

Residents Want Redevelopment Answers

Why are Mayor Parisi and Town Attorney Richard Trenk pursuing the Redevelopment area at Essex Green and Executive Drive when the properties clearly don't meet the legal standards for designating an Area in Need of Redevelopment - namely, a "blighted" area as defined in the state constitution and laws?

The law clearly states that Redevelopment is only for properties that cannot attract private capital. The properties were recently purchased for nearly \$117 million. As one of the most valuable areas of town, the properties generate approximately \$4.5 million in property taxes annually - and could generate even more with improvements that would add to their assessed value.

Do you believe these tenants would locate in a "blighted" area -- national and regional brands that include Panera, AMC, Shoprite, Sears, Petco, Total Wine, Macy's, Pearle Vision, Xfinity, Gamestop, Coldstone Creamery, SuperCuts, GNC, H&R Block, CitiFinancial, TGI Fridays, a federal agency, Geico, and Lincoln Educational Services?



Why do we need a Redevelopment area when the town is already due more than \$9 million for selling the property where the current Public Works building is located and when the properties in the redevelopment area are already zoned for a municipal building?

Why did Trenk say publicly that Mayor Parisi had recused himself from this redevelopment and then the mayor subsequently posted multiple times on Facebook demonstrating intimate knowledge of the project not known publicly and even stating that he would provide tax abatements only for a municipal purpose?

Why is Trenk even involved in this redevelopment? He was chastised in the 2007 Justice Stein Report (<https://ourgreenwestorange.org/richard-trenk%2C-esq>) for an "error of judgment when he decided to become a participant in the group that was acquiring 347 Mt. Pleasant Avenue" (page 51) while the town was considering including the adjacent Organon property for redevelopment. The 347 Mt. Pleasant property, where the Trenk law firm is located, nearly abuts the proposed redevelopment area. Justice Stein also wrote that "there appears to be general agreement among the experts with whom I spoke that property adjacent to an area designated as an area in need of redevelopment is likely to have enhanced value when the redevelopment occurs ..." (page 42). Trenk's college-age son was appointed by Mayor Parisi to the Planning Board, where Andrew Trenk voted to recommend the Essex Green Executive Drive Redevelopment Area.

- SEE REVERSE -

Why Redevelopment? It basically enables two things:

1: “overlay” zoning that can be different from the rest of the municipality and allow the municipality to determine what can and cannot take place in the area. [The area is already zoned for retail, residential and municipal buildings - the three areas Mayor Parisi and the property owners have cited publicly as their goals.]

2: “incentives,” which include tax abatements and Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). A redevelopment designation is virtually the only way a municipality can provide 30 years of tax abatements. This would result in much less PILOT revenue than if the property paid taxes, and no PILOT revenue to the school district.

The property owners stand to save millions of dollars in a tax abatement. Under the law, they would negotiate a PILOT that would be much lower than what they would pay on any improvements to the properties. That discount could amount to millions of dollars over 30 years

Even though Mayor Parisi insists he has no plans for the site, the town has already commissioned architectural designs for the public works facility. We know this not from the mayor’s Administration, but from an Open Public Records Act request (<https://ourgreenwestorange.org/essex-green-redevelopment>).

Township of West Orange

TIMELINE OF ESSEX GREEN/EXECUTIVE DRIVE REDEVELOPMENT - 2017

Target Date	Description
September 19, 2017	Township Council to adopt Resolution Referring to the Planning Board investigation into whether Essex Green/Executive Drive constitutes an Area in Need of Redevelopment.
October 5, 2017	Planning Board prepares a map showing boundaries of the proposed redevelopment area with an appended statement setting forth the basis for the investigation as to whether Essex Green/Executive Drive constitutes an Area in Need of Redevelopment
October 12, 2017	Planning Board sets date for public hearing and publishes first public notice for hearing including boundaries of the redevelopment area and the location of map for public inspection.
October 19, 2017 (one week later)	Planning Board publishes second public notice for hearing.
November 1, 2017 (at least 10 days later)	Planning Board hearing on recommendation to designate Essex Green/Executive Drive as an Area in Need of Redevelopment.
November 21, 2017	Township Council reviews recommendation from Planning Board and adopts a binding resolution designating Essex Green/Executive Drive as a Redevelopment Area. Township Council authorizes the preparation of a Redevelopment Plan by the Planning Board.
January 4, 2018 (within 45 days)	Planning Board reviews and approves Redevelopment Plan and submits to the Township Council for Action.
January 17, 2018	Township Council holds first hearing on Ordinance adopting Redevelopment Plan.
February 7, 2018	Township Council holds second and final hearing on Ordinance adopting Redevelopment Plan.



 DPW ADMINISTRATION OFFICES (+3,792 S.F.)	 DPW EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SPACES, LOCKERS, BREAK, OFFICES (+3,800 S.F.)
 DPW STORAGE GARAGE (+19,224 S.F.)	 DPW SHOP/STORAGE (+3,790 S.F.)
 DPW MAINTENANCE GARAGE (+25,478 S.F.)	 SITE AREA (+2.5 ACRES)

TOTAL AREA OF BUILDING (+36,000 S.F.)

DESIGN EXHIBIT FOR TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
ROONEY CIRCLE WEST ORANGE, NJ
SCALE: 1" = 30'
Response to OPRA Request 2017-1150 - 65

RELOCATED PUBLIC WORKS
SP4.0

4819-3781-8957, v. 1

Response to OPRA Request 2017-1150 - 167



Through OPRA, we have much more transparency than the mayor's Administration has provided, including a September 12, 2017, e-mail that “In order to attract professional tenants to our buildings we will need to modernize and upgrade the buildings and lower taxes thru a pilot so that we can make this economical and be able to compete with other markets.” This was before the redevelopment study had even been written and presented to the Planning Board and Town Council.