

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
October 23, 2023**

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Hindle at 7:00 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting had been duly advertised.

**ROLL CALL**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Allen, J.  
Becker, R.  
Cook, J.  
Filler, C.  
Hindle, J.  
Hendrickson, N.  
John, C.  
Mueller, A.  
Panico, V.  
Villa, C.  
Izzo, T.

<b>Member</b>	<b>2023 Excused Absences</b>	<b>2023 Unexcused Absences</b>
Allen		
Becker	1(9-11)	
Cook	1(4-10)	
Filler	1(6-12)	
Hendrickson	1(8-28)	
Hindle		
John		
Mueller	2(7-10, 8-28)	
Panico	2(1-9, 5-22)	
Villa		
Izzo		

**Others Present:**

Attorney Joseph Tauriello for Board Attorney Jonathan Drill, Board Planner James Clavelli, Board Engineer Rob O'Brien, Director of Land Use and Development Christina Schwartz, and Board Secretary Ann Marie Lehberger.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Becker abstained.  
Mr. Cook moved, and Ms. Filler seconded a motion to approve the September 11, 2023, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**RESOLUTIONS**

There were no resolutions presented for Board consideration.

### **TRC UPDATE**

There was no TRC update.

### **ADJOURNMENTS OF ANY SCHEDULED HEARINGS OR MOTIONS**

There were none.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

There were no public hearings.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Chair Hindle reviewed the old business as follows:

1. Sign Ordinance-Ongoing
2. Municipal Resiliency Planning-Ongoing
3. New Stormwater Regulations-Ongoing
4. Tree Ordinance-Ongoing

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **2023 Master Plan Reexam and Land Use Element Report**

Chair Hindle gave a brief overview of the Master Plan Reexam Report, explaining that this is a culmination of the work that the subcommittee has done since 2020. She stated that the goal is to encourage more business to come to Readington and incentivize economic growth and development in underutilized properties.

Mr. Becker inquired about the process.

Christina Schwartz, Director of Land Use and Development provided some history and explained that the subcommittee was formed in 2020 as a result of many inquiries received in her office from business owners who wanted to come to the Township. She explained that they reviewed the proposed uses to see what things could be added to expand the range of uses while still respecting the adjacent uses and existing lot sizes. She further explained that in 2022 as phase 1, several uses were added to the PO Zone by an ordinance adopted by the Township Committee, but noted that a policy document is needed to enact any further changes.

James Clavelli, Township Planner gave a brief presentation explaining what a master plan reexam is and the reason it is being done now which is to provide policy basis for changes to zoning in the Route 22 corridor. Mr. Clavelli reviewed the required components of a master plan reexam report noting that the zoning recommendations in the Whitehouse Corridor is the most substantial update. He stated that it is recommended that the Land Development ordinance be revised to:

- Implement the recommendations of the Route 22 Subcommittee.
- Adopt ordinances to create the HVC, B-1, and HC zones as described in the reexam report.
- Update the zoning map to reflect any zone changes along Route 22.
- Adopt the proposed definitions to clarify proposed uses in the Route 22 corridor.

The summary of the zoning recommendations in the Whitehouse corridor are as follows;

## **HVC Zone**

- In portions of the existing B Zone, VC Zone, and PO Zone.
- Intended to introduce village style zoning, indicative of a convivial and lively commercial center with a mix of uses on smaller lots.
- It recognizes the smaller, older lot pattern of the Route 22 corridor area in and around the gateway to Whitehouse Station.

## **B-1 Business Zone**

- Intended to build upon the existing Business (B) Zone framework and update it to be more in line with a modern highway commercial district.
- Include a range of commercial uses, including those relating to vehicle repair and the construction trades.

## **HC Highway Commercial Zone**

- “Gateway Zone” as people drive into the Township from Branchburg.
- Contains buffer requirements that will create a vegetated, natural frontage along Route 22, introducing visitors to the agrarian, natural environment that forms the core of the Township’s identity.
- Permitted uses will be similar to those in the B-1 Zone, though auto related uses such as detailing, repair, service and car washes, and high traffic commercial uses such as banks and self-storage centers are prohibited.

Mr. Clavelli confirmed that the reexam does not create new zones, it only makes recommendations for them. He explained that an ordinance must be introduced and adopted by the Township Committee to enact the proposed zone changes.

Mr. Becker asked for clarifications on the new zones.

Mr. Mueller inquired about drive-thru’s specifically for fast food and beverage.

Ms. Allen explained the history of why drive-thru’s were not permitted in the Township in the past.

Mr. Panico commented on the need for a live, work, and play environment in the Township.

Mr. Hendrickson commented on having a few businesses with drive-thru’s opposed to a commercial strip of multiple uses.

Ms. Filler commented that the number of curb cuts on Route 22 is a concern.

The Board discussed different options and how other towns have handled having different type of uses. It was agreed that the Route 202 corridor, Three Bridges, and circulation will also need to reviewed.

Mr. John commented on the need for a balance between development on the highway corridor and the downtown.

Chair Hindle opened the meeting to questions from the public.

Karen Mittleman, Board of Adjustment Chair advised the Board that an application was coming in front of the Board of Adjustment for a proposed Starbucks drive-thru. She also stated that she was not in favor of fast-food restaurants in the Township.

Matthew Wisky stated that he recently moved to the area and commented on the need for a more open walking area downtown .

Mr. Hendrickson moved, and Ms. Filler seconded, a motion to adopt the 2023 the Master Plan Reexamination Report and forward it to the Township Committee for their review. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Allen			X					
Becker				X				
Cook			X					
Filler		X	X					
Hendrickson	X		X					
Hindle			X					
John			X					
Mueller			X					
Panico			X					
Villa							X	
Izzo							X	

**Update on Status of Application Checklists**

Chair Hindle and Christina Schwartz provided an update on the status of the revised application checklists that the Board professionals have been working on with the TRC (Technical Review Committee). Ms. Schwartz showed the Board the new framework and explained that it will streamline the process for the applicant, TRC and professionals.

**OTHER DISCUSSIONS**

Mr. Hendrickson advised that the revised ERI (Environmental Resource Inventory) was almost complete. Chair Hindle noted that Princeton Hydro would be doing a presentation at a Township Committee meeting. The Board secretary will send out the draft to the Board and will advise on the exact date for the meeting.

Township Engineer Rob O'Brien reminded the Board that they have to complete the stormwater training required by the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) by the end of the year. He noted that the Board secretary would send out the links to the videos.

Chair Hindle stated a residential imperious coverage review subcommittee will be

established that will include Board Members Mueller, Villa, John, and Hindle.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Filler moved, and Mr. Panico seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Marie Lehberger  
Planning Board Secretary