| 1 | BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG PLANNING BOARD |
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| 2 | COUNTY OF SOMERSET - STATE OF NEW JERSEY |
| 3 | |
| 4 | REGULAR MEETING FOR: |
| 5 | THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE BLOCK 7801, LOT 1 |
| 6 | 100 UNION AVENUE |
| 7 | CASE NO. PB 19-02 |
| 8 | TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2021 |
| 9 | COMMENCING AT 7:30 P.M. TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING |
| 11 | |
| 12 | BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: |
| 13 | TRACEE SCHAEFER, CHAIRPERSON KEITH S. BALLA, MAYOR PAUL FIORILLA |
| L 4 | PIETRO MARTINO, COUNCILMAN YVETTE NORA |
| 15 | KAREN PENNETT STEPHEN POTE |
| 16 17 | TROY SIMS DONALD SPEENEY, VICE-CHAIRPERSON ELLEN SPINGLER |
| 18 | ALSO PRESENT: |
| 19 | FRANCIS P. LINNUS, ESQUIRE, BOARD ATTORNEY |
| 20 | RICARDO MATIAS, P.E., BOARD ENGINEER MARK HEALEY, P.P., BOARD PLANNER |
| 21 | JOHN JAHR, P.E., PTP, TSOS, BOARD TRAFFIC ENGINEER THERESA SNYDER, BOARD SECRETARY |
| 22 | AD COURT DEPONITING III |
| 23 | AB COURT REPORTING, LLC Certified Court Reporters |
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A P P E A R A N C E S: (Via Video Conference)
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| 1 | | INDEX | |
| 2 | MITTANDOODO | | DACE |
| 3 | WITNESSES | | PAGE |
| 4 | NONE | | |
| 5 | NONE. | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 8 | PUBLIC COMMENT: | | |
| 9 | NAME | ADDRESS | PAGE |
| 10 | | 112211200 | 11102 |
| 11 | None. | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | EXHIBITS | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | EXHIBIT | DESCRIPTION | PAGE |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | None. | | |
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4 (Time noted, 7:34 p.m.) identified the following variances, basically, from 1 1 2 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Ellen, please Mark Healey's reports: 3 call our next application. 3 Relief is required for lot frontage. MEMBER SPINGLER: Case Number 4 Relief is required for parking lot 4 setback. 5 PB 19-02, The Learning Experience, 100 Union Avenue, 6 Block 7801, Lot 1, BB Zone. Expiration 7/31/21. 6 I'm not sure relief is required for 7 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. 7 building setback, front yard building setback. 8 Last month, both the applicant and the Mark, have you looked into that? opposer gave their closing arguments, and we are now 9 BOARD PLANNER: Yes. And when you 9 10 ready to vote on this application. 10 posed that question to me earlier today, I had to really stretch my power of recollection. 11 Before we do, Frank, can you go over 11 the particulars for our board members? 12 Originally they had asked for requested 12 13 BOARD ATTORNEY: Yes. Thank you very variances when it was initially proposed in 2019, 13 much, Madam Chairperson. but they have subsequently revised the plan, and 14 14 15 As the board and members of the public 15 they comply with the front yard setback along both are well aware, this is, I think, our tenth hearing streets. So there is no setback for front, for the 16 16 17 on the above matter. There have been many exhibits, 17 front yard setback. 18 both introduced by the applicant, as well as the 18 BOARD ATTORNEY: Okay. And then objector. Tonight we're here for deliberations, and 19 there's the issue as to whether a parking variance 19 a vote and taking action on the application. is required. As the board may recall, the applicant 20 20 21 Before we proceed, by matter of 21 took the initial position, and probably is still the 22 housekeeping, I note that we do have a full board 22 same position, that state law preempts the local here tonight. As a matter of fact, I counted ten 23 ordinance for childcare centers and that parking 23 24 board members, which would include one alternate. 24 requirements are not necessary. However, we do have 25 Theresa, has everybody -- is everybody 25 an ordinance, and our ordinance states that the 5 1 eligible to vote tonight? ordinance has no specific parking requirement for 2 BOARD CLERK: Yes, they are. the use, nor are there any parking requirements for BOARD ATTORNEY: Okay. So there would a similar use. And in such instances, our ordinance 3 4 be a full-board vote. Certainly, Yvette Nora would 4 indicates that the off-street parking requirements 5 be the second alternate. She can deliberate and she 5 are to be determined by the board based upon can participate, but she's not eligible to vote. accepted industry standards. 6 6 7 7 All right, having said that, basically, What does that mean? You have heard a 8 what we're going to be acting on tonight is 8 lot of testimony regarding what the industry 9 preliminary site plan. As you are aware, the 9 standards are. The objectors took -- the objector applicant has elected to proceed with preliminary took the position that ITE was the standard to be 10 10 site plan only, which means that if he gets applied; that's the Institute of Transportation 11 11 preliminary site plan, that some day you're going to Engineers. And if that standard is applied, then my 12 12 13 see the final site plan, and that will be presented recollection of the testimony -- which doesn't mean 13 to the board. anything, it's your recollection -- was that 52 14 14 15 There were a number of variances, and 15 parking spaces were required by ITE standards. 16 I'll detail them later because there are a couple of 16 The applicant is proposing, I believe, threshold issues that need to be addressed on the 31 parking spaces. The applicant took the position 17 17 number of variances, as well as the design waivers. that other standards applied, not the ITE standards. 18 18 So at the end of the day, you will deliberate and So there's a threshold issue; one, what standard 19 19 take action on the preliminary site plan, the 20 does apply? And that's a board decision. Is it ITE 20 identified variances and the exceptions to your 21 or any other standard? And if the answer is yes, a 21 22 development standards, your site plan standards. 22 standard applies, then the question becomes should a 23 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you, 23 variance be granted. And that, of course, would be 24 Frank. 24 based on all of the testimony as you received it and 25 BOARD ATTORNEY: All right. I have 25 whether there's adequate parking for the proposed

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1 use. 2 So at this point, Madam Chair, I think 3 the board should make a determination as to whether the ITE standard applies, that is, the 52 parking 4 5 space standard, or some other standard applies. 6 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: So what I'm going to do is I'm going to ask Rick or John, John 7 Jahr or Rick Matias, their opinion on this. If you would like to share an opinion, please? 9 10 BOARD TRAFFIC CONSULTANT: Okay. I 11 would say that it's Bright View's opinion that they are providing 30 -- as stated in our last memorandum 12 to the board, I would say that we have pretty much 13 indicated that it's our opinion that they are 14 providing 32 spaces, and we feel that that is 15 adequate. So from a -- if the question is clearly, 16 17 does Bright View feel 32 parking spaces will be 18 adequate for this use, it's our opinion that it is. 19 BOARD ATTORNEY: All right. That's not the real question, Madam Chairperson, although 20 21 it's good that you're getting this information from 22 our consultants and our professionals. 23 The question before the board, the threshold question is what standard applies. And 24

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then we get into whether there's a variance --9 whether there's proof sufficient for the variance.

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that is my question. So, John, can you elaborate on that, please? BOARD TRAFFIC CONSULTANT: Well, you know, this is a quasi-legal engineering question, I suppose, Frank. You know, my feeling would be that because the ordinance very clearly says that the threshold would be the ITE number, and we all agreed 11 that the ITE number was 52 spaces, then I don't 12 think it's -- it's nothing that this board hasn't done before. My feeling would be they should be asking for a variance, and my recommendation to the board would be to grant one because they're -- they have 32 spaces, and they only need 29.

CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: And I think

So, you know, I guess it's somewhat a little bit out of the engineering part and into the legal part, I suppose.

Frank, am I hitting the question somehow? I'm not sure if I'm getting this right. BOARD ATTORNEY: You're getting it partially right. The board has to determine what standard applies, and then they could vote on the variance at the appropriate time.

So I think, if I understand you correctly, you're stating that in your opinion there is an ITE standard, and that is the departure -- the point at which they would have to depart.

5 BOARD PLANNER: I think I could speak to the first part of the question, which is what is the -- what standard to apply. The language of the ordinance says in

the absence of a standard in your ordinance, that you should seek the industry standard. So then the question is, what is more appropriate to apply as far as setting a standard, the ITE or the information that Ms. Dolan supplied. Again, for the purpose of setting the standard.

It's my opinion, I think, that ITE is an industry standard. So I think it would be appropriate to apply that as the requirement for the site.

And then again, the second part -- as Frank explained, the second part of the question is, have they supplied sufficient justification in their reports and in their testimony to, you know, support relief from that standard. That second part, I will defer to Mr. Jahr.

But I do feel comfortable, again,

indicating to the board that it's my opinion that

2 the ITE standard should apply because it is an industry standard. 3

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BOARD TRAFFIC CONSULTANT: I agree. I 5 agree with Mr. Healey that the ITE is the standard that would apply. 6

And I would also like to remind the board that there was extensive testimony about how the ITE establishes its universal number, but in the preface of the ITE it says, "Always rely upon a local study," and that information was submitted by both the objector, and by our office and Ms. Dolan's office. So there was a significant amount of information provided.

I'll point out that I think that one of

16 the things that is a little gray here is that the 17 ITE global standard or number that you pick based on 18 the charts and graphs they have in the book is 52 19 spaces. However, the ITE has a catch-all that says, 20 "If you can produce a local study, then that would 21 be the preferable data to use." 22 So that's where things get a little - a

little tricky here because what Mark and I are saying is that there needs to be -- and the ordinance says, there has to be a standard. All

| 12 1 right? We're all agreeing that the ITE is the 2 standard. The problem is, is that the ITE puts us 3 in a bad spot because they have a definitive number 4 that you pick from a chart and say, Okay, that's it 5 for day cares, but in the beginning of their book it 6 says, But if you have something local, it's better 7 to go by that than go by I mean, because 8 remember, the ITE numbers are national. And they're 9 very, very good. They're very good to rely upon. 10 All right? But a lot of testimony was given both to 11 more and to less, you know, with regard to that. 11 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Don? 1 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Don? 1 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Troy? 5 MEMBER SIMS: I guess I will defer to 6 the professional, who indicates that the ITE 7 standard is what we should go by, but he also 8 suggests that a variance should be approved. So 9 however you want to if you want to go to the ITE 10 and have them get a variance, fine, but I'm taking 11 the advice of the professional. |
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| 10 All right? But a lot of testimony was given both to 10 and have them get a variance, fine, but I'm taking |
| |
| The day of the processional. |
| 12 I honestly think that a variance would 12 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. |
| 13 be appropriate just to codify that and to make 13 Councilman Martino? |
| 14 certain that, you know, if they ever want to make 14 COUNCILMAN MARTINO: Yes, I also agree |
| |
| |
| 16 of variance, it would be much easier for the zoning 16 occur here, I agree also with the variance. 17 Officer and the town to match it if a variance was 18 Thank you. |
| , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , |
| 18 granted for this reason. This way, if they ever 18 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Mayor? |
| 19 wanted to, you know, add an addition or make any 19 MAYOR BALLA: I agree with the |
| 20 changes, then, you know, this variance would 20 standard and to go with the variance. |
| 21 certainly, you know, put some limitations on that. 21 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. |
| 22 Something to consider, board. The 22 Yvette? |
| 23 decision is ultimately with you. There is so much 23 MEMBER NORA: Yes. I agree with |
| 24 information on this. I would say this is a tough 24 Mr. Jahr and Bright View's recommendation. |
| 25 one for the board to consider and what my my 25 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. |
| 13 15 |
| 1 professional opinion and the professional opinion of 1 Who am I missing? Paul. I'm going |
| 2 Bright View is, ITE is the standard, and I believe a 2 so, Paul, the reason why you're last is because |
| 3 variance is appropriate. 3 you're the last on my screen. |
| 4 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. 4 So, Paul, your input? Paul? |
| 5 I'm going to look to our board members 5 MEMBER FIORILLA: Yeah. I'm going to |
| 6 BOARD ATTORNEY: Madam Chair, do you 6 I guess I will concur with, you know, the |
| 7 want to poll the board on that issue? 7 comments that I have heard so far. I would rely on |
| 8 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I was just 8 our professionals because what's that? |
| 9 doing that, Frank. I was going to look to the board 9 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. |
| 10 members for their input on this so we can decide if 10 MEMBER FIORILLA: Can you hear me? |
| 11 a variance is warranted or not. |
| So I'm going to start with Ellen first. 12 but just so you know, your screen |
| 13 MEMBER SPINGLER: I think we should go 13 MEMBER FIORILLA: Hello? |
| 14 with a variance. 14 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Paul? Hello? |
| 15 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Steve? 15 MEMBER FIORILLA: Yeah? |
| 16 MEMBER POTE: I think, as well, we 16 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Paul, can you |
| 17 should go with the variance. In absence of that 17 hear |
| 18 standard we're seeking something else, and I just 18 MEMBER FIORILLA: Yeah. Can you hear |
| 19 think we're missing by too much; to go from 52 to 19 me? |
| 20 29, that's 60 percent. I think we should have that 20 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I could hear |
| 21 as a standard, ITE. 21 you, but just so you know, your screen is frozen. |
| 22 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Thank 22 Okay? |
| |
| 23 you. Karen? 23 MEMBER FIORILLA: My volume is kind of |
| 23 you. Karen? 23 MEMBER FIORILLA: My volume is kind of 24 my volume is breaking up, I guess, a little bit |

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| 1 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: But your screen | 1 | whether to grant if there is a requirement, to |
| 2 | is frozen. | 2 | grant relief from it. So I'm going to read from the |
| 3 | MEMBER FIORILLA: Yeah. Sorry about | 3 | ordinance because, again, this is somewhat similar |
| 4 | that. | 4 | to the parking. |
| 5 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: No problem. | 5 | It says, "For every building or part |
| 6 | MEMBER FIORILLA: I mean, GoToMeeting | 6 | thereof which is to be occupied by manufacturing, |
| 7 | is terrible. We should do Zoom. | 7 | storage, goods display, retail store, wholesale |
| 8 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Well, we have | 8 | store, or warehouse, market, hospital" and this |
| 9 | GoTo so you | 9 | is the key part "or other use similarly requiring |
| 10 | MEMBER FIORILLA: I don't know what to | 10 | the receipt or distribution in vehicles of materials |
| 11 | do about that. I think do you want me to call | 11 | or merchandise, there shall be provided a loading |
| 12 | in? | 12 | space." |
| 13 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think that | 13 | So here, you know, my opinion, the |
| 14 | worked for you last time. | 14 | question is if it doesn't mention a day care, but |
| 15 | MEMBER FIORILLA: I mean, I | 15 | it does say that other uses that require the receipt |
| 16 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: You're back. | 16 | or distribution of materials or merchandise, that |
| 17 | MEMBER FIORILLA: Yeah. All right. | 17 | they have to provide a loading space. |
| 18 | But, you know, last time I was on last time I was | 18 | So here, again, it's my opinion that |
| 19 | using a computer, so this time I am using a tablet. | 19 | the first determination the board needs to make is |
| 20 | But I guess that's still not perfect, so I will I | 20 | does a day care require a loading space. Then if |
| 21 | didn't have any problems with the volume until just | 21 | you do if it does, I should say, then have they |
| 22 | now though, so anyway. | 22 | provided sufficient testimony in support of a grant |
| 23 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think | 23 | of relief from that requirement. |
| 24 | MEMBER FIORILLA: I'm going to call | 24 | So I think that's the issue in a |
| 25 | in. | 25 | nutshell. |
| | | | |
| | 17 | | 19 |
| 1 | 17 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think you're | 1 | 19 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. |
| 1 2 | | 1 2 | |
| | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think you're | | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. |
| 2 | $\label{eq:CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think you're okay.}$ | 2 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. So as you-all remember, there was a lot |
| 2 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think you're okay. Okay. So the consensus is is that a | 2 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. So as you-all remember, there was a lot of testimony on the loading area, and the testimony |
| 2 3 4 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think you're okay. Okay. So the consensus is is that a variance would be needed for the parking. | 2 3 4 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. So as you-all remember, there was a lot of testimony on the loading area, and the testimony was that they were going to be doing it off-hours. |
| 2 3 4 5 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I think you're okay. Okay. So the consensus is is that a variance would be needed for the parking. BOARD ATTORNEY: I think there's one | 2 3 4 5 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. So as you-all remember, there was a lot of testimony on the loading area, and the testimony was that they were going to be doing it off-hours. They didn't have a lot of they didn't have any |
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| | 20 | | 22 |
| 1 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Thank | 1 | retail use that it requires a loading space. That's |
| 2 | you. | 2 | the issue. Does the ordinance in this instance |
| 3 | So same thing, I'm going to poll the | 3 | require a loading space? |
| 4 | board on what their thoughts are on this. So now | 4 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Or have they |
| 5 | I'm going to go from the bottom up. | 5 | provided enough information from relief on that? |
| 6 | Paul? | 6 | BOARD ATTORNEY: That's the second |
| 7 | MEMBER FIORILLA: Ask me the question | 7 | question. We first have to determine whether it's |
| 8 | again. | 8 | applicable. |
| 9 | BOARD ATTORNEY: The question is, is | 9 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Sorry. |
| 10 | the loading space required under the design | 10 | BOARD ATTORNEY: Does it apply? And |
| 11 | standards of the ordinance? | 11 | then you are going to vote on whether they have |
| 12 | MEMBER FIORILLA: I didn't hear that | 12 | supplied enough information to have the waiver or |
| 13 | quite I'm sorry, can I get | 13 | exception granted. |
| 14 | BOARD ATTORNEY: Approval on the | 14 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Paul, do |
| 15 | exception. | 15 | you want me to start with the other new question, or |
| 16 | MEMBER FIORILLA: My sound is not | 16 | do you want to answer? |
| 17 | great. Say that one more time. | 17 | MEMBER FIORILLA: Can I listen to some |
| 18 | BOARD ATTORNEY: The question is, does | 18 | of the discussion before I respond again? |
| 19 | our ordinance require a loading space for this child | 19 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Sure. Sure. |
| 20 | care facility? And even if the answer is yes, then | 20 | MEMBER SIMS: I'll answer. I'll jump |
| 21 | you will be voting on whether there should be an | 21 | in. |
| 22 | exception based on the testimony. | 22 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. |
| 23 | MEMBER FIORILLA: Well, I would just | 23 | MEMBER SIMS: If the ordinance is |
| 24 | state, you know, I mean, the testimony was that they | 24 | talking about manufacturing and retailing, it's |
| 25 | weren't going to have a lot of products being | 25 | obvious that they're not selling anything retail. |
| | 3 · 3 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · | | |
| | 21 | | 23 |
| 1 | · | 1 | , , , , , |
| | 21 | | Nobody's coming in and out, and they're not manufacturing any products. So them needing a |
| 1 | delivered, if that's the standard. So | 1 | Nobody's coming in and out, and they're not |
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25 that is coming out of there is going to be in the

proposed use is so similar to a manufacturing and

| | 24 | | 26 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | way, and they're not it's not a retail store | 1 | operation. |
| 2 | where somebody can get hurt coming in and out of. | 2 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. |
| 3 | If they're going to do it after hours, then that's | 3 | Councilman Martino? |
| 4 | what they said, then we'll hold them to it then. | 4 | COUNCILMAN MARTINO: Yeah. I see no |
| 5 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Thank | 5 | reason for a loading dock. We have office buildings |
| 6 | you. | 6 | throughout the borough. We have mixed uses |
| 7 | Ellen, I'll go to you. | 7 | throughout the borough. There are very few loading |
| 8 | MEMBER SPINGLER: When you read the | 8 | docks in these facilities. And when you're looking |
| 9 | ordinance, it wasn't just there was another | 9 | at use groups and the word "merchandise" if you |
| 10 | caveat at the end; could they re-read that | 10 | look up "merchandise," stuff that is brought in to |
| 11 | ordinance? It wasn't just manufacturing. It said | 11 | be resold, supplies that are brought in to be |
| 12 | any building that has a delivery. | 12 | stocked, I look at this as a quasi-professional use |
| 13 | Wasn't that correct? | 13 | group. I do not see a storage facility for |
| 14 | BOARD PLANNER: Why don't I read that | 14 | materials. |
| 15 | last section again? | 15 | So I'm really not sure how all of these |
| 16 | MEMBER SPINGLER: Would you, again, | 16 | other structures were built within our borough |
| 17 | please? | 17 | without loading zones, but this is a very specific |
| 18 | BOARD PLANNER: Sure. Again, it does | 18 | use, and I really feel that I don't see I |
| 19 | indicate those specific uses such as manufacturing, | 19 | haven't heard anything that they're going to be |
| 20 | storage, retail, warehouse, et cetera. And then it | 20 | stocking on this site. So I don't see a forklift. |
| 21 | says, "Or other use similarly requiring the receipt | 21 | I don't see a large door for loading. And I'm a |
| 22 | or distribution in vehicles of materials or | 22 | stickler for use groups. |
| 23 | merchandise." So those type uses would require a | 23 | So, again, I will go to Mr. Healey. I |
| 24 | loading space. | 24 | am not sure if you will know this; is this its own |
| 25 | MEMBER SPINGLER: All right. I'm | 25 | specific use group in the Department of Community |
| | 25 | | 27 |
| 1 | going say, from what I'm hearing, I don't think it's | 1 | Affairs through the Uniform Fire Code and Uniform |
| 2 | a requirement. | 2 | Construction Code? |
| 3 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Steve | 3 | BOARD PLANNER: I do not know the |
| 5 | Pote? MEMBER POTE: I believe a loading | 5 | answer to that. I am sure there are specific requirements for signage and egress due to the use |
| 6 | | | |
| U | space is required. It's not necessarily a loading | 6 | and the age of the people occupying the space, but |
| 7 | space is required. It's not necessarily a loading | 6 | and the age of the people occupying the space, but |
| 7 | dock, but loading space. I think that it's | 7 | I'm not a building code official, so I can't answer |
| 8 | dock, but loading space. I think that it's impossible to fully control what comes in and out | 7 | I'm not a building code official, so I can't answer that definitively. |
| 8 | dock, but loading space. I think that it's impossible to fully control what comes in and out over the course of any given week. You can say it's | 7 8 9 | I'm not a building code official, so I can't answer that definitively. COUNCILMAN MARTINO: Yeah. Because |
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ATTORNEY HEHL: That's correct.

9, the street trees have been proposed along the

developed portion of the site every 40 feet on

CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Number

MEMBER NORA: I am still uncertain 1 2 with deliveries involved, and not knowing the scope 3 of the deliveries, and with having the option to, you know, in part two, to add those conditions in. 4 I would like to err on the side of caution and, you 5 6 know, keep the requirement for a loading space. CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you. 7 8 Don? VICE-CHAIRMAN SPEENEY: Yeah. Tracee, 9 10 I just want to add to my comment. I believe there 11 is a mix of traffic in the parking lot that requires a loading space only because there's children 12 involved in moving in and out with, luckily, with 13 parents hopefully, but you know -- so I still 14 reenforce my decision of the requirement. 15 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Paul, 16 are you prepared now? 17 18 Can't hear you, Paul. 19 BOARD ATTORNEY: You're muted, Paul. MEMBER FIORILLA: I wasn't muted, so I 20 21 don't -- can you hear me now? 22 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: We can hear 23 you. 24 BOARD ATTORNEY: Yes. 25 MEMBER FIORILLA: Okay. I was 29 1 listening to the ordinance. You know, there are 2 specific uses that require a loading dock, and then there's also this, you know incredibly broad, you 3 4 know, anything that might get a delivery, I guess, something -- you know, whatever the wording was was 5 very vague and broad. 6 7 So, I mean, I just -- it sounds to me 8 like there just is not going to be a lot of 9 deliveries that would require, you know, a 10 dedicated, you know, loading area at this site, so I would say no. 11 12 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Thank you, Paul. 13 14 So, Frank, we have the answer. 15 BOARD ATTORNEY: What's the vote? 16 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: It's -- one, two, three, four -- five to -- one, two, three --17 four. 18 19 BOARD ATTORNEY: All right, five indicating that the ordinance applies? 20 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Does not apply. 21 BOARD ATTORNEY: Does not apply, okay. 22

So, therefore, no exception is necessary.

loading space situation based on the testimony.

Of course, you can condition the

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center. But the trees should be placed on the loading is required by the Municipal Land Use Law of 1 1 2 subject site, not in the right-of-way. You agreed New Jersey and the Borough of Watchung. 3 to that as well, correct? 3 I further conclude that the development ATTORNEY HEHL: That's correct. is too large for the suitable space to create the 4 4 5 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. And then 5 development. 6 the final one had to do with the sidewalk. You said 6 Now, my first issue on parking is that you would be willing to put the sidewalk along the 7 7 there's insufficient parking. The applicant's frontage? triangular parking field with three sites at the tip 8 9 ATTORNEY HEHL: That's correct. 9 of the triangle -- it's a non-parallel nature of the 10 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. Thank 10 proposed parking field -- requires a significant 11 you, Mr. Hehl. That's all I had for you. 11 15-foot relief from the borough's 20-foot setback 12 ATTORNEY HEHL: I'll go back on mute. 12 requirement for parking. And the particular relief CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. So what for this parking is in the front yard, six sites. 13 13 14 Now, the applicant is unable to meet 14 we're going to do is I'm going to make a motion. We're then going to have discussion. After the 15 their own calculated parking requirements without 15 discussion, we will then have a vote. And whatever 16 the significant relief from the borough's code. 16 17 the vote may be, Frank will then memorialize 17 Applicant's parking space calculation, based on the 18 whatever the action is that will be taken by this 18 applicant's small set of data, indicates 31 sites board. 19 are sufficient while it's been testified by Objector 19 So I seek a motion to approve Weldon that a more robust industry standard and 20 20 21 Application PB 19-02, The Learning Experience, with 21 statistically significant calculation results and 22 conditions, waivers and variances. Do I have a 22 would require 52 sites, but a range is offered for motion? 23 52 down to 42. And the board has already discussed 23 24 MEMBER SPINGLER: So moved. 24 this, but the significant discrepancy of at least 25 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you, 25 ten sites in parking further demonstrates that the 33 1 Ellen. 1 2 Do I have a second? 2 the size of the proposed use. 3 MEMBER SIMS: Second. I believe the triangular parking field 3 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Troy, was that 4 4 5 you? 5 in traffic maneuvering exhibits OW-13(A), OW-13(B), 6 MEMBER SIMS: Yes. Second. 6 and additional circulation exhibits OW-23 and OW-24. 7 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Discussion. 7 I conclude the submitted parking field design is a 8 Anybody have discussion? forced fit to meet applicant's own minimum 9 Don. 9 calculations for parking. And this triangular VICE-CHAIRMAN SPEENEY: Yeah, Tracee, parking field layout is not typical, is unsafe for 10 10 I have several points that drives me to vote the way 11 vehicles and, as such, unsafe for subsequent student 11 I'm going to vote, and I would like to air out these 12 drop-offs. 12 points. It'll take a few minutes. 13 13 14 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Okay. 14 15 15 VICE-CHAIRMAN SPEENEY: Okay. The 16 state allows this day care use in our zone. The 16 state left site plan approval up to the local 17 17 approving boards, in this case our planning board, 18 18 and my presumption is they did that because they 19 19 thought the boards would know better than having the 20 20

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state mandate the approval of the site plan.

plan, Application PB 19-02 for the Learning

Experience, does not provide for safe and efficient

vehicular and pedestrian circulation. Parking and

So I conclude that the proposed site

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developable area of the site is not large enough for

is impractical at best, basically unsafe, as shown

And another significant issue is traffic safety. The inadequate parking field forces ingress traffic to queue excessively on Union Avenue as shown on stacking Exhibit OW-22 and impedes egress traffic from the site as well. Add to this that for 2016, 2017, 2018 traffic accidents data shown in OW-20 for Bonnie Burn Road and New Providence Road is an average of 34.3 accidents per year and most of them listed as daylight conditions. This equates to an average rate of one

accident every one and a half weeks, and such accidents at this location may cause drivers of these huge vehicles exiting Weldon Quarry and other

southbound New Providence Road motorists to detour 1 Applicant's water detention proposal is 1 2 east down Union Avenue and cause other motorists 2 only practical. My absolute worry is that no local 3 from Route 22 to travel westerly onto Union Avenue, 3 water detention system can deal with what we have all of which further conflicts with ingress and already experienced over the years, flash floods. 4 4 egress of the traffic negotiating The Learning 5 Applicant's Exhibit A-9 shows U.S.G.S. 5 6 Experience site. 6 topography map of the entire area, including New 7 7 The limitation on the site circulation Providence Road, and it can be seen from this as shown in Exhibits OW-12, OW-13(A), OW-13(B) are satellite image that New Providence Road is in the 8 other examples that bring site traffic and 9 9 gap nested with the Green Brook between two steep 10 pedestrian safety into serious question. 10 slope elevations, one side the Weldon Quarry, the 11 Applicant Exhibit A-10 shows the 11 other side portions of the Watchung Reservation. complexity of parking. Off-day deliveries must be Here, New Providence Road and the Green Brook are 12 12 13 made. And in this case they show an easy parking 13 shown as a funnel, and typical flash flood waters maneuver without other vehicles being shown, that we have experienced can mount ferocious speeds 14 14 requires a FedEx truck to use an unencumbered heading to the downstream communities. And one of 15 15 parking site. So there are no guarantees made that the very first sites of these downstream communities 16 16 17 the 100 percent off-duty deliveries can be adhered 17 at the bottom of the funnel is The Learning 18 18 Experience site. 19 19 Environmental safety. Weldon Quarry's I conclude that this terribly conceived been in business at this location since 1892 and has situation adjacent to the quarry is enough for me to 20 20 21 testified on the expectations to continue mining 21 vote no, recommend that members vote no. And most business for the next 80 years. Our land use QU 22 importantly for me, I will not vote in favor of 22 Zone for Weldon Quarry enables mining activities to placing teachers, caregivers and the 154 very young 23 23 within 30 feet of New Providence Road. This 24 children at the bottom of the New Providence-Green 24 25 includes blasting with its subsequent noise and 25 Brook funnel. 37 39 1 underground vibration, stores of sand piles subject 1 Thank you. to the whims of the wind, recycling materials and 2 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you, Don. 2 other materials associated with the business 3 3 Any other discussion? 4 activity of the Weldon companies. 4 Okay. Paul? 5 In Mr. Leonard Cilli's report, Weldon 5 MEMBER FIORILLA: Yeah. I'm sorry to is an approved Class B recycling facility. keep doing this; can you hear me? 6 6 7 7 Materials of the type of recycling were explained by CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Yes, we can 8 Mr. Weldon and characterized as recovered road 8 hear you. Go ahead. 9 materials made for reuse. 9 MEMBER FIORILLA: You know, I have Mr. Cilli's report further indicates some -- share some of the concerns that Don has. 10 10 that Weldon is in a federal database for a site that And I think the biggest concern I have is with the 11 11 can generate, transport, store, treat and/or dispose traffic that is presumably, you know -- most of the 12 12 children will be dropped off at rush hour when, you of hazardous waste. 13 13 And a final issue I have here is about know, the traffic at those intersections is the 14 14 15 flooding safety. It's been put on record by 15 heaviest. 16 Mr. Butler, representing Objector Weldon, that in 16 I hear the concerns about the flooding, the last 3 years, there have been 12 flooding events although I don't think it's severe enough or often 17 17 from the Green Brook to Route 22. Significantly enough to create danger to occupants, but at the 18 18 more than opined by the applicant. 19 19 same time there seems to be a lot of [Zoom 20 Mr. Weldon submitted photos from a 2015 20 distortion] to approve through mediation with the storm that resulted in New Providence Road flooding State and all the other relevant agencies just to 21 21 with water from the quarry running down onto the 22 [Zoom distortion], you know, a use of this size and 22 23 site in question. The same storm that brought down 23 nature. Weldon property brick retention wall designed for 24 And, you know, I'm also concerned 24

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about, you know, with quarry, you know, obviously

holding back earth, by the way, onto cars below it.

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that creates issues, and we have heard testimony
about that. And even the owners of the quarry have
talked about that. But then at the same time I
think, well, then you're kind of punishing the owner
of this site for the use of other sites, and I'm not
sure, you know, how, you know -- whether that's fair
to, you know, this particular owner.

And, you know, it seems to me there would be a lot better places to build something like this. But, then again, also, you know, on the other hand, I'm not sure that, you know, as a planning board member, that's really my, you know, jurisdiction to talk about or, you know, rule on something like that.

So, yeah, it's very definitely, you know -- there's -- there's some issues that I think make this problematic. You know, just my opinion, I'm just not sure that it's enough to vote no. So I share some of Don's concerns, but at the same time I am not sure that those concerns are enough to tilt the favor to no.

Thank you.

Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you,

24 Paul.

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Any other comments, discussion?

Steve?

MEMBER POTE: Yes. You know, one of the concepts of having a Learning Experience in Watchung makes a lot of sense. And while I have heard the arguments and justifications for, you know, having TLE at this site, I continue to have issues with the application in terms of what we're trying to do. I do feel like we are trying to put a

9 round peg in a square hole in regards to this, this
 10 site.
 11 You know, despite some -- I think some

11 12 admirable efforts by the applicants, I cannot agree with the collective picture that I see painted. 13 Without going into the details that Don just went 14 15 into, you know, the site plan, I feel like we're 16 force-fitting the parking spaces. I think that the variance request is significant in terms of what 17 we're asking for. And I'm certainly not an expert, 18 but having a standard that is saying 52 and we're 19 dealing with 31 or 29, I just think is -- there's 20 just something there that needs to be, you know, 21 22 looked at.

 $I'm\ probably\ most\ concerned\ with\ the$ flow of the traffic of the circulation in and out of the site when considering the placement of parking

spaces. There's heavy traffic that is immediately
next to the facility, even closer with the requested
setback variance.

4 Yes, the potential water and flood conditions will be reviewed by the DEP, but, you know, given that all that -- that water that was shown in those maps, it's of a concern. And while I have no doubt that the fire officials are accurate in their assessment of a fire truck's access and 9 10 egress, I'm concerned about the greater possibility of a perfect storm of conditions that would impair 11 12 that fire vehicle to access in a timely manner those 13 154 students.

14 You know, I was having trouble reconciling all of this, so I actually went out and 15 16 visited eight other Learning Experience 17 facilities -- Warren, Basking Ridge, Piscataway, 18 Edison, Somerset, East Brunswick and Hillsborough. And what I will say is I was looking for why do they 19 20 exist successfully, and were there mitigating things that were at these locations that should be in any 21 22 Learning Experience area. Of the ones that I just talked to you

Of the ones that I just talked to you about, all but one had what I perceived to be somewhere between 40 and 60 spaces. Sometimes

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marked, sometimes unmarked, but certainly the

2 building was part of a larger parking lot. Most

3 front entrances to these buildings were located

4 either at the end of a larger building, behind the

5 building, or were isolated by themselves, making it

6 a lot safer for pedestrian traffic. One had a very

7 large dedicated fire lane, which, you know, I said

8 to myself, why isn't that part of most or all of,

9 you know, other areas.

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One location had a huge semicircle for drop-off, and, you know, most had parking spaces that stretched out, you know, over a long area where you had better visibility, both cars and pedestrians. And ingress and egress just seemed to be more simplified based on where the building and the spaces were placed.

So I guess what I'm saying is I saw what's possible and what should be required of this type of facility, and I respectfully can't support this application, as much as I think the concept has merit.

22 CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you,

23 Steve.

Any other comments?

Okay. We're going to go to a vote.

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|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Roll call, please. | 1 | ATTORNEY BUTLER: I just have two |
| 2 | BOARD CLERK: Ms. Spingler? | 2 | short questions, and I know the Objector Weldon lost |
| 3 | MEMBER SPINGLER: Yes. | 3 | at this point, but there certainly is no animosity |
| 4 | BOARD CLERK: Councilman Martino? | 4 | between me and my client and the board members and, |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN MARTINO: Yes. | 5 | of course, Mr. Hehl and his witnesses. I just have |
| 6 | BOARD CLERK: Ms. Pennett? | 6 | two quick questions, and I think Frank can answer |
| 7 | MEMBER PENNETT: No. | 7 | them. |
| 8 | BOARD CLERK: Mayor Balla? | 8 | So I gather that a resolution will be |
| 9 | MAYOR BALLA: Yes. | 9 | brought up for a vote in the August vote in the |
| 10 | BOARD CLERK: Mr. Speeney? | 10 | August meeting? |
| 11 | VICE-CHAIRMAN SPEENEY: No. | 11 | BOARD ATTORNEY: Well, I'll do the |
| 12 | BOARD CLERK: Mr. Pote? | 12 | best I can within the time period. I can't |
| 13 | MEMBER POTE: No. | 13 | guarantee that it will be here in August. |
| 14 | BOARD CLERK: Mr. Fiorilla? | 14 | ATTORNEY BUTLER: No, no. I'm not |
| 15 | MEMBER FIORILLA: Yes. | 15 | pushing you, you know that. |
| 16 | BOARD CLERK: Mr. Sims? | 16 | But the soonest it could be is next |
| 17 | MEMBER SIMS: Yes. | 17 | August at your August meeting, your regular |
| 18 | BOARD CLERK: Madam Chair? | 18 | meeting? |
| 19 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Yes. | 19 | BOARD ATTORNEY: I can assure you that |
| 20 | Okay. Frank, please prepare a | 20 | the soonest it would be would be the August meeting. |
| 21 | resolution memorializing the action the board took | 21 | ATTORNEY BUTLER: Okay, that's fine. |
| 22 | this evening. | 22 | That's fine. Mr. Linnus, I know how busy you are, |
| 23 | BOARD ATTORNEY: Will do. | 23 | and I know how busy most good lawyers are, okay? So |
| 24 | ATTORNEY HEHL: On behalf of the | 24 | that's all I had to say about that. |
| 25 | applicant and everyone participating, we would like | 25 | The other thing is and what I'm about |
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| 1 | to thank you for your time and comments with | 1 | to ask is probably self-evident because tonight you |
| 2 | everyone involved at this stage for a productive | 2 | took a voice vote and you approved the application. |
| 3 | evening, and we'll see you again soon. | 3 | Mr. Hehl, the attorney for the applicant, has |
| 4 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you, | 4 | extended to July 31st. In other words, I think that |
| 5 | Mr. Hehl. Thank you for indulging us for as long, | 5 | goes out the window now. The approval July 31st |
| 6 | you know going through COVID and | 6 | means nothing at this point. |
| 7 | ATTORNEY BUTLER: Madam Chair, may I | 7 | BOARD ATTORNEY: That's correct. |
| 8 | just make a comment? | 8 | ATTORNEY BUTLER: That's correct, |
| 9 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: I'm right in | 9 | okay. BOARD ATTORNEY: Action was taken |
| 10 | the middle of saying something, Mr. Butler. Please let me finish. | 10 | tonight. |
| 11 | ATTORNEY BUTLER: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm | 11 | ATTORNEY BUTLER: I have no further |
| 13 | sorry. I apologize. | 13 | questions. Thank you. |
| 14 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: No problem. | 14 | CHAIRPERSON SCHAEFER: Thank you, |
| 15 | I just want to say thank you to | 15 | Mr. Butler. |
| 16 | I just want to say thank you to | 16 | Okay. Ellen, can we call the next |
| | Mr. Hehl for indulging the time element, and I know | | oray. Energy can we can the next |
| | Mr. Hehl for indulging the time element, and I know that it's been a long haul we've gone through | | agenda item? |
| 17 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through | 17 | agenda item? |
| 17 18 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through COVID; we've gone through GoToMeetings; we have gone | 17 18 | |
| 17 18 19 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through COVID; we've gone through GoToMeetings; we have gone through a lot and I just want to say thank you | 17 | agenda item? (Application concluded at 8:30 p.m.) |
| 17 18 19 20 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through COVID; we've gone through GoToMeetings; we have gone through a lot and I just want to say thank you for indulging us and for being so genuine in | 17 18 19 20 | |
| 17 18 19 20 21 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through COVID; we've gone through GoToMeetings; we have gone through a lot and I just want to say thank you for indulging us and for being so genuine in extending your application to be able to get to a | 17 18 19 | |
| 17 18 19 20 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through COVID; we've gone through GoToMeetings; we have gone through a lot and I just want to say thank you for indulging us and for being so genuine in extending your application to be able to get to a point of finality. | 17 18 19 20 21 | |
| 17 18 19 20 21 22 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through COVID; we've gone through GoToMeetings; we have gone through a lot and I just want to say thank you for indulging us and for being so genuine in extending your application to be able to get to a | 17 18 19 20 21 22 | |
| 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 | that it's been a long haul we've gone through COVID; we've gone through GoToMeetings; we have gone through a lot and I just want to say thank you for indulging us and for being so genuine in extending your application to be able to get to a point of finality. ATTORNEY HEHL: Thank you. | 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 | |

CERTIFICATE

I, ANGELA C. BUONANTUONO, a Notary Public and Certified Court Reporter of the State of New Jersey and Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that prior to the commencement, the witnesses were duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the proceeding as taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place and on the date hereinbefore set forth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative, nor employee, nor attorney, nor counsel of any of the parties to this action, and that I am neither a relative, nor employee of such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in the action.

Lugela C. Sucranteuro

23 Angela C. Buonantuono, CCR, RPR, CLR

NJ State Board of Court Reporting

25 License No. 30XI00233100 Dated: August 5, 2021

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