

### **Right to Know/FOIL**

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October 23, 2018

Loretta Taylor, Chairperson  
Town of Cortlandt Planning Board  
1 Heady Street  
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567

Re: 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Rescue  
Appian Way Ventures, LLC  
260 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Verplanck, NY  
Site Plan/Special Permit Approval



Ms. Taylor,

This office has received a video submitted by an adjacent homeowner in which dog barking can be heard seemingly from the direction of the applicant's business location. While it is obvious that this video is credible, the assumption that it is the applicant's business is not factual.

As evidenced by the lack of leaves on the trees and the blooming forsythia bushes below the railing, this video was taken in the early spring. Forsythia bushes only bloom once a year and in our climate zone this usually takes place late March to early April. The applicant, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Rescue, took over the business in July of 2018. The dog sounds barks heard from the facility occurred while under the operation of Westchester Kennels who is no longer the owner/operator.

Westchester Kennels was operating with approximately 60 dogs in crates at the facility. In addition, no sound dampening had been installed along the walls, windows or door openings within the space.

The applicant, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Rescue, is housing one-third the capacity of the previous Kennel. They have installed sound dampening foil on the overhead door at the rear of the facility and 2 1/2" thick foam dampening pads along the exterior walls. The noise generated from this facility is far less than under the previous ownership and it is not due solely to the number of dogs or sound dampening. It is due to the philosophy of the owners and promises they have made to their donors.

The previous operation was an adoption center. They housed the dogs for a short time to turn them out for adoption as quickly as possible. The owners of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Rescue are operating an enrichment center for the dogs. Inherently, a number of these dogs come in with behavioral and social issues. The owners believe in correcting these behaviors through the process of exercise, training and social interaction with staff and other dogs. They currently have treadmills in the space and the dogs go for walks multiple times per day. In their experience a tired dog sleeps well at night and results in a quiet atmosphere.

The business operates 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm. Employees and trainers are on site during that 12-hour period. On average, the ratio of staff to dogs is 1:7. There are currently 4 people on staff. Once a month, certified trainers visit the facility to work with the staff over a 2-day period to provide up-to-date training methods and techniques. The facility is monitored 24 hours a day with a video surveillance system triggered by both noise and motion. After normal operating hours, the video feed is available to all staff members and the closest staff lives several blocks from the facility. Dogs are double leashed on all walks and are limited only to the rear of the building so as not to interfere with dogs being dropped off at the front for Canine Kindergarten.

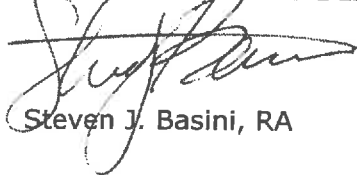
The purpose of the proposed outdoor pens is twofold. The pens will allow the dogs more exercise which in turn improves health and sleeping habits. It also helps to improve social skills. By learning how they interact with people and other dogs, the trainers can more accurately assess the dog's disposition and helps in the placing/adoption process. The pens would have 5 dogs in them at a time. At 3 pens total there would be 15 dogs exercising at a time. Exercise sessions would average about 45 minutes and each dog would be exercised multiple times during the day. No dogs would be in the pens before 9:30 am and they would all be returned by 7:45pm. Comparatively, the existing pens utilized by Canine Kindergarten house 20-30 dogs at a time.

The current use as a kennel in this space has already been approved by the Board of Health, the Building Department and your honorable Board. The applicant is asking for an improvement that will not negatively impact the neighborhood but will ensure that the dogs are more well behaved and monitored then in the past.

2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Rescue was built with funds from donors who were promised a better adoption facility. The dogs are not treated as a number and are trained in real-life rooms and play groups to ensure they leave the facility prepared for a good home. The facility has been revamped to ensure a better quality of life for the dogs. This equates to an operation that does not generate as much noise or disturbance as its predecessor and is currently the model for which other rescues strive.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

**SJB ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven J. Basini', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Steven J. Basini, RA