

NARRATIVE OF PROPOSAL
Saint Joseph High School

The Property is located at 145 Plainfield Avenue and has been operated as a parochial college preparatory high school, known as Saint Joseph High School, at this location since 1961. The school contains a number of buildings used for administrative offices, classrooms and recreational and athletic uses. The school grounds also contain athletic facilities, which includes an athletic field that is used for track and field events, football, soccer and lacrosse games. Recently, the Zoning Board by Resolution adopted on October 9, 2014, under Application No.: 14-1032 approved a conditional use variance, bulk variances, waivers/exceptions and preliminary and final site approval for various improvements to athletic field (the “2014 Resolution”).

The Applicant, Saint Joseph High School, now requests a conditional use variance from Section 110-87.A(10) for the use of temporary lights on the athletic field for six (6) night athletic events per school year, which are anticipated to be for football, lacrosse and soccer games. There will be four (4) temporary lights per side, one (1) at 15/20 yard line, one (1) at 35/40 yard line, one (1) at the opposing 35/40 yard line, and one (1) at the opposing 15/20 yard line for a total of eight (8). The temporary lights will not be located in the front yard area, and, the light location closest to Plainfield Avenue is approximately 275 feet from the Plainfield Avenue right-of-way. The Application also requires a Design Exception from Section 110-157(C) as the light illumination level exceeds 0.9 footcandles, which is required to properly light the fields for night games, and which do not extend beyond the Property lines. Night games will end by 10:00 p.m. as required by Section 110-87.A.(9). Additionally, the Applicant requests relief from a condition of the 2014 Resolution to allow the use of the athletic field by third parties, as that use is customary and incidental to the athletic field. The athletic field use by third parties is for activities including, skills programs for sports (i.e.: soccer and lacrosse), regional sports events/games in which Saint Joseph teams participate, allowing practice use and games by other schools and teams in the area including, Metuchen youth soccer league, and other athletic related uses. Third party use of the athletic field will not be at nights and will not involve the use of the temporary lights.

The athletic field is a conditionally permitted use and a conditional use variance was granted for the athletic field being located in a small portion of the front yard area per the 2014 Resolution. The only change requested in the current application is the use of temporary lights. There are no physical improvements proposed.

The addition of temporary lights is a de minimis change as the athletic field use is a conditionally permitted use and was approved by the 2014 Resolution. Night games are a traditional part of the high school experience, and many high schools have fields with permanent lights and have a number of night games each year. The proposed temporary lights will be on the existing athletic field which have been in existence for over 40 years and the significant front yard setback will remain and there will be no substantial detriment to the public good, the zone plan or the master plan. The Applicant’s addition of night games by use of temporary lights adds to the Saint Joseph students’ high school experience and supports and furthers the parochial high school inherently beneficial use.