

August 2, 2023

Neptune Township Planning Board  
P.O. Box 1125  
Neptune, NJ 07754-1125

**Re: West Congregation of Neptune of  
Jehovah's Witnesses, Inc.  
Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan  
Lot 33, Block 2601  
Our File NTPB 23-10**

Dear Board Members:

Our office received an application for Preliminary and Final Site Plan review in conjunction with the above referenced project. The following documents have been reviewed:

1. **Submitted Documents**

- A site improvement plan prepared for Lot 33 in Block 2601, 2900 West Bangs Avenue consisting of fourteen (14) sheets prepared by Leslie A. Walker, III, P.E., of Meridian Engineering Group, Inc., dated March 24, 2023, with no revisions.
- A boundary/partial topographic survey consisting of one (1) sheet prepared by Jay A. Stuhl, Jr., P.L.S., of Brunswick Surveying Incorporated, dated September 2, 2022, with no revisions.
- A rehabilitation of the existing parking area report prepared by Atlantic Engineering Laboratories, LLC, dated December 1, 2022, with no revisions.
- A traffic and parking study prepared by Elizabeth Dolan, P.E. and Gary W. Dean, P.E., P.P. of Dolan & Dean Consulting Engineers, LLC, dated January 3, 2023, with no revisions.
- A project hydrology narrative prepared by Leslie A. Walker, III, P.E., of Meridian Engineering Group, Inc., dated February 27, 2023, with no revisions.

We have completed our engineering and planning review of the submitted documents and offer the following comments:

2. **Technical Review Meetings**

On August 22 2022 and July 20, 2023, Technical Review meetings were held with the Applicant to discuss the proposed design of the above referenced project. In these meetings, the Applicant agreed to address all preliminary comments through direct testimony to be provided at the Planning Board meeting or by providing additional information either through revisions to the site plan or supplemental reports.

3. **Completeness Review**

A. In accordance with the Development Application Completeness Checklist, Ordinance Section 812.A, the following checklist items have been requested to be waived by the Applicant. Testimony to be provided.

- Ordinance Section 802.A.4.b - Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Plans and proof of submission to Freehold Soil Conservation District. **The Applicant indicates this can be a Condition of Approval.**
- Ordinance Section 802.A.5 - Tree Removal Application Package **The Applicant indicates this can be a Condition of Approval.**
- Ordinance Section 802.A.6 - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Ordinance Section 802.A.12 - Community Impact Statement

4. **Site Analysis and Project Description**

A. The property is known as Lot 33, Block 2601 consisting of approximately 234,675 square feet (5.39 Acres) and is a corner lot. The lot has frontages along Wayside Road and West Bangs Avenue (Monmouth County Route No. 17). The Applicant shall correct the plan to indicate the correct block number for the property.

B. The lot consists of a one-story building and parking lot.

C. The Applicant proposes to add twenty-five (25) parking spaces, stormwater management improvements, solar canopy, and sidewalk along Wayside Road. Other improvements include repaving and striping the existing parking lot, walkway modification, adding electric vehicle charging stations, replacing the exterior lighting and landscaping.

5. **Surrounding Uses**

Properties surrounding the site are zoned R-2, which is primarily residential (single-family residential) with the exception of Lot 7, Rick’s Wine & Liquor.

6. **Zoning and Land Use**

- A. The property is located in the R-2 (Low Density Residential) Zone. The existing use is a place of worship, which is a permitted use in the zone district. The existing surface level parking is permitted accessory use. The proposed solar canopy is a permitted accessory use as it is customary to the principal use.
- B. The Applicant is seeking preliminary and final site plan approval.

7. **Variiances and Design Waivers**

- A. The subject property is situated within the R-2 (Low Density Residential) Zone. The table below summarizes the zone and bulk requirements for the property.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Minimum Lot Area	12,500 sf.	234,675 sf.	No change
Minimum Lot Width	100 ft.	489.5 ft.	No change
Minimum Lot Frontage	100 ft.	860.67 ft.	No change
Minimum Lot Depth	100 ft.	477.17 ft.	No change
Minimum Front Yard Setback (West Bangs Avenue)	15 ft.	97.9 ft.	No change
Minimum Front Yard Setback (Wayside Road)	15 ft.	123.7 ft.	No change
Minimum Rear Yard Setback*	36.75 ft.	256.97 ft.	No change
Minimum Side Yard Setback*	36.75 ft.	129.7 ft.	No change
Maximum Building Height	35 ft.	24.5 ft.	No change
Maximum Building Coverage	30%	3.77%	No change
Maximum Impervious Coverage	40%	25.77%	28.03%
Minimum Improvable Area (M.I.A.)	2, 400 sf.	>2,400 sf.	>2,400 sf.
Minimum MIA Diameter Circle	32 ft.	>32 ft.	No change
No Parking Permitted in Front Yard	Not Permitted	(NC)	Additional 22 spaces (V) *
Parking Setback From Any Side Property Line	20 ft.	57.06 ft.	59.15 ft.
Parking Setback From Rear Property Line	10 ft.	97.02 ft.	98.49 ft.

**(V) Variance Required      (NR) Not Reported      (NC) Existing Non-Conformity**

\* Under Ordinance No. 14-27, Section 412.18 – parking is prohibited within front yard setback for all properties fronting along State Highway 35 and West Lake Avenue.

**Solar Canopy** - Along the southern portion of the existing parking lot, the Applicant proposes a solar canopy above fifteen parking spaces. Under current ordinance regulations, the canopy is considered an accessory building.

**Accessory Building** - Unless otherwise specified in this Chapter, all accessory buildings and structures (principal or accessory) shall conform to the regulations and standards contained in this Land Development Ordinance which govern the principal building for the applicable zone district within which they are located.

Description (Ex. Garage)	Required	Existing	Proposed
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	36.75 ft.	19 ft. (NC)	No change
Minimum Side Yard Setback	36.75 ft.	390 ft.	No change
Maximum Building Height	35 ft.	(NR)	(NR)

(V) Variance Required (NR) Not Reported (NC) Existing Non-Conformity

**Solar Canopy**

Description (Prop. Solar Canopy)	Required	Proposed
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	36.75 ft.	121 ft.
Minimum Side Yard Setback	36.75 ft.	103 ft.
Maximum Building Height	35 ft.	(NR)*

(V) Variance Required (NR) Not Reported (NC) Existing Non-Conformity

\* The Applicant should provide the height of the solar canopy.

B. Ordinance Section 412.06.E requires a barrier-free walkway system shall be provided to allow pedestrian access to a building or use from both a parking lot within the site and from the Township sidewalk system. The Applicant does not propose walkway access to the proposed public sidewalk. **A variance is required.**

C. Ordinance Section 412.17.F – For uses not specifically described herein, parking requirements shall be determined by the approving authority during a public hearing. These requirements are considered minimum standards, and parking may be provided in excess of these requirements, but in no case shall the provided parking for non-residential uses exceed these minimum requirements by more than twenty (20%) percent. This restriction shall not apply to single-family dwelling units. In accordance with Section 412.7 Table 4.2 (1) one space per 4 seats; every three (3) feet of a pew measured horizontally shall be considered a seat.

350 existing seat/4 seats per space = 88 spaces required.  
 Existing parking on site = 122 spaces  
 New proposed parking = 25 spaces

Total new parking 147 spaces. Maximum allowed parking per ordinance – 106 spaces. **A variance is required.**

- D. Ordinance Section 503.B.1 requires buffering shall consist of a minimum ten (10) foot wide area surrounding all sides of a parking lot exposed to view. The Applicant does not provide buffering around the proposed parking lot area. **A design waiver is required.**
- E. Ordinance Section 503.B.2 requires that where such parking area is located on a tract adjacent to a residential use or district, such screening shall consist of a minimum six (6) foot high visually impervious screen. The height of any required screen shall decrease to a maximum of three (3) feet in height where driveways approach sidewalks or walkways, in order to provide adequate visibility of pedestrians from motor vehicles and police visibility into the lot. The Applicant does not propose screening along adjacent residential lot. 32. **A design waiver is required.**
- F. Ordinance Section 505.B.4 – Table 5.2 permits a maximum width for nonresidential driveways of twenty-four (24) feet. The Applicant proposes 26 feet for the existing driveway to Wayside Road. **Existing non-conformity.**
- G. Ordinance Section 509.H requires foundation plantings at the base of all sides of a building excluding sides of a building directly abutting a public right-of-way. The Applicant does not propose landscaping. **Existing non-conformity.**
- H. Ordinance Section 509.I.4. states that for parking lots with one hundred (100) or more spaces, a minimum of five percent (5%) of the interior area of the parking lot shall be provided with planting islands containing a minimum of one (1) deciduous tree planted for every five (5) parking spaces. Planting islands in such parking lots shall conform to the following requirements:
  - 1) Diamond-shaped tree islands shall be utilized between parking bays (head-to-head parking) and shall contain a minimum of thirty-six (36) square feet. The existing and proposed parking lot does not utilize diamond-shaped tree island. **A design waiver is required.**
  - 2) A landscaped island strip with a minimum width of four (4) feet shall be placed at the end of each row of parking. Two (2) of the existing landscape islands are three (3) feet wide. These two (2) landscaped islands are an **Existing non-conforming.**
  - 3) No more than eight (8) parking spaces shall be placed in one (1) continuous row of parking without an intervening landscaped island strip placed on both sides of the spaces. The minimum width of an

intervening landscaped island strip shall be seven (7) feet. The existing parking lot does not comply with this requirement. **Existing non-conforming.**

The existing parking lot has more than eight (8) parking spaces in a row without a landscaped island. This represents an existing non-conforming condition. The Applicant is proposing twenty (20) parking spaces in a row without a landscaped island. **A design waiver is required.**

- I. Ordinance Section 511.E.3. states that (all other zones) Old Town A850 luminaire with metal halide ballast per Sternberg Lighting Catalog, or functional and aesthetic equivalent. The Applicant does not propose street lighting. **A design waiver is required.**
- J. Ordinance Section 519.B.2 requires all lots shall have private walkway access to a public sidewalk in the right-of-way. Such access shall be designed for the safety, control, efficient movement, convenience and encouragement of pedestrian traffic into and out of the site and to promote pedestrian circulation generally within the Township. The Applicant does not propose walkway access to public sidewalk via parking lot driveway. **A design waiver is required.**
- K. Ordinance Section 521.B.3 requires a barrier-free walkway system shall be provided to allow pedestrian access to a building or use from both a parking lot within the stie and rom the Township sidewalk system. Such walkway system shall promote pedestrian activity both within the site itself and throughout the community by its integration with the Township sidewalk system. Walkways shall be a separate pleasant route for users that will promote enjoyment of the site and encourage incidental social interaction among pedestrian. The Applicant does not propose a walkway to the building. **A design waiver is required.**
- L. Ordinance Section 521.B.4 requires the exterior of a site with greater than 100 feet of street frontage shall provide decorative lampposts approximately 40 t60 feet along or near all street lines and driveways. The Applicant dos does not provide street lighting. **A design waiver is required.**

8. **Site Plan Review**

A. **General Site Improvements**

- 1) The Applicant shall revise the coversheet to address the following:
  - a) The signature block for the Planning Board Secretary shall be revised to read Administrative Officer.



- b) The authorized agent for the Owner/Applicant notarized signature block should appear on the cover sheet.
- 2) The following General Notes shall be added to the plan:
- a) “All proposed improvements are in accordance with ADA requirements.”
  - b) “All construction shall be in accordance with Neptune Township Design Standards and Details.”
  - c) “No soil shall be removed from the site without the written approval of the Director of Engineering and Planning.”
  - d) “All proposed utilities shall be placed underground.”
  - e) “During construction, the Applicant shall comply with solid waste, public health and noise codes.”
- 3) Ordinance 812.02.B.9 – all existing structures onsite and within two hundred feet (200’) thereof, including their use indicating those to be destroyed or removed and those to remain. This should be added to the plan.
- 4) Ordinance Section 515.A.1 – requires all non-residential refuse and recyclable disposal collection areas shall be suitably buffered and screened to minimize the impacts of noise, odors, disposal and collection activities and views of collection bins and dumpsters. Buffering shall consist of a minimum 4-foot-wide area surrounding all sides of such facility exposed to view. The Applicant did not indicate any existing or proposed refuse and/or recyclable disposable area. Testimony should be provided.
- 5) The Applicant shall provide testimony with regards to signage under Ordinance 416. The plan indicates no new signage is proposed.

**B. Traffic Circulation and Parking**

The Applicant has to provide a traffic study in accordance with Section 811. The Applicant shall provide testimony with regards to the following:

- 1) The Applicant should be prepared to discuss the following:
  - a) Trash/recycling pick-up
  - b) Hours of service and number of parking spaces needed for congregation.

- c) The congregation’s need for the additional twenty-five (25) spaces.
- 2) Ordinance Section 412.17.D. Table 4.2 – parking regulations require one (1) space per four (4) seats; every three (3) feet of a pew measured horizontally shall be considered a seat. By the Applicant’s calculations, eighty-eight (88) spaces are required. Currently one hundred twenty-two (122) spaces exist, which conforms. The Applicant is proposing twenty-five (25) additional parking spaces. The new parking lot total is one hundred forty-seven (147) spaces, which exceeds Ordinance section 412.17F. The parking lot includes five (5) ADA parking spaces and four (4) EV spaces.
- 3) The following tables were provided by the Applicant for the trip Generation Projection and Existing Trip Generation.

**Trip Generation Projection**

Size	Evening Peak Hour			Sunday Peak Hour		
	Enter	Exit	Total	Enter	Exit	Total
8,480 sf.	14	10	24	77	83	160
350 Seats	34	22	56	80	84	164

**Existing Trip Generation**

Evening Peak Hour			Sunday Peak Hour		
Enter	Exit	Total	Enter	Exit	Total
45	2	47	96	8	104

The Applicant’s professional concludes the site is underperforming in terms of trips. **Testimony should be provided.**

- 4) The plans shall be submitted to the Neptune Fire Official to address fire lanes, hydrant connections (if required) and directional markings.
- 5) All proposed site triangles and associated easements shall comply with Neptune Township design standards under Ordinance Section 520.B.
- 6) Ordinance Section 519.B.3 (b) in addition to the required sidewalks along streets, commercial developments shall provide internal sidewalks creating convenient linkages between the commercial development and all surrounding streets, including residential streets. Internal sidewalks shall be provided linking such commercial development to adjoining non-residential



developments. The Applicant should provide sidewalk linkage to the Wayside Road frontage. **The Applicant shall comply, or a design waiver will be required.**

- 7) Testimony to be provided to address Atlantic Engineering Laboratories report and the recommendation of full depth replacement of the asphalt parking area.

C. **Grading and Stormwater Management**

- 1) The project disturbance is less than one (1) acre, and the Applicant does not exceed a quarter of an acre of new impervious surfaces. The project is exempt from the NJDEP Best Management Practices threshold with regard to groundwater recharge and TSS removal. The Applicant has provided a detention basin system to address the proposed improvements.
- 2) The increase in stormwater runoff due to the creation of new the impervious surface will be mitigated by an open detention basin. Additionally, the existing roof drainage collection system will be intercepted and discharged to the proposed basin. The Applicant shall address a direct connection from the proposed basin to the exiting 24" pipe located within the drainage easement along the southern property line. **Testimony to be provided.**
- 3) The following table is for pre- and post- development stormwater runoff rates:

<b>Design (Year)</b>	<b>Existing Peak Flows (cfs)</b>	<b>Proposed Peak Flows (cfs)</b>
2	3.255	3.168
10	5.009	4.908
100	9.184	8.109

The Applicant has reduced the stormwater runoff. **Testimony should be provided.**

- 4) Soil boring including profile layers and water table information should be provided.
- 5) The Applicant shall address the following design concerns:
  - a) Testimony shall be provided to address the condition of the existing detention system and outfall.
  - b) Design calculations shall be provided showing the existing system has the capacity to handle the receiving point discharge from the newly created basin.

- c) Please provide maintained logs and video of the existing basin and 15 inch pipe outfall.
  - d) The Applicant shall provide testimony relative to the control of existing stormwater runoff and the potential impact on existing downstream residential properties.
- 6) The Applicant shall provide a stormwater maintenance manual in accordance with NJDEP BMP standards. Within the manual, the following maps (11" x 17") shall be provided.
- a) Grading Plan
  - b) Drainage and Utility Plan
  - c) Landscape Plan and Details
  - d) Soil Erosion Seeding Notes
- 7) The following notes shall be added to the Grading and Drainage Plan:
- a) Stormwater management facilities shall be regularly maintained to ensure they function at design capacity and to prevent health hazards associated with debris buildup and stagnant water.
  - b) Responsibility for operation and maintenance of the stormwater facilities, including periodic removal and disposal of accumulated particulate material and debris, shall remain with the owners or owners of the property. Maintenance shall follow the operations maintenance manual approved by the Neptune Township Planning Board.
  - c) In the event that the facility becomes a danger to public safety or public health, or if it is need of maintenance. The owner shall affect such maintenance and repair of the facility in a manner that is approved by the Township Engineer.

**D. Environmental Impact**

- 1) The Applicant has requested a waiver from the Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with Ordinance No. 4-23; Section 2 entitled "Environmental Impact Statement".
- 2) The Applicant shall address related key elements of the Environmental Impact ordinance requirements with regards to

noise, lighting, air pollution and impacts of water quality from the proposed parking lot improvements.

- 3) A tree removal permit shall be obtained from the Township Conservation Officer prior to any tree removal. The Applicant's compliance with replacement tree requirements shall be provided during testimony.

**E. Lighting and Landscaping**

- 1) The Applicant shall address existing and proposed site lighting. **Testimony to be provided.**
- 2) The following note shall be added to the Lighting Plan:
  - a) Ordinance Section 511.A.2.(a) states that security lighting design for commercial developments shall employ timers on all or a portion of the site lighting that reduces the average illumination to the minimum requirements of this ordinance within one hour after close of business or before midnight, whichever occurs earlier. The plan indicates lights specified on this plan shall be fully illuminated one-half hour before sunset, until last employee leaves for closing. **The Applicant should provide testimony.**
  - b) Ordinance Section 511.D., states that (building-attached fixtures), light fixtures attached to the exterior of a building shall be designed to be architecturally compatible with the style, materials, colors and details of such building and other lighting fixtures used on the site. Consideration shall also be given to the type of light source utilized and the light quality such produces. The type of light source used on buildings, signs, parking areas, pedestrian walkways and other areas of a site shall be the same or compatible. The use of high-pressure sodium lighting shall be prohibited for all fixtures. The Applicant is proposing wall mounted lighting on the existing building detail of this lighting should be provided. **Testimony should be provided.**
  - c) All lighting shall provide for non-glare lights focused downward.
  - d) The Applicant shall shield all parking lot lighting spillage from adjacent properties in accordance with Ordinance Section 511.A.2.

- 4) The following notes shall be added to the Landscape Plan:
  - a) “Only nursery-grown plant material shall be utilized” per Ordinance Section 509.E.
  - b) “All landscaped areas shall be well maintained and kept free of all debris, rubbish, weeds, tall grass, other overgrown conditions and the storage of any equipment or materials” per Ordinance 509.E.
  - c) “The developer shall be required to replace dead or dying plant material for a period of two zoning permits for occupancy and shall post a maintenance guarantee for such pursuant to Article X of this ordinance” per Ordinance Section 509.F.
  - d) “All plantings shall be installed free from disease in a manner that ensures the availability of sufficient soil and water for healthy growth is not intrusive to underground utilities.”
- 5) The Applicant shall revise the landscaping planting schedule to address the following:
  - a) Ordinance Section 509.D., states that low growing evergreen shrubs shall be a minimum of two and one-half (2-1/2) feet in height at the time of planting.
- 6) Ordinance Section 509.I.1.(b) states that front yards shall be landscaped with a combination of an alternating evergreen and deciduous hedge a minimum of three (3) feet tall at the time of planting, with deciduous shade trees located a spacing of thirty (30) feet on-center, said spacing to supplement and alternate with required street trees. Testimony should be provided.
- 7) Ordinance Section 509.D. (Planting sizes) Deciduous trees shall have a minimum caliper of 3 ½ inches at time of planting. Evergreen trees shall be a minimum of six (6) feet in height at time of planting. The Applicant indicates a planning size of 2.5” to 3” caliper for all shade trees. **The Applicant shall comply, or a design waiver is required.**

F. **Utilities**

- 1) The Applicant shall address existing utility services for the building. All services shall be shown on the plans.

- 2) The Applicant shall provide testimony and construction details with regards to housing for the domestic and fire backflow preventers, if required.

9. **Conditions of Approval**

- A. Freehold Soil Conservation District
- B. Monmouth County Planning Board
- C. Neptune Township Developer's Agreement
- D. Neptune Fire Official
- E. Performance Guarantees and Engineering Inspection Fees
- F. Title 39 – governing all motor vehicle operation within the site
- G. Filing of Deeds for Sight Triangle

Please be advised that additional comments may follow upon completion of testimony and/or submission of further revisions by the Applicant.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Very truly yours,

LEON S. AVAKIAN, INC.



Jennifer Beahm, P.P.  
Planning Board Planner



Peter R. Avakian, P.E., P.P.  
Board Engineer

DMH/MM/mcs  
cc: Kristie Dickert, Administrative Officer  
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NT/PB/23/23-10