

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 11, 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  
Panico  
Villa

**Board Members Absent:**

Mueller  
Cook (recused)  
Izzo (recused)

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

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

Mr. Hendrickson moved, and Ms. Filler seconded a motion to approve the November 13, 2023, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

There were no resolutions presented for Board consideration.

### **TRC UPDATE**

Chair Hindle stated that the TRC met to review an application for tree removal in the SSR Zone in conjunction with the construction of a single-family home and noted due to "D" variances required the jurisdiction of the application will go to the Board of Adjustment.

### **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.

Attorney Bret Kaplan was present on behalf of the applicant.

The following were present and previously 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 present and previously sworn.

The applicant submitted an exhibit packet to the Board with the exhibits marked as follows:

- A-1 Site Aerial
- A-2 Preliminary Major Subdivision Plan
- A-3 Site Plan
- A-4.1 Sign Details
- A-4.2 Sign Data
- A-5 Affordable Housing Plan
- A-6 Building "A" Floor Plans
- A-7 Typical "A" Building Elevations
- A-8 3D Building Rendering

- A-9 Clubhouse Elevation
- A-10 Clubhouse Floor Plan
- A-11 Maintenance Building Plans
- A-12 Fire Truck Turning Exhibit
- A-13 COAH Compliance Analysis
- A-14 Maple Lane Cul-De-Sac Exhibit
- A-15 Easements at Single Family Lots Exhibit
- A-16 Trail Exhibit
- A-17 Municipal Roadway Dimension Plan

F. Mitchell Ardman, the applicant's engineer, was present. It was noted that he was previously sworn and remained under oath.

Chair Hindle stated that she would like to address the items that required follow up from the last meeting as follows:

- The material of the walking trail. Mr. Ardman stated that as per the original developer's agreement for the project, the material for the walking trail will be grass. The applicant will upgrade to a grass paver in areas to address the concerns from the Board regarding any overflow from the detention basin.
- The maintenance of the walkway. It was noted that as long as the trail remains as grass, the applicant would maintain it.
- Mr. Ardman stated that the applicant will add bollards at the end of Mullen Road to prevent vehicular access to the walking trail.
- Mr. Ardman reviewed the proposed signs as highlighted in Exhibits A-4.1 and A-4.2
- Mr. Ardman confirmed that the applicant will work with the Township professionals regarding the details of the landscape plan.
- The elevation of Municipal Road A in relation to existing properties regarding drainage. Mr. Ardman stated that they are basically parallel, noting that there are roadside swales throughout the road that will pick up that drainage so it will not go to the backyards of those houses.
- The applicant will remove the proposed parking spot over the existing manhole.
- The size of the ADA parking spaces. Mr. Ardman stated that they will make them 11 feet wide with a 5-foot aisle.
- On Municipal Road A, water will be piped to the drainage basin and there will be Manufactured Treatment Devices (MTD's). The applicant agreed that the Township will not take responsibility or ownership of the MTD's but will approve stormwater easements within the municipal right-of-way to permit access for maintenance by the applicant. Mr. Kaplan noted that in the event that the adjoining property owner

(Hionis) developed their property, they would expect them to participate in the maintenance cost.

- The water run off on the cul-de-sac at the end of Mullen Road. Mr. Ardman stated that the sheet flow is going down the same path as it goes now and will not go to any of the neighbors.
- Mr. Ardman confirmed that the stormwater flow pattern will not change and it will not be increased.
- The location of the pedestrian path through lots 5.01 and 5.04 from Mullen Road to Municipal Road A. Referencing Exhibit A-15, Mr. Ardman stated that it will be moved from the north side of lot 5.04 to the west side of lot 5.04.
- Mr. Ardman spoke to compliance of the riparian zone buffer with the Township's Stream Corridor Ordinance.
- Referencing Exhibit A-17, Mr. Ardman described the new proposed gravel parking for the Gables that will be required because the new municipal road will run through the existing Gables parking area. Board Planner Michael Sullivan reviewed some conditions regarding the construction of this parking area that would be a requirement of final site plan approval. Mr. Kaplan confirmed that the applicant was withdrawing their request for final approval.
- The Board's Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman confirmed that he sent a letter to the Department of Transportation (DOT) dated November 29, 2023, requesting that they reconsider the original plan presented by the applicant for the connection to Route 22. He noted that they acknowledged the letter and he is awaiting their response.
- Mr. Ardman confirmed that they comply with parking area planting requirements.
- Mr. Ardman stated that he confirmed with the Township Fire Official that there was a typo in his memo regarding lot number 53 and he will work with them regarding the placement of the fire hydrant.
- Referencing Exhibit A-14, Mr. Ardman clarified that the applicant will provide a right of way dedication to the Township for a cul-de-sac at the end of Maple Lane and it will be up to the Township as to whether or not they wish to install it.

Chair Hindle opened the meeting to questions of Mr. Ardman. There were no questions.

Stephen Tietke, the applicant's architect, was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Referencing Exhibits A-5 through A-10, Mr. Tietke provided testimony as follows: They are proposing a multi-family community with a clubhouse, garages for residents and a maintenance building. There are 192 residences, 48 of which are affordable units. The breakdown for the affordable units is 8 one bedroom, 30 two bedrooms and 10 three

bedrooms. The remaining 144 residences are market rate units comprised of 57 one bedroom and 87 two bedrooms. Mr. Tietke reviewed the location of the affordable units throughout the site. The applicant agreed to indicate the detail for the affordable units on the plan for clarification as requested by the Board Planner.

The Board questioned where the access point to the units would be.

Mr. Tietke explained that they are proposing a three-story building with central entries and stair towers. The stair tower takes you to a central corridor where all the units are accessed from. Mr. Tietke described the interior layout of the units. Every unit has a self-contained package in a closet off the balcony that contains the heating and cooling system for each residence. No condensing units are proposed around the building.

The Board questioned how much parking was available for each unit. Mr. Tietke explained that there are limited private garages, noting that for each 10-unit module there are 6 garages with driveways. The residents that rent the garages can park in the garage or the driveway and the other residents can park on the provided surface parking.

The Board questioned if the garages were assigned to a specific unit. Jason Kaplan, principal of the applicant, confirmed that they were but explained that all garages are accessed from a central corridor and the cost for the garage would be built into the rent.

The Board questioned where the parking would be for the affordable units. Mr. Kaplan stated that it would be on the surface parking right outside the building, noting that they do not assign parking unless an issue arises.

The Board questioned where the parking was located in relation to the building. Mr. Kaplan explained that it was located directly across which was typical for these developments.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Tietke confirmed that there were no elevators.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Kaplan stated that there has not been an issue where they had to assign the surface parking at any of their other developments.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan asked if boats and campers were permitted to be parked in the parking areas. Mr. Kaplan stated that oversized vehicles would not be permitted and noted that any commercial vehicles would have to fit within the parking spot.

The Board questioned if the door to the stairwells would be locked. Mr. Kaplan explained that they install a key fob system on the doors with an intercom system for guests.

Mr. Tietke described the exterior elevations for the buildings explaining that they are proposing a mix of stone horizontal and batten style siding to create a modern farmhouse look. The roof will have gables and shed dormers with metal accents. He stated that all the units have their own balcony which are inset within the unit footprint.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan noted that it was called Loggia style.

Mr. Tietke stated that the building height as measured from the average grade to the highest ridge is 45 feet and 50 feet is allowed by ordinance.

The Board questioned if solar panels were considered due to the size of the roof area. Mr. Kaplan stated that each tenant pays for their own utilities, but they would consider it for a shared area such as the clubhouse.

The Board questioned who was responsible for cleaning the outside of the windows. Mr. Kaplan stated that as the landlord they are responsible for the exterior maintenance.

The Board questioned if the garages are on a slope upward or downward towards the building. Mr. Tietke explained that they pitch out and slope out towards the driveway.

Mr. Tietke stated that they are requesting a design exception for the depth in the changes to the wall plane for the 20-unit buildings because they do not meet the 3% requirement if you take an average.

The Board questioned the height from the garage door bottom to the roadway edge. Mr. Ardman stated that there is a range in the slope from the gutter line going around so it is a range between 2.5 inches and 10 inches.

Mr. Tietke described the design of the clubhouse which would match the modern farmhouse style. He explained that there will be lots of amenities for the residents including a large fitness room, a yoga/spinning room, a lounge area, a reception area, a kitchenette, a game room, leasing office and package room. There will be restrooms and two outdoor lounge areas that will surround the pool with some barbeques.

The Board questioned if there are any fire concerns with the barbeques. Mr. Tietke confirmed that although it is covered, it is an open area.

The Board questioned if grills were permitted on resident balconies. Mr. Kaplan stated that they were not.

Mr. Tietke confirmed that there will be a generator as required for the fire pump room.

Chair Hindle opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Tietke.

Patick Paul questioned if there were ground floor units and how wide the stairwells would be to the second and third floors. Mr. Tietke stated that the stairwells would be 4 feet wide with intermediate landings. Mr. Paul asked if there were any elevators. Mr. Tietke stated that there were not. Mr. Paul expressed concern about bringing stretchers down the hallways and stairs in the event of an emergency.

Karl Pehnke, the applicant's traffic engineer, was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. Pehnke provided testimony as follows: There were two traffic studies done

for the project. The first one in March of 2023 which addressed the direct development and the second one with a revision date of October 2023 that supports the Township's application to the DOT (Department of Transportation) for Municipal Road A. The Redevelopment Plan has established and set the parameters of the vision of how access to this project is being accomplished which is via a new municipal road that connects to Route 22 under the direction of the DOT and extends into the site. The applicant has filed on behalf of the municipality, a street intersection application. The applicant's intent is to process the application and construct the improvements that ultimately get approved by the DOT. Mr. Pehnke explained that their original application included turn lanes with some modifications to the median brake at Fire Lane, but the DOT requested that the application be revised to remove those modifications. The Board's Traffic Engineer, via letter, requested that the DOT reconsider their decision and they are awaiting response. The site is well designed and operates mostly as a parking lot once you enter the site. There are two diminimus exceptions being requested from the state wide standards that will result in better plan from a traffic and pedestrian safety standpoint. The site will operate safely and efficiently. With regard to Municipal Road A, the Township police department suggested LED speed signs but it is the applicant's preference to build a speed bump instead.

The Board Engineer Rob O'Brien stated that speed bumps are not preferred because they interfere with snow removal.

Mr. Penhke stated that the Township police department also proposed two push button LED crosswalk signs at the entrance to the development. Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman stated that he agreed with the memo from the police department regarding the LED speed signs but does not think the two LED push button crosswalk signs are applicable at the location suggested.

The applicant agreed to install an LED speed sign at a location to the satisfaction of the Township professionals.

The Board questioned if the LED sign would be visible to the residents on Mullen Road. Mr. Pehnke stated that it would not be.

Mr. Troutman agreed that the site is well laid out with well distributed parking to all of the units.

Board Engineer O'Brien questioned the proposed curb radius. Mr. Penhke stated it would be 47 feet.

The Board questioned the data provided in the traffic report specifically regarding the expected increase in vehicles to the site.

Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman reviewed his report. The applicant agreed to do an updated traffic count at the Routh 22 and Fire Lane U-turn.

Chair Hindle opened the public portion of the meeting to questions of Mr. Pehnke.

Patrick Paul questioned whether a dual axle tower ladder truck would be able to access the site. Mr. Ardman confirmed that a tower ladder truck could make the radiuses and noted that the plan was reviewed by the Township's Fire Official. Mr. Paul also asked for a rendering of the original proposed plan that was submitted to the DOT for Fire Lane. Mr. Pehnke explained the original proposal.

John Hindle questioned if there was a sidewalk on the west side of the entrance road to the development. Mr. Ardman stated that there was a sidewalk on the east side.

Attorney Drill reviewed the items required for preliminary approval.

Chair Hindle opened the public portion of the meeting for comments from the public.

Dominic Mazzagetti was sworn. He stated that he was present representing the Regency at Readington Homeowners Association. He expressed concern about additional traffic as a result of the development and the impacts from stormwater to their property. He asked for assurance that the Township will ensure that it is constructed according to the plan. He also requested that the proposed extension(stub) on the southeast corner of the trail that leads to the conservation easement into their development be eliminated. He read a letter into the record that was sent by their attorney Jennifer Alexander Esq. to the Township Attorney Sharon Dragan Esq. dated December 6, 2023.

Attorney Drill advised Mr. Mazzagetti to make a request for the engineering inspection reports to the Township Committee.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan spoke to the requirements of the Redevelopment Plan.

The Board discussed and it was agreed that the applicant will eliminate the proposed (stub) extension on the southeastern property line and provide an easement to the Township to allow potential development of the trail in the future.

Tara Rossi was sworn and expressed concern about the access to Mullen Road from the trail and requested that additional buffering be added behind her property noting that many trees have recently been removed. The applicant agreed to work with the Township professionals to add additional buffering on Block 36 Lot 60.

The Board expressed concern about ample space for emergency vehicle movement on site.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ardman confirmed that the drainage patterns on the site will remain as they are today and there will be a reduction in the peak flow rates coming off the property.

The Board questioned if the plan was compliant with the Township's Green Streets Policy.

The applicant agreed to make a request to Hunterdon County to add an additional stop for the Link bus on the site.

The public portion of the meeting was closed and the Board began deliberations.

Ms. Filler moved, and Mr. Hendrickson seconded, a motion to approve the Preliminary Major Site Plan, Preliminary Major Subdivision with variances and exceptions application for Camelot at Readington Urban Renewal LLC (Kaplan) with the conditions as discussed. The roll call vote follows:

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

The Board took a 5-minute break and returned at 10:15 p.m. Mr. Cook and Mr. Izzo rejoined the meeting.

**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. Application Checklists-Ongoing
5. Impervious Coverage Subcommittee

Chair Hindle provided an update on the TRC's work on the revised application checklists and the new DIR (Developmental Impact Report).

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business discussed.

**OTHER BUISNESS**

Chair Hindle took a moment to acknowledge and review the work and the efforts of the Planning Board for the year and the goals moving forward in 2024. She also thanked the Board's professionals, administrative staff, and members of the Board for their time and dedication to the Township.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were none.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Panico moved, and Ms. Filler seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Marie Lehberger  
Planning Board Secretary