Voorhees Township Environmental Commission Minutes September 11, 2018

The Chairperson called the meeting to order. It was stated that this meeting is being held in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act and has been duly published and noticed as required by law”.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

Present: Mr. Rashatwar, Mrs. Schwartz, Mr. Pike, Mr. Khayati, Mr. Sytnik, Mr. Hale

Absent: Mr. Gaffney, Mrs. Brown

Mr. Joseph Giddings, CME Consultant also present.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Mike Avila approaches the Commission and advises that he is the engineer for the Voorhees Animal Orphanage (VAO) application. He is accompanied by Mr. David Semless who has managed the VAO for the past 30 years. Mr. Avila explains that this application had previously been heard by the VEC in 2014 but due to funding issues they never appeared before the Zoning Board. He introduces the application as being upgrades to the already existing 3.6 acre property at Block 230.27, Lot 51 that sits within the RR Zone. The property provides 532 feet of frontage along Cooper Road (County Route 765) and rests approximately 516 feet south of the Kresson-Gibbsboro Road intersection. At present the VAO is a one-story, 3,000 sq. ft. building which houses a kennel structure and an enclosed play/run area for the animals. The property also has numerous accessory sheds and tent structures on location as well as (15) designated parking spaces and (2) loose rock driveways. Mr. Semless advises the VEC that the building is serviced by public water and sewer.

Mr. Semless advised the VEC that the project will include modern updates to the kennels and office space, as well as provide improved amenities for the animals. He stated that the VAO is a “no kill” facility and that there will be no increased capacity to house more animals then what is currently housed in the 67 kennels. Mr. Avila states that all construction will happen sequentially and there will be no time lapse. Additionally he stated that the project will not disturb any wetlands and that water flows from the northern end of the property to the southern end and empties into the tributary under Cooper Road.

Mr. Hale asks the engineer to turn to page 4 of the EIR where a report from 2008 is referenced. Mr. Avila advises that it was submitted with the original application in 2008 but will forward a copy to Mr. Giddings and the Commission Secretary.

Mr. Avila addresses Letter D of the EIR on page 4 in reference to illumination. He has proposed that they can erect sidelight shields and notes that the illumination in question is not near a residential area. Mr. Rashatwar asks what the hours of operation are and Mr. Semless advises that they are a 7 day facility with M-F hours being Noon to 7PM and Sat. & Sun. Noon to 5PM. They have 15 FT/PT employees that work shifts and usually arrive between 7-8AM. They are an open intake shelter that houses dogs and cats ONLY.

Mr. Avila continues to explain that the site plan calls for the reduction of (2) driveways to (1) for both an entrance and exit. The facility maintains recycling on site for plastics and paper and is contracted for removal of trash through a waste management company. Mr. Semless explains that animals will not be doubled up in the kennels unless they are bonded or tiny. Mothers and puppies will be housed with Foster families off site. Animals currently needing to be spayed/neuter will still be sent out for procedures but once construction is completed they will be able to provide those services on-site for VAO animals only. Mr. Hale asks about the process for collecting and disposing of animal waste. Mr. Semless explains that hard waste is picked up and disposed of with regular trash and wet waste is collected in tanks, transferred to their separate pressure system and then empties into the municipal sewer system. Hair is trapped in the drain traps and cleaned daily. Mr. Semless further explains that noise pollution is currently caused by the concrete slabs that cause amplification. The new construction will use materials, such as wallboard and sound absorbing floors designed to withstand and contain noise. This is important not only for the surrounding neighborhood but also for the stress levels of the animals. Mr. Semless explains that noise levels will be reduced also with the addition of a kennel wing for animals with behavior issues. Mr. Hale then asked for Mr. Semless to explain the process of exercising and housing the dogs during “outside” time. Mr. Semless explains that all kennels have inside/outside runs. He further explains that dogs are exercised outside dependent upon weather conditions. When it’s hot they’re out 5-10 minutes at a time, in cooler temperatures they may be outside for upwards of an hour at a time. Mr. Semless advises that when the orphanage experiences a pup that is a “barker” they tend to walk them more and exercise them indoors as well. Mr. Rashatwar questions the use of incorporating additional buffering to mitigate the noise. Mr. Avila explains that the current plan develops nearly all of the available space without encroaching on the wetlands buffer. It is his opinion that any additional buffering would decrease the amount of area developed in order to add buffering without building into the wetlands. He further explains that berms can do a multitude of things, such as redirect noise, but he does not feel that in this situation it would be helpful. Mr. Semless states that the VAO works closely with each dog to ensure chemistry to minimize barking. They also schedule certain dogs to be out at certain times to actively combat excessive barking.

Mr. Hale then directs the applicant to Page 6 of the Consultants letter in reference to the Tree Compensation Plan. Mr. Avila states that the TCP was submitted to the Zoning Board during the completeness meeting in August. He explains that the trees to be removed are in the parking lot only. A total of 23 trees will be removed, 13 of which will be replaced, with a deficit of 10 trees due to space within the site not permitting additional plantings.

Mr. Giddings then questions the size and scope of the repairing zone. Mr. Avila explains that the original 2008 plan had included the 150 foot repairing zone to request a “permit by rule”. He further explains that you need to show the “repairing zone” on the plan in order to apply for a “permit by rule” which they intend to do. Mr. Hale asks whether there are any underground storage tanks and Mr. Avila states that other than the holding tank there are no underground tanks. He further states that the tank is noted on the plan. There is a well on site that is currently being used but will be shut down when construction is complete, for public sewer and water. They had original looked into the DEP allowing for them to use the well for washing down and irrigation purposes but unfortunately that won’t be allowed.

Mr. Hale then opens the meeting to the public. Seeing there is no one present, Mr. Hale requests a motion to close the public portion. Mr. Rashatwar makes a motion and Mrs. Schwartz seconds the motion. All present members in favor.

COMMISSION RECCOMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made for the Zoning Boards review:

**1.**The applicant agrees to consider using acoustic materials such as tile, wall covering and flooring to reduce kennel noise and control sound.

**2.**The applicant agrees to restrict excessive barking dogs to the north kennels to lessen the noise pollution that would encroach on the residential homes.

**3.**Applicant agrees to revise Note #25 on the Demolition Plan to indicate that clean fill will meet the NJDEP Technical Requirements for Site Remediation Standards found at NJAC 7:26E.

Mr. Rashatwar made a motion to accept all (3) three Commission Recommendations and Mrs. Schwartz seconded it. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ROLL CALL VOTE

Aye: Mr. Rashatwar, Mrs. Schwartz, Mr. Pike, Mr. Kayahti, Mr. Sytnik and Mr. Hale

Nay: None

Seeing there is no public and no further business, Mrs. Schawrtz makes a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Rashatwar seconds the motion. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MEETING ADJOURNED

VEC Secretary,

**Kendralyn Cornwall**