's action on them are as follows.

Design waivers

a. Section 200-27.D(2) – Schedule of Off-Street Loading Requirements – requires one loading area for up to ten thousand square feet of building floor area for places of public assembly, whereas Applicant proposes that deliveries will occur at the Athletics Operations facility and will be transferred to the Baseball Ballpark by staff utilizing University vehicles as needed.

b. Section 200-29.I(3) – Width of Driveways – requires that two-way driveways are to be 24-feet in width, whereas Applicant proposes driveway widths of +/- twenty-two feet and three-eighths inches.

c. Section 200-29N.(3) – Bicycle Access – requires that where bicycle access is combined with motor vehicle access, driveways shall be no less than thirty feet if two-way direction is provided, whereas Applicant proposes widths of +/- twenty-two feet and three-eighths inches.

d. Section 200-36.1 – Use of Pervious and Impervious Surfaces – requires that impervious surfaces shall be used for all drives and parking areas, whereas Applicant proposes porous pavers for fire access.

a-d. Waivers granted: The Applicant in its Lake Campus South application applied for waivers from these four ordinance provisions as well as a number of others. The pertinent facts and rationales that the Board adopted in granting these waivers set forth in sections 13a, b, d, and e of the Lake Campus South Resolution apply equally to the waiver requests herein. The Board, for the same reasons, grants these waivers.

Submission waivers

The Applicant has filed for the following submission waivers:

a. Section 200-14.C.1(a) – the approved preliminary site and copy of the preliminary resolution of approval together with all proposed additions, changes or departures therefrom, if applicable.

b. Section 200-14.C.1(b)(1) – final plans for site development and site improvements including those construction details as may be specified at the time of preliminary approval.

c. Section 200-14.C.1(b)(5) – A final Landscape Plan, signed and sealed by a certified or licensed landscape architect, in the form of construction drawings and substantially conforming to the approved preliminary Landscape Plan. The plan shall be prepared for separate halftone sheets of the engineer's grading site plan. The plan shall include the location and detailed specifications for all landscape architectural improvements including planting details which conform with the standard Township details and for the irrigation and maintenance of all planting areas.

Waivers granted: The Applicant applied for the same waivers for Lake Campus South, and the Board hereby grants them for the same reasons, namely, that they apply when preliminary and final approval are sought separately. Given that the Applicant has not sought this separate approval, this information is not available.

CONDITIONS REQUIRED

14. The Board finds that, in order to address the concerns expressed during the course of the hearing, the relief granted is subject to the following conditions:

Stormwater Management

a. The updated cover page of the Lake Campus South – Stormwater Operations and Maintenance Plan shall be recorded, and a deed notice for Block 3, Lot 1.0113 shall reflect the change from the previously approved document. The documents shall be subject to the review and approval of the Planning Board attorney.

b. The Lake Campus South Stormwater Maintenance Agreement between the Township and the University shall be amended to include the newly-proposed BMPs.

Landscaping

c. Notes shall be added to the plans indicating soil test and decompaction as determined to be necessary by the Township staff, at the location of the two proposed shade trees adjacent to the Lunar Drive frontage. The notes shall be added to the Landscape Drawings and the Civil Drawings in reference to the Landscape Drawings.

Utilities

d. The Applicant shall secure approval from the West Windsor Township Council with respect to sewer flows. The Stonybrook Regional Sewerage Authority must approve the Applicant's method of calculating an average daily flow of 410 gpd for this facility.

Lighting

e. Field lights shall have control systems in place to ensure that lights are turned off no later than 11:00 p.m. Field lights shall not be left on when games or practices are not in progress.

Potable Water

f. Potable water for this project will be provided by New Jersey American Water. Locations for all proposed hydrants shall be subject to the review and approval of the Director of Fire and Emergency Services.

General

g. Metes and bounds descriptions for any proposed easements and dedications (such as Stormwater BMPs), with closure calculations for same, are to be submitted for review and approval of the Township Engineer. The forms of any easement and dedication shall be reviewed and approved by the Board Attorney.

h. The following technical comments are to be addressed:

a. Detailed grading of all handicapped ramps and accessible routes to the accessible ballpark entrance shall be provided at 10-scale, minimum. Proposed elevations at both sides of ramps, landings and accessible routes shall be provided to show compliant cross-slopes as well as running slopes. Design slopes shall be limited to 1:14 max for ramp running slopes and 1.5% cross- slopes to allow for construction tolerances.

b. All Township sanitary sewer and connection details shall be provided on the plans in accordance with Ordinance Section 200-91.

c. The Applicant shall provide a core drill connection construction detail for the sewer connection to existing SMH-27.

i. All construction details shall be subject to the review and approval of the Township Engineer.

j. The Applicant shall submit two Engineer's construction cost estimates for review. One will be for all onsite improvements for the purpose of calculating construction inspection escrow fees. The second will solely be for items that are required to be covered by a performance guarantee, such as buffer landscaping. The Applicant shall be required to post performance guarantees and inspection fees for the site improvements in accordance with the MLUL and the Township Ordinance.

k. As per Ordinance section 200-81.1 the Applicant shall provide, via both hard copy and in electronic format, approved subdivision and site plans being submitted for signature and as-built surveys upon project completion. Electronic copies of the Stormwater Management Report and Maintenance Manual shall also be required.

Other

l. No building-based concessions shall be provided. A Princeton University Campus Dining food truck will serve the patrons.

m. Other outside agency approvals will also be required. The following approvals are anticipated at this time:

- Mercer County Planning Board
- Mercer County Soil Conservation District
- Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission

Emergency Services

n. "No Parking - Fire Lanes" shall be created by the Applicant along all curb areas to prohibit curbside parking from the entire site.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, the Board at its November 6, 2024 meeting voted to approve the plans with revisions made therein and as supplemented and modified by the exhibits and to grant the relief identified above subject to the conditions and to be revised in accordance with the conditions set forth herein.

This resolution of memorialization was adopted on December 18, 2024 by a vote of who voted to grant the relief sought by the applicant.

The date of decision shall be November 6, 2024 except that the date of the adoption of this memorializing resolution is the date of decision for purposes of (1) mailing a copy of the decision to the applicant within 10 days of the date of the decision; (2) filing a copy of the decision with the administrative officer; and (3) publication of a notice of this decision. The date of the publication of the notice of decision shall be the date of the commencement of the vesting protection period.

We do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Planning Board at its regular meeting held on December 18, 2024. This resolution memorializes formal action taken by the Board at its regular meeting held November 6, 2024.



Michael Karp, Chair



Lisa Komjati, Administrative Secretary

Michael Karp – Yea
Curtis Hoberman – Yea
Hemant Marathe, Mayor – Yea
Martin Whitfield – Yea
Allen Schectel – Yea
Jyotika Bahree – Absent
Robert Loverro, Alternate No. 1 – Yea
Pankaj Patel, Alternate No. 2 – Absent
Simon Pankove – Yea
Anis Baig – Absent
Sue Appelget – Recused