

**ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIVINCENZO TO HOST MEETING TO GAIN PUBLIC
INPUT
ABOUT ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO MASTER PLAN**

West Orange, NJ – Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. will host a public meeting about the Master Plan being created for Essex County Turtle Back Zoo. The purpose of the meeting is to gather input from the community about what improvements they would like to see at Turtle Back Zoo. It will be held as follows:

Date: Thursday, February 22, 2018
Time: 7 p.m. (promptly)
Place: Essex County South Mountain Recreation Complex
Essex County Turtle Back Zoo
Education Building
560 Northfield Avenue
West Orange, NJ

*The Education Building is located on the eastern side of the Zoo,
adjacent to the Treetop Adventure.*

“With all the new exhibits, attractions and amenities, Turtle Back Zoo and the South Mountain Recreation Complex have grown by leaps and bounds. Our Zoo has been described as one of the fastest growing facilities in the United States and definitely is on the ‘must do’ list for families from throughout the Tri-State area,” DiVincenzo said. “Creating a master plan will help us establish a blueprint for future development and improvements. We are looking forward to hearing from the public and listening to their ideas because it will help us set priorities to enhance the Zoo and surrounding complex,” he added.

Turtle Back Zoo was opened in 1963. In each of the past 13 years, a new attendance record has been established, including in 2017, when 907,522 visitors were welcomed. In addition, the Zoo has earned accreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Zoological Association of America, and has been recognized with several Certificates of Excellence from TripAdvisor.com.

Since taking office in 2003, DiVincenzo has spearheaded over \$70 million in upgrades to the facility, which have included developing a new Educational Building, the Carousel with 33 figures of endangered animals; building the African Adventure Exhibit with Masai Giraffes, Lions and Hyenas; Sea Lion Sound Exhibit with sea lions, sharks and sting rays; the Big Cat Country Exhibit with jaguars and cougars; Tam-ring Gibbons Reserve with white cheeked gibbons apes, Reeves muntjac and white naped cranes; Australian Exhibit that features kangaroos, wallabies, emus and over 500 birds in the Aviary; Reptile and Education Center, open air dining pavilion and playground, Penguin Exhibit, Otter Exhibit, Wolf Exhibit, Alligator Exhibit, North American Animal Exhibit, Black Bear Exhibit, Animal Hospital, Essex Farm Petting Zoo and South American Animal Exhibit; building the Savanna Café and making upgrades to the entrance as well as fencing and infrastructure

to meet AZA requirements. Funding has been provided through Green Acres grants, existing capital improvement bonds, or donations from the Zoological Society, Essex County Parks Foundation, corporations or private foundations. Corporations that have provided support include Investors Bank, Prudential Financial, Inc., Wells Fargo (Wachovia Bank), PNC Bank, PSE&G, Verizon, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, Coca Cola, Capital One Bank, TD Bank, Aramark, Covanta Energy and OxyMagic carpet cleaning.