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# Ira M. Emanuel, P.C.

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Four Laurel Road, New City, NY 10956

Tel: 845.634.4141 Fax: 845.634.9312

E-mail: [Info@EmanuelLaw.com](mailto:Info@EmanuelLaw.com)

[www.EmanuelLaw.com](http://www.EmanuelLaw.com)

Counsel to  
Freeman & Loftus, RLLP

Amy Mele, Esq.  
*Of counsel*

PLANNING BOARD  
VILLAGE OF CHESTNUT RIDGE

UPDATED NARRATIVE SUMMARY  
(MAY 29, 2020)

THE WELLINGTON EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE  
SITE PLAN

Tax Lots 68.05-1-12, 13, 14 and 22

The Wellington Educational Initiative (“Wellington”) originally submitted proposed plans in September 2019. Since that time, working with CDRC and the Board, Wellington has made revisions and improvements to its plans. Submitted herewith is a significant revision. Wellington believes that it has addressed the concerns of the Board, neighbors to the project, CDRC, and outside agencies.

***Background***

Wellington was formed to provide a proper campus for the education of Jewish children. Wellington acquired a parcel at the corner of Summit and Red Schoolhouse Roads in the Village for that purpose. This parcel is of sufficient size, and has appropriate access, to host two school divisions in a setting similar to that of typical suburban schools.

The parcel consists of four existing tax lots that will be merged. Previously, the parcel had been proposed for further subdivision into single family lots. That project never reached fruition, and the parcel has stood vacant for many years.

The parcel has a total gross lot area of 23.8 acres (there are no deductions required for environmental features and designated street lines for non-residential projects). It is in an R-25 zoning district, which allows schools and associated dormitories by special permit of the Board of Trustees.

The site is bounded by Red Schoolhouse Road on the East, De Salvo Court and single-family residences on the South, Fleetwood Elementary School on the West, and Summit Road on the North. Red Schoolhouse Road is a County highway (Route 41). Summit Road is a major east-west thoroughfare. An interchange with the southbound Garden State Parkway extension of the New York State Thruway is directly opposite the site, having a signalized intersection with Red Schoolhouse Road.

Transport of Rockland bus route 92 passes directly in front of the site on Red Schoolhouse Road. There are no sidewalks along Red Schoolhouse Road in the area. There is a narrow, asphalt sidewalk along Summit Road, adjacent to the site. This sidewalk continues past site and eventually becomes a more standard concrete sidewalk that extends to Chestnut Ridge Road.

The surrounding area is generally residential, although there are two nearby institutional uses: Fleetwood Elementary School, which abuts the site to the West, and The Promenade, an assisted living facility, across Red Schoolhouse Road. Also across Red Schoolhouse Road is a multi-tenanted office building. Light industrial uses are to be found further north and further south on Red Schoolhouse Road. Chestnut Ridge Middle School is nearby, north of Summit Road.

Wellington proposes a campus for two schools: a girls' elementary school and a boys' secondary school. The girls' school will be a preK-8 day school with up to 1,000 students. The boys' school will be a residential secondary school for up to 328 students. Dormitories will be provided.<sup>1</sup> Parking appropriate to the size and use of the schools is proposed.

The proposed site plan provides for an internal road network for safe passage, as well as for emergency access. The two divisions will function separately. Little to no day-to-day interaction between the two divisions is expected, although the schools will coordinate activities to insure that no conflicts arise. Attached are updated operational narratives for each of the schools.

The building sites and configurations have been designed to blend into and to take advantage of the site topography. The site generally slopes upward from Red Schoolhouse Road to the West. School buildings and parking areas have been located in areas of more gentle slopes. Buildings take advantage of the slopes by having exterior entrances on either side. Site improvements are set well back from the respective roadways in order to provide privacy to the students and to minimize adverse visual impacts on the streetscape.

### ***Traffic Impacts***

A traffic impact study prepared by Provident Design Engineering, dated August 15, 2019, has been previously submitted. It examined existing conditions at various nearby intersections during May and June, 2019 (within the school year). . The study determined the foreseeable impacts of the proposed schools using standard methodology.

It is not the responsibility of the schools to cure existing conditions or to mitigate the impacts of other proposed projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Dormitories are expressly permitted as accessory uses to schools of general instruction, as here. Zoning Code, Art. XII, § 2.

### ***Wetlands***

There is a small, isolated wetland near the southeasterly corner of the site. This wetland is outside the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is within the jurisdiction of the Village, pursuant to the Village's Wetlands Law (LL 7 of 1987).

Except for a proposed emergency access road, the current proposal does not encroach into this wetland area. Other aspects affect the 100-foot regulated area surrounding the wetland.

A separate application for a wetland permit is not required in the context of a site plan application, so long as the standards for granting such a permit are addressed by the proposed site plan and supporting documents. A separate submission will address the requirements of the Wetlands Law.

### ***Special Permit Requirements***

The school and dormitory uses both require special permits from the Village Board. There are no special standards for schools. Article XII, Sec. 2 of the Zoning Code provides special standards for dormitories.

### **General Requirements (School and Dormitory)**

- A. *The proposed use shall be of such location, size and character that it will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the district in which it is proposed to be situated and not be detrimental to the site or adjacent properties in accordance with the zoning classification of such properties.*

The proposed use is for a school campus in a residential area. Such uses have been determined to be "inherently beneficial" to residential areas by New York courts. The proposed uses are permitted by the Zoning Code. In addition, the site has been designed to direct areas of heavier usage away from nearby residences, and to direct heavier traffic generation to the adjacent County road, rather than the Village road. Protective landscape screening will further mitigate the impact of the uses on the surrounding neighborhood.

- B. *The location and size of such use, the nature and intensity of operations involved in or conducted in connection therewith, its site layout and its relation to access streets shall be such that both pedestrian and vehicular traffic to and from the use and the assembly of persons in connection therewith will not be hazardous.*

The applicant has submitted a traffic impact study prepared by Provident Design Engineering dated August 15, 2019, in connection with this application. That study found that the road network was adequate for the proposed use. The applicant will work with the Planning Board to refine the traffic design of the site.

- C. *The location and height of buildings, the location, nature and height of walls and fences and the nature and extent of landscaping on the site shall be such that the use will not hinder or discourage the development and use of adjacent land and buildings.*

All parcels surrounding the site are fully developed. Nothing about the design of the subject site will adversely affect the future redevelopment of those parcels.

- D. *The proposed use will not require such additional public facilities or services, or create such fiscal burdens upon the Village greater than those which characterize uses permitted by right.*

The applicant is not aware of any additional public facilities that it will require from the Village as a result of its proposed use.

- E. *As a condition of all special permits and conditional use permits, right of entry for inspection with reasonable notice shall be provided for to determine compliance with the conditions of said permit.*

Noted.

[Subsection F is not applicable, as it does not apply to the R-25 zone in which the parcel is located.]

[Subsection G relates to the tenure of a special permit, once granted, and is acknowledged.]

#### Special Permit Requirements (Dormitory, Only)

A. *There shall be a minimum lot area of one thousand eight hundred (1,800) square feet provided per dormitory bed, exclusive of the lot area allocated and devoted to the principal and other accessory buildings on any site, including the required yards and/or setbacks, buffers and parking facilities for said buildings.*

The site contains 23.76 acres of land. 10 acres are required for the school, leaving 13.76 acres (599,365sf) available for the dormitory. At 1,800sf per bed, the site can accommodate 332.98 beds. 332 beds are proposed (328 for students, 4 for adult resident advisors).

B. *The minimum distance between a dormitory and any other building on the lot shall be fifty (50) feet.*

Complies.

C. *The minimum distance between any dormitory and any interior driveway shall be twenty-five (25) feet.*

Complies.

*D. The maximum height of any dormitory shall be two (2) stories or twenty-five (25) feet, whichever is less.*

Because of the sloped topography of the site, a basement will be provided for the dormitories. The basement is considered a story. The height, in feet, will comply with the Zoning Code. A variance for the number of stories is required.

*E. No dormitory room or dwelling unit shall be permitted in any cellar.*

Complies. There are no cellars provided.

*F. All dormitories shall be equipped with sprinkler and fire alarm systems in accordance with the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code.*

Sprinkler and fire alarm systems will be included in the construction drawings. Will comply.

### ***Variances Required***

The following required variances have been identified by the applicant:

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Required</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Front Yard	100 ft	38.0 ft (Red Schoolhouse Road)
Side Yard	100 ft	71.6 ft (South lot line)
Rear Yard	100 ft	48.2 ft (Southwest lot line)
Height (Dormitory) <sup>2</sup>	2 stories	3 stories
Parking spaces @ 1/300sf	494	213

The front yard, side yard and rear yard variances will allow for additional parking spaces within those yards to serve the elementary school.

A height variance for the dormitory buildings, only, will be requested in order to efficiently use the sloped topography. Note that the overall height of the buildings, in feet, complies with the bulk requirements.

The Zoning Code uses two ratios to compute the required number of parking spaces: the first is based on the overall floor area of the buildings, the second is based on the number of student seats. The Code requires that the larger number be used. Here, the Zoning Code requires

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<sup>2</sup> Zoning Code Art. XII, § 2.D.

a total of 472 spaces based on floor area, and 173 spaces based on student population. As with many other schools, the number of parking spaces required using the floor area method far exceeds the number actually needed or reasonably anticipated. The proposed plans show 213 spaces. This parking complement conforms to the student seat calculation method.

The applicant will make the appropriate application to the Zoning Board of Appeals after a negative declaration is granted by the lead agency under SEQR. The Board is reminded that the applicant is a religious and educational institution.

***Plan Revisions (Drawings last revised 05-29-2020)***

The drawings submitted herewith contain significant improvements to plans previously reviewed by the Village, its consultants, outside agencies and the public, including oral comments received from the Fire Department. The applicant believes that they are positive responses to the comments received, and creates a more efficient site.

Grading

No fill is expected to be imported, although a small amount may require export.

A rip-rap lined swale, West of the elementary school building and extending to the North behind the dormitory parking area, will intercept runoff from the uphill side. The swale will convey the runoff to the existing downstream wetland area.

Driveways have been narrowed to the minimum width appropriate to their functions.

Elementary School

Traffic circulation patterns have been simplified. Vehicles entering the elementary school portion of the site will pass a guardhouse and come to an intersection. During normal operations, buses will be separated from other vehicles. Buses will enter a one-way loop that goes clockwise around the school building. The clockwise loop ensures that children enter and exit the buses from the sidewalk side. School entrances are on both the East and West sides of the building. There is sufficient stacking space for 18 full-sized buses, although this space is not expected to be needed because there are three separate dismissals. Buses exit the loop at the original intersection, and will proceed to exit the site. There will be no vehicular access to bus loop during school hours, other than by school buses. Between arrival and departure times, this area will be used for recreation. (There are also grassed recreation areas available for student use.)

Other vehicles will be directed to a parking area further East of the bus loop. The parking area will support two-way traffic, and provides a turnaround area. There are 96 available parking spaces in this parking area.

During larger evening events, such as PTA evenings, overflow traffic will be directed to the bus loop. Vehicles will circle to the West side of the building, where 31 overflow parking spaces are available.

The intersection of the main entrance road, the bus loop roads, and the parking road has been engineered to minimize conflicts.

An emergency access road has been added to connect the East parking area to DeSalvo Court. The road impacts the isolated wetland area. The road will be gated and fitted with Knox boxes or other security devices in coordination with emergency services providers. The road shall not be used as a “cut-through” from DeSalvo Court to Red Schoolhouse Road, except in emergencies.

### Dormitories

The locations and grading of the dormitories have been modified to reduce the need for grade changes. The new grading is closer to the existing grades, which has helped to minimize the amount of earthwork activity. Nevertheless, the dormitory buildings conform to the separation requirements of the Zoning Code.

Hardscape consisting of a combination of driveways, sidewalks, and compacted turf, allows 360-degree access to the buildings for emergency services, while also providing pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

Two dormitory buildings are proposed. The East building will have 136 beds; the West building will have 200 beds (for a total of 336). There will be four adult resident advisors for the two buildings. Curfew for students varies from 11:15pm to 12:30am, depending on the student’s age.

Vehicle access has been simplified. A single, two-way driveway serves the dormitories for pickup/drop-off, deliveries, maintenance, and parking. The driveway is widened at the entrances to the buildings to provide safe pickup/drop-off areas. These areas are not intended as parking spaces.

Loading areas are provided at the South ends of each building. The East dormitory also has a one vehicle garage for a maintenance vehicle located in its Southeastern corner on the lower level.

A roundabout has been added to the South of the buildings to allow for turnarounds. The roundabout has been sized to accommodate fire trucks.

At the far South end of the driveway is a parking area with 36 spaces. It is anticipated that the parking spaces will be used primarily during move-in/move-out periods. When not used for parking, the area will act as a hard court sports recreation area for the students.

The previously shown emergency connection between the dormitories and the elementary school has been eliminated in favor of the new emergency access plan.

### High School Building

The high school building has the greatest potential impact on residential neighbors. To mitigate that impact, all parking on the West side of the building (nearest the residences) has been eliminated. All parking will be on the East side of the building, which is also further down the hill. Thus, the residences will now be shielded from the parking area by distance, trees, the building, and the grade difference.

The building itself will conform to the required 100 foot setback. (Note that the proposed building is farther from the residential lot lines than is the existing neighboring public school.) The building will continue to have architectural treatment on all sides.

The driveway will have one-way, counterclockwise, circulation. There will be no designated pickup/drop-off area on the West side, although there will be a door to the building. 50 parking spaces are provided on the East side of the building.

All of the above has the effect of (a) moving activity associated with the school away from the neighboring residences, and (b) providing the opportunity for more screening in the area between the school and the houses.

A boulevarded entrance driveway will allow for safer emergency access.

Two walkways will connect the high school buildings to its dormitories. One will be a straight path between the two, with integrated stairs to accommodate the grade change. The other will be curved, without stairs, along the interior tree line.

### ***Subdivision***

The parcel currently consists of four tax lots. These tax lots will be consolidated into one as part of the site plan proposal. An application for “re-subdivision” is submitted herewith.

### ***GML and SEQR Status***

The site is located adjacent to County Highway 41 (Red Schoolhouse Road) and the Garden State Parkway extension of the New York State Thruway. The project must therefore be referred to the Rockland County Planning Department for review for its regional and county-wide impacts, if any. No other referral features are implicated.

The project is a Type I action under SEQR, as it proposes more than 100,000sf of new floor area.<sup>3</sup>

Dated: June 1, 2020  
New City, New York

  
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Ira M. Emanuel, P.C.  
Attorneys for applicant

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<sup>3</sup> 6 N.Y.C.R.R. § 617.4(b)(6)(v).

### ***Mesivta of Long Beach (Mens' and Boys' Division) – Operations Narrative<sup>4</sup>***

The Mesivta of Long Beach is an umbrella organization that administers a high school, Torah High School of Long Beach and a college, Rabbinical College of Long Island. The current combined total of students is 275. Both the high school and the college will occupy the secondary school portion of the Wellington Campus.

#### General Program Description and Schedule Torah High School

The high school program is a dual-track program of both religious studies and a NYS Regents secular studies program. It is a four year course of study. Torah High School is authorized by the NYS Department of Education to issue NYS Regents Diplomas.

The high school runs on an eleven month calendar. Secular studies are held September through June. Religious studies continue through July, with additional religious classes introduced in the absence of secular studies. Summer break is for one month.

Torah High School currently has 150 students, all whom are required to live on campus. Students are permitted to go home roughly every fourth weekend. Ninth grade entering student are permitted to go home every other weekend during the first nine months, as an adjustment period. The Jewish High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), other major religious holidays and festivals, and most minor religious holidays are observed on campus.

Transportation to and from school is not provided by the school. At the beginning and end of each session, parents transport their children or arrange coach busses to bring students from a central location. (when there is a demographic concentration of students). High school students are not permitted to drive to and from campus, and parents are discouraged from allowing their children to obtain driver's licenses until after high school graduation.

In the fall, high school students go home for 2 weeks after the observance of Yom Kippur to be with their families for the Succos Holiday. In the spring they go home for the Passover Holiday for 2 weeks as well.

#### General Program Description and Schedule Rabbinical College of Long Island

The Rabbinical College of Long Island is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Counsel for Higher Education as an accredited college. IT is accredited through the Association of Advanced Rabbinic and Talmudic Schools (AARTS). AARTS has been recognized as an accreditation agency by the United States Department of Education since 1974. Upon successful completion of the college program a degree is issued to students. As mandated, a religious school in the State of New York calls its degree a First Talmudic Degree or the like.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on information provided by the school.

The Rabbinical College operates on an 11 month calendar with a one-month summer break.

The Rabbinical College currently has 125 students, all whom are required to live on campus. Students are permitted to go home roughly every fourth weekend. The Jewish High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), other major religious holidays and festivals, and most minor religious holidays are observed on campus.

In the fall, Rabbinical College students go home for 3 weeks after the observance of Yom Kippur to be with their families for the Succos Holiday. In the spring they go home for the Passover Holiday for 3 weeks as well.

Transportation to and from school is not provided by the school. Students **may not have a car** while on campus, and are required to arrange their own transportation.

#### Staffing (High School and Rabbinical College)

##### Full-time Employees:

Deans/Rabbis (religious instruction teachers)/Counselors – 15

Administrative – 7

Kitchen – 6

Maintenance – 7

Night Custodial - 2

##### Part-time Employees:

Secular studies teachers (high school, only) – 5

Total staff: 37 full-time; 5 part-time.

#### School Day Schedule (High School and College)

Before the school day begins, the kitchen staff arrives at 7:00 to prepare breakfast and begin meal preparation for the rest of the day. There are approximately 6 members of this team.

The school day begins with prayers at 7:30 each weekday morning. Attending prayers are approximately 20 Rabbis from the staff of both Torah High School and Rabbinical College as well as all the students.

At 8:30 am the office and administrative staff begins to arrive. These too are somewhat staggered. There are 7 members of this team.

At 9 am, members of the maintenance team begin to arrive. Their duties are staggered to allow coverage over the course of a long school day. There are 7 members of this team and there usually no more than 4 members at a time on duty. There is also a night custodial team with two members, who work from 11:30pm through 6:30am.

*Daily schedule (typical):*

7:30 – 8:30 am	Morning prayer service
8:30-9:15 am	Breakfast is served between (student and staff eat in)
9:00 am – 12:50 pm	Religious instruction
12:50 – 1:40 pm	Lunch (student and staff eat in)
3:30 – 6:00 pm	Secular instruction (Religious instructors leave).
6:30 – 7:45 pm	Dinner
8:15 – 9:30 pm	Evening religious instruction (Half the staff of religious instructors return)
9:30 pm	Evening Prayers

Special Events, Programs and Holidays

During the High Holidays approximately 40-50 alumni join the Yeshiva for prayers and meal requiring them to stay on campus. A similar number of guests join the Yeshiva for the Shavuos and Simchas Torah Holiday. Visiting guests are housed on campus, if there is available room. Otherwise, they are hosted by local families.

For 10 days revolving around the Purim Holiday (usually in February), the Rabbinical College student body organizes and runs a charity campaign called, Israel Purim Fund. The Rabbinical College rents 25-35 cars for this period. Students fan out in groups around the metropolitan area targeting specific and identified donors in meticulously mapped out routes to solicit funds for indigent people.

***Bais Yaakov Elementary School (Girls' Division) – Operations Narrative<sup>5</sup>***

Bais Yaakov Elementary School was founded in 2011 to provide a first class education for orthodox Jewish girls from Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Rockland County and its environs. The school quickly gained prominence in the community and the number of students grew steadily. The total number of students registered for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year is 560.

General Program Description and Schedule for Bais Yaakov Elementary

The educational program is a dual track program of both religious studies and secular studies. The secular studies follow the Common Core curriculum. Both secular and religious studies are completed on a September through June schedule. Transportation to and from school, for girls in K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, is provided by the respective school districts where the students reside. The majority of the students live in the East Ramapo school district. The remaining students live in Ramapo Central, North Rockland, Nanuet and NYC school districts. Pre-K does not receive transportation services from the sending districts; the parents must provide transportation. On legal holidays the sending districts do not provide transportation and the entire student body uses private transportation.

Staffing

For the 2019-2020 school year:

48 teachers (24 religious studies and 24 secular studies)

14 assistant teachers (full-time)

18-20 support staff (generally no more than 2-3 at the school at the same time)

12 administrative staff (not more than 8 at the school at the same time)

1 day custodian

2 night custodians

Total staff: 73 full-time equivalent (including 48 half-time teachers)

School day schedule

Starting at 8:30, staff and students begin to arrive.

All grades start the school day with religious studies at 9:00. Pre-K and K begin secular studies at 12:30. 1<sup>st</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grades begin secular studies at 12:45 and 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades at 1:00. As the secular studies teachers arrive the religious studies teachers leave.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on information provided by the school.

Pre-K and K are dismissed at 3:00. 1<sup>st</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grades are dismissed 3:45 and 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades at 4:15.

The last of the administrative staff leaves at 5:00. Most of the administrative staff work part time and leave during the day.

There is one custodian who cleans during the day. Two custodians clean after school hours, from 4:00-10:00PM.

#### *Daily schedule (typical)*

8:40 am	staff and students arrive
9:00 am	religious studies begin (all grades)
12:30 pm	Pre-K and K secular studies begin
12:45 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> grade secular studies begin
1:00 pm	5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade secular studies begin
3:00 pm	Pre-K and K dismissal
3:45 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> grade dismissal
4:15pm	5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade dismissal

#### Support services

At various times during the day tutors, therapists, and social workers come to the school to provide extra help to the students that require it.

#### Food Service

Breakfast and lunch is provided by an outside vendor. All food is prepared off-site and ready to eat. Some food may need to be warmed. Breakfast is at 9:30 and lunch varies by grade starting from 11:20-12:45

#### Special events

Within the first two weeks of the school year there is a Teachers Orientation event. This provides an opportunity for the parents to meet the teachers of their respective daughters. This is done at after school hours usually in the evening. We also schedule a P.T.A. Parents meet the teachers by appointment so that the traffic flow is controlled.

Throughout the year, there are individual class performances which are attended by the parents, family and friends of the performing class.