

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
November 13, 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
Becker
Filler
Hindle
Hendrickson
John
Mueller
Villa

Board Members Absent:

Panico
Cook (recused)
Izzo (recused)

Mr. Mueller moved, and Ms. Filler seconded a motion to excuse the absence of Board Member Panico. The motion carried unanimously. It was noted that Board Members Cook and Izzo were also excused.

Member	2023 Excused Absences	2023 Unexcused Absences
Allen		
Becker	1(9-11)	
Cook	2(4-10, 11-13-recused)	
Filler	1(6-12)	
Hendrickson	1(8-28)	
Hindle		
John		
Mueller	2(7-10, 8-28)	
Panico	3(1-9, 5-22, 11-13)	
Villa		
Izzo	1(11-13- recused)	

Others Present:

Board Attorney Jonathan Drill, Board Planner Michael Sullivan, Board Engineer Rob O'Brien, Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman, Board Environmental Consultant Sean Walsh, and Board Secretary Ann Marie Lehberger.

MINUTES

Mr. Hendrickson moved, and Ms. Filler seconded a motion to approve the October 23, 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

Camelot at Readington Urban Renewal LLC (Kaplan)

Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan, Preliminary Major Subdivision and Variances for Multi-Family Housing Development

Appl# PB23-004, Block 36 Lots 5, 5.02, 5.04, 65 & 66

Chair Hindle provided a brief explanation of the hearing process for the members of the public.

Board Attorney Drill explained that Board Members Cook and Izzo have recused themselves from the hearing because they reside within 200 feet of the subject property.

Attorney Bret Kaplan was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Kaplan provided some background on the project as follows: The Township entered into a settlement agreement with the former owner of the property as a result of affordable housing litigation. This project is part of the Readington Township Court Approved 2020 Amended Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and represents a major component of the Block 36 Redevelopment Plan, adopted by the Township on March 7, 2022. It is in accordance with a redevelopment agreement and an affordable housing agreement with the Township. The proposal is for 192 multi-family housing units, including 48 affordable units and a new minor collector road connecting the site to U.S. Route 22 that will facilitate vehicular and pedestrian circulation from U.S. Route 22 to the site. The portion of the existing Mullen Road on Lot 5 will be redeveloped, shortened, and terminated in a new a cul-de-sac with 4 single family homes. The plan that is in front of the Board tonight was deemed substantially consistent by the Township's PRC (Project Review Committee).

The following were present and sworn in for the applicant:

F. Mitchell Ardman, Applicant's Engineer, and Professional Planner

Stephen Tietke, Applicant's Architect

Karl Pehnke, Applicant's Traffic Engineer

Jason Kaplan, Principal of the Applicant

Paul Kausch, Director of Forward Planning and COAH Compliance for the Applicant

Board Engineer Rob O'Brien, Board Planner Michael Sullivan, Board Environmental Consultant Sean Walsh, and Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman were also sworn.

The following exhibits were marked into evidence as follows:

A-1 Aerial Map-Site Features Plan Exhibit

A-2 Colored Rendered Preliminary Major Subdivision Plan

A-3 Colored Rendered Dimension Plan

F. Mitchell Ardman, PE, PP, was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. Ardman described the existing conditions on the site and provided testimony as follows: Lots 5 and 5.02 are the main focus of the project. The Gables property is located on the northwest portion of the property (lot 66), the former Whitehouse diner site is located on the northeast portion of the property (lot 65). The former ironworks building has been demolished. There is a stream corridor and wetlands on the property. All DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) approvals have been obtained for the project. Mr. Ardman described the proposed subdivision and explained the alignment of the proposed collector Road and driveway locations. He stated that there are 4 proposed single family lots at the end of Mullen Road that are consistent with the Redevelopment Plan. He noted that each lot is fully confirming with all zone standards and no variances are required. He continued his testimony as follows: A cul-de-sac will be constructed at the end of Mullen Road. Lot 5.02 will be deed restricted for open space with the exception of an emergency access drive and will remain owned by the applicant. Lot 5 will be for the proposed development which includes 192 units, 13 separate buildings around a center loop. The larger buildings will have 20 units, the smaller buildings will have 10 units and there will be one building with 12 units. 48 units will be affordable COAH units that will be mixed throughout the site. There will be a loop drive that will run throughout the site. Along the drive there will be surface parking and access to the apartments and garages. The surface parking will be spread uniformly through the site.

The Board questioned if there would be any parking on the road outside of the designated parking areas. Mr. Ardman stated that there would be more than ample parking on the site.

Mr. Ardman continued his testimony as follows: There will be a 5,500 square foot clubhouse at the entrance point of the development which will include a pool with deck and patio, barbeque pits and outdoor kitchen to create a community atmosphere for the residents. There will also be a playground (tot lot) and dog park. There will be a 1,600 square foot maintenance building on the site that includes a dog grooming area. The center open space area will be the focal point of the development and will have a walkway and several patio areas with barbeque pits. Public walking trails will be created around the property with Township easements for public use. The trail will be graded but composed of dirt.

The Board questioned who would be responsible for maintaining the trail. Mr. Ardman stated that the Township would be responsible for the maintenance of the trail.

The Board questioned if edging was proposed around the trail. Mr. Ardman stated that it was not proposed.

Engineer O'Brien inquired if wood chips would be used on the trail as noted on the plan. Mr. Ardman stated that they would confirm with the DEP approval.

The Board questioned the width of the trail. Mr. Ardman stated it was a 6-foot wide walking trail over a 10-foot wide easement.

The Board questioned where the maintenance of the trail would end for the Township.

The Board questioned if a gate was proposed at the end of Mullen Road. Mr. Ardman stated that a gate was not proposed.

The Board questioned if there would be a bridge over the stream corridor. Mr. Ardman stated that there would not be.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ardman explained that anytime there is a stream corridor on the property that is being touched, the DEP has jurisdiction.

Mr. Ardman stated that from a development standpoint, no variances are required however variances are being requested for signage.

Mr. Ardman reviewed the landscaping plan.

The Board expressed concern about the density of the plantings, the soil being used and whether they would be planted in a lawn area or a planting bed. Mr. Ardman confirmed that the applicant would work with the Township planner regarding the details of the landscape plan.

The Board questioned if there would be additional landscaping to buffer the adjacent properties on Maple and Mullen Roads, the elevation, and the limit of disturbance.

Mr. Ardman described the lighting plan as follows: There are decorative pole mounted LED lights, 12-14 feet high proposed to be placed throughout the site. They are all downward facing and there will be no light spillage onto neighboring properties. The internal pathways in the development will be lit but the trail will not be lit. The site will be served by public sewer and water. There will be a private water pump for this project that will be in the clubhouse to ensure adequate water pressure. There are five dumpster enclosures spread evenly throughout the site. They will have a stone face to match the architecture of the buildings. Each dumpster enclosure will have an area for recycling as well. There will also be an oversized dumpster on the east side of the property for larger items.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ardman confirmed that there will be no new sewer mains through the wetlands.

Mr. Ardman spoke to the parking on site explaining that 372 parking spaces are required. He stated that the plan provides 213 surface spaces, 114 garage spaces and 114 driveway spaces for a total of 441 spaces.

The Board questioned if there would be assigned parking spots. Jason Kaplan, principal of the applicant stated that the driveway and garage parking is assigned to the unit, but the surface parking will be unassigned unless issues arise.

Mr. Ardman also explained that 9 ADA accessible spaces are required but 14 will be provided. The Board noted that some of those spots need to be van accessible.

Mr. Ardman stated that there will also be 56 EV (Electric Vehicle) spaces provided as required.

The Board questioned if there would be a schedule for the use of the EV spaces. Jason Kaplan stated that there is an app that notifies the residents when time is up, and their car needs to be moved. He also stated that every garage spot will be prewired for EV setup.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ardman confirmed that some of the ADA spots would be EV ready.

Mr. Ardman confirmed that they would follow the required installation timeline for the EV parking spaces.

Board Engineer Rob O'Brien commented that some of the proposed parking is over the manhole and needs to be addressed.

Mr. Ardman spoke to the stormwater on the site as follows: They are going to be taking the water from the proposed development and roadway into a new stormwater system on site. There are no residential properties downstream from the site. There will be a wet pond on the east side of the property that will be the main volume feature for the site. All the inlets will pipe to the wet pond. All water is getting piped to that basin and the outlet from the basin is going to go east and discharge into the stream corridor. That discharge point is about 150 feet from the nearest property line.

The Board expressed concern about standing water and mosquitos. Mr. Ardman stated that an aerator will be provided which would address that.

The Board questioned if any water would be trapped by the railroad.

The Board questioned what would happen if the pond overflowed and expressed concern about the outside dirt trail being wiped out.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan noted that there was a discussion of using stabilized turf.

Mr. Ardman stated that the intention was naturalization and bio enhancement for that area, but they will look at ways to reinforce that area.

Mr. Ardman discussed that the drainage from the proposed municipal roadway would get piped to the basin and there will be a series of inlets along the road.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ardman confirmed that the proposed development will not cause any additional flooding issues or water problems on the adjacent property.

Mr. Ardman confirmed that they received all required permits from the DEP.

The Board questioned if a fence would be installed around the pond. Mr. Ardman confirmed that a fence would be installed around the whole area.

The Board questioned what happens to the water when it hits the railroad. Mr. Ardman stated that there was a 54-inch culvert there.

The Board questioned the drainage flow at the end of Mullen Road where the cul-de-sac was being installed. Mr. Ardman stated that the water would flow downstream and should not run down the trail.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ardman stated that no curbing is proposed around the cul-de-sac.

The Board questioned if the existing overhead poles would remain. Mr. Ardman confirmed that a new service will need to be brought in so they would likely be taken down.

The Board took a quick break and returned at 9:00 p.m. with all members present.

The Board questioned if any calculations were done to ensure that the 54-inch pipe would be big enough to accommodate the water on the adjoining Regency at Readington development. Mr. Ardman confirmed that calculations and an analysis were done.

Mr. Ardman described the location of the proposed signs as follows: There will be a monument sign at the entrance with the community's name that will be 41.9 square feet, have a stone bottom and be internally illuminated. There will be building ID signs on the upper corner of each building and EV parking signs. The following proposed signs will require variances:

- Property layout sign
- 3 future resident parking signs for the leasing office
- Leasing hours of operation sign
- Barbeque and fire pit rules signs
- Pool rules sign
- Rules and hours for the tot lot sign
- Dog park rules and hours sign
- Package and mail pickup sign

Mr. Ardman provided planning testimony regarding the variances needed for the signs noting that each sign has a specific safety or circulation purpose that will help residents, guests, and emergency services.

Chair Hindle opened the meeting to questions of Mr. Ardman.

Harold Michael Jones questioned how much water can pass through the 54-inch pipe and if their calculations include all of the drainage outlets that go to the stream. He expressed

concerns about stormwater and impacts south of the railroad and from the adjoining lot 4. He also questioned if there were any natural springs found on the property.

The Board asked for clarification as to whether lot 4 was higher or lower grade than the subject property. Mr. Ardman stated that they run parallel.

George Hespe asked for confirmation that the Hionis property and any retail on lots 65 & 66 were not part of this application. Mr. Ardman confirmed they were not. Mr. Hespe also questioned the required setbacks and if the dog leg portion that is proposed on the walking trail on the border of the Regency at Readington was necessary.

Patrick Paul questioned if there would be sidewalks from the applicant's property to the new proposed collector road. Mr. Ardman stated that there would be sidewalks. Mr. Paul also questioned the reason for the trail noting that Mullen Road gets very wet.

Nancy Stevens Kagan questioned if there were plans for development on lot 66. Mr. Ardman noted that the applicant did not own that property.

Jennifer Lee questioned who determined the location of the pathway that leads to the trail and if it can be relocated. Mr. Ardman stated that they will review it.

Michelle Jaunarajs questioned how deep the water pond would be and if the area would be fenced. Mr. Ardman confirmed that it would be fenced, and would be 10 feet deep at the deepest point. She also asked about DEP regulations regarding the flow of water on site.

Mr. Ardman reviewed the reports of the Board's professionals.

Board Environmental Consultant Sean Walsh noted that there was a gap in plantings proposed at the end of Mullen Road. The applicant agreed to put a native seed mix in the area between the end of Mullen Road and where the stream corridor plantings start.

The Board asked Mr. Walsh for clarification on item 3.3 in his report.

The Board questioned how the riparian zone buffer was measured.

It was noted that there would be additional discussion at the next meeting on some items in both the Engineering and Planning reports.

George Hespe returned and asked if there would be traffic testimony. It was confirmed that there would be traffic testimony at the next hearing.

Board Engineer Rob O'Brien asked if there were going to be any changes to the plans for the connection to Route 22 per the DOT (Department of Transportation) approval. Mr. Ardman stated that the DOT required them to remove the proposed left turn lane.

Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman stated that the DOT is currently evaluating median cuts with the intent of closing them or making them safer and recommended that the

Township contact the DOT to request that they reconsider their decision on the original plan proposed with the left turn lane.

Ms. Filler moved, and Ms. Allen seconded, a motion to authorize Board Engineer Jay Troutman to send a letter to the DOT to request that they consider the original plan submitted by the applicant with the proposed left turn lane. The roll call vote follows:

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

It was noted that the applicant will reach out to the Township Fire Official for clarification on his request regarding the additional fire hydrant before the next meeting.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ardman confirmed that there would be generators on the water pump.

The applicant confirmed that they will provide a copy of the Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment for the Board files.

It was announced that the application would be carried to the meeting on December 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. without further notice.

OLD BUSINESS

Chair Hindle reviewed the old business and provided updates on the following:

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

Chair Hindle reminded the Board members to complete their online stormwater training and advise the Board secretary when complete.

Mr. Hendrickson advised that the Township’s tree ordinance was compliant with the State ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

George Hespe inquired about any proposed plans for the Hionis site.

Ms. Filler moved, and Mr. Hendrickson seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marie Lehberger
Planning Board Secretary