

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
MEETING – April 15, 2024**

Mayor Mueller *calls the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.* announcing that all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

**PRESENT:** Mayor A. Mueller, Deputy Mayor V. Panico, Mr. J. Albanese, Mr. J. Heller, and Mr. J. Huelsebusch

**ALSO PRESENT:** Administrator R. Sheola (left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.)  
Municipal Clerk K. Parker, Attorney C. Corsini

**ABSENT:** None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Clerk read the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION**  
**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.*, the Open Public Meetings Act, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist and desires to authorize the exclusion of the public from the portion of the meeting in accordance with the act;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the specified subject matter as set forth in the following Exhibit “A.”

**EXHIBIT A**

<b><u>Subject Matter</u></b>	<b><u>Basis Of Public Exclusion</u></b>	<b><u>Date Anticipated When Disclosed to Public</u></b>
Bolarakis, Devoe & Parker vs. Readington....	Litigation.....	Certain information at the discretion of Twp tonight shall remain confidential
Release of Deed Restriction ... (Block 21.12, Lot 25)	Contract Negotiations.....	“ “ “
PBA #317 (Grievance) .....	Contract Negotiations .....	“ “ “
Block 21, Lot 4 (520 Mountain Road).....	Contract Negotiations .....	“ “ “
Municipal Complex (ROSI) .....	Contract Negotiations .....	“ “ “
Block 43, Lot 1 (26 Pulaski Road) .....	Contract Negotiations .....	“ “ “
Executive Session Minutes..... • April 1, 2024	Attorney-Client Privilege.....	“ “ “
Affordable Housing.....	Potential Litigation.....	“ “ “

It is anticipated at this time that the stated subject matter will be made public on or about the time set forth in Exhibit “A.”

2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Heller to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

The meeting reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Mueller led those present in the *Salute to the Flag*.

***Executive Session:***

***Litigation / Bolarakis, DeVoe & Parker vs. Township of Readington***

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

***Contract Negotiations / Release of Deed Restriction (Block 21.12, Lot 25)***

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the release of the deed restriction for Block 21.12 Lot 25, seconded by Mr. Albanese and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

***Contract Negotiations / PBA 317 (Grievance)***

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

***Contract Negotiations / Block 21, Lot 4 (520 Mountain Road)***

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the contract of sale for Block 21 Lot 4, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

***Contract Negotiations / Municipal Complex (ROSI)***

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

***Contract Negotiations / Block 43, Lot 1 (26 Pulaski Road)***

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

***Attorney-Client Privilege/ Executive Session Minutes/ April 1, 2024***

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the Executive Session Minutes of April 1, 2024 for content only, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded. Mr. Panico abstained as he was not in attendance for the entire portion of the meeting.

***Potential Litigation / Affordable Housing***

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mayor Mueller read the following statement:

*All items listed with an asterisk “\*” are considered to be routine by the Township Committee and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a committee member or citizen requests, in which event the item will be removed from the General Order of Business and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.*

1. \* **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** of meetings of April 1, 2024
2. \* **Payment of Bills** – (Complete bill list is on file in Clerk’s Office)

<u>Fund Description</u>	<u>Fund No.</u>	<u>Received Total</u>
GENERAL	3-01	\$ 9,932.43
SEWER UTILITY OP FUND	3-02	\$ 1,447.60
GENERAL	4-01	\$ 2,334,114.87
SEWER UTILITY OP FUND	4-02	\$ 191,773.15
GENERAL	G-01	\$ 5,650.53
OTHER TRUST	X-03	\$ 52,879.38
PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	X-06	\$ 197,049.59
2023 CAP IMPROVEMENTS	X-23	<u>\$ 10,025.75</u>
<b>TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS</b>		<b>\$ 2,802,873.30</b>

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Albanese to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

- Mr. Albanese -Aye
- Mr. Heller - Aye
- Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye
- Mr. Panico - Abstained from approval of April 1, 2024 minutes
- Mayor Mueller - Aye

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** for items listed on the agenda only

There were no comments from the public.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

As it was after 7:45 p.m., A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adjourn the regular meeting to hold a Public Hearing, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON TO AMEND ARTICLE IV  
 “DISTRICT REGULATIONS” OF CHAPTER 148 “LAND DEVELOPMENT”, TO AMEND AN  
 INCLUSIONARY HOUSING ZONE ALSO KNOWN AS AGE-RESTRICTED AFFORDABLE  
 HOUSING-2 DISTRICT (ARAH-2)**

**ORDINANCE #10-2024**

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the governing body

There were no comments

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the public.

There were no comments.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to close the Public Hearing and open the regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

***AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON TO AMEND ARTICLE IV “DISTRICT REGULATIONS” OF CHAPTER 148 “LAND DEVELOPMENT”, TO AMEND AN INCLUSIONARY HOUSING ZONE ALSO KNOWN AS AGE-RESTRICTED AFFORDABLE HOUSING-2 DISTRICT (ARAH-2)***

***ORDINANCE #10-2024***

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Albanese to adopt this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Panico and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adjourn the regular meeting to hold a Public Hearing, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

***AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A DEED OF DEDICATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY DESIGNATED AS A PORTION OF LOT 5.01 IN BLOCK 3.01, ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS 202 HALLS MILL ROAD, READINGTON, NJ 08889***

***Ordinance #12-2024***

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the governing body.

There were none.

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the public.

There were none.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to close the Public Hearing and open the regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

***AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A DEED OF DEDICATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY DESIGNATED AS A PORTION OF LOT 5.01 IN BLOCK 3.01, ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS 202 HALLS MILL ROAD, READINGTON, NJ 08889***

***Ordinance #12-2024***

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Albanese to adopt this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Panico and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye  
Mr. Heller - Aye  
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye  
Mr. Panico - Aye  
Mayor Mueller - Aye

**CORRESPONDENCE / OTHER INFORMATION**

1. Notice to Public Service Electric and Gas Company Electric Customers in ***the Matter of the Petition of Public Service Electric and Gas Company's For Approval of Incremental COVID-19 Costs for Recovery through a New Special Purpose Clause, and for Authorization to Recover Uncollectible Costs for Gas through the Societal Benefits Charge.*** No action taken.
2. Memorandum dated April 4, 2024 from Donna Kukla, RMC, Township of Raritan regarding ***An Ordinance of the Township of Raritan Amending Chapter 296 Entitled "Land Development" of the Code of the Township of Raritan to Creating a New Part 6 Entitled "Tree Removal-Replacement" Adopting and Establishing the NJDEP Tree Removal and Replacement Regulations.*** No action taken.
3. Letter dated December 11, 2023 from Dominick DiRocco, Elizabethtown Gas, in ***the Matter of the Petition of Elizabethtown Gas to Implement an Infrastructure Investment Program and Associated Recovery Mechanism.*** No action taken.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. ***An Ordinance Authorizing the Acquisition of Certain Real Property Known as Block 21, Lot 4 in the Township of Readington, Hunterdon County from Solis***

The following ordinance was offered for introduction:

***AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 21, LOT 4 IN THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON, HUNTERDON COUNTY FROM SOLIS***

***Ordinance #13-2024***

**WHEREAS**, there exists certain real property known as Block 21, Lot 4 on the official tax map of in the Township of Readington consisting of approximately 4.4 +/- acres lands and structures owned by Mario R. Solis, which is commonly known as 520 Mountain Road (“the Property”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Readington (hereinafter the “Township”) has determined that there is a beneficial public interest in acquiring the Property for open space, conservation, passive recreation and/or other public purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township is authorized pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq. to acquire the Property for public purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for this purchase is anticipated to come from a Hunterdon County Open Space Trust Fund Grant, and/or from the Township’s Open Space Trust Fund, and/or NJDEP Green Acres, or other available grant source; and

**WHEREAS**, sufficient funding from the proposed purchase and costs thereof is available from the Township's Open Space Trust Fund; and

**Ordinance #13-2024 cont'd:**

**WHEREAS**, in the interest of negotiating a timely and mutually acceptable voluntary transaction between the Township and the owner of the Property, it is and has been the policy of the Township to negotiate with the owner of the Property on the basis of fair market value; and

**WHEREAS**, the purchase shall be made subject to and in accordance with the conditions set forth in the Contract of Sale on file with the Township Clerk's Office, and any agreed-upon amendments thereto, for a negotiated price of \$ 300,000, plus acquisition and closing costs of approximately \$20,000 for an estimated total of \$320,000; and

**WHEREAS**, the transaction is subject to Seller's demolition and removal of all structures and debris on the property at Seller's expense, and satisfaction of other conditions as set forth in the contract, a satisfactory deed and other conveyance documents for the Property being submitted to the Township at closing of title on the Property, County, and Green Acres' approval, as may be necessary for initial funding, or reimbursement thereof, as applicable.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington in the County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey, as follows:

**Section One.** For the reasons set forth above, which are incorporated herewith as if fully repeated herein, the Township Committee hereby authorizes the purchase of the property known as Block 21, Lot 4 on the official tax map of the Township of Readington (520 Mountain Road) from Mario R. Solis for a purchase price of \$300,000, plus \$20,000 in anticipated acquisition and closing costs, and conditioned upon satisfaction of the conditions set forth in the contract, and the receipt of a grant from the Hunterdon County Open Space Trust, or grant source. A maximum up to \$320,000 including acquisition and closing costs, is authorized to be appropriated from the Township's Open Space Trust Fund, as applicable or as necessary to complete the transaction. The Township is authorized to accept and record the Sellers' deed with the Office of the Hunterdon County Clerk following the closing of title on the Property.

**Section Two.** The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Administrator, Township Clerk of the Township and designated Township Attorney are hereby authorized and directed to take all reasonable, necessary and lawful steps including execution of any and all necessary documents, toward the acquisition of said Property, in the manner and subject to the terms and conditions specified above, and are further authorized and directed to make the aforesaid payment to the owners of the Property.

**Section Three.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances deemed to be inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed.

**Section Four.** This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon final adoption and publication in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to introduce this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

*The Public Hearing was scheduled for May 6, 2024 at 7:45 p.m.*

2. ***Emergency Stabilization for Historic Taylor's Mill Site***

Pat Fisher Olsen, Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, provided brief overview of the Taylor's Mill Historic Preservation Plan Project's history. Ms. Olsen highlighted the urgent need for emergency stabilization to Taylor's Mill due to damage caused by the recent earthquake. Ms. Olsen sought approval to allocate funds from the Open Space Trust Fund for these repairs. Ms. Olsen stated she is obtaining a cost estimate for the repair by the week's end and will promptly share it with the Township Administrator upon receipt.

3. ***Application for Special Event Permit / Bishops Wine and Spirits (Food Truck Event)***

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the special event permit, seconded by Mr. Albanese and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye  
Mr. Heller - Aye  
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye  
Mr. Panico - Aye  
Mayor Mueller - Aye

4. ***Application for Special Event Permit / Morris Area Freewheelers Foundation Revolutionary Ramble***

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the special event permit contingent upon following the requirements by the police, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye  
Mr. Heller - Aye  
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye  
Mr. Panico - Aye  
Mayor Mueller - Aye

5. ***Application for Special Event Permit / Carlos Amarilla Shipping Container***

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the special event permit, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye  
Mr. Heller - Aye  
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye  
Mr. Panico - Aye  
Mayor Mueller - Aye

6. ***Request to Hold Annual Coin Toss Fundraiser / Whitehouse Fire Company***

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the coin toss fundraiser, seconded by Mr. Albanese and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye  
Mr. Heller - Aye  
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye  
Mr. Panico - Aye  
Mayor Mueller - Aye

7. ***Resolution of the Board of Adjustment - Report on Variance Applications***

The Committee discussed the Board of Adjustment Annual Report and noted that the Planning Board Subcommittees will be reviewing the items.

***ATTORNEY'S REPORT***

Attorney Corsini stated that he had nothing further to report.

***COMMITTEE REPORTS***

**JOHN ALBANESE**

Mr. Albanese stated that he had nothing further to report.

**JONATHAN HELLER**

Mr. Heller reported that the annual Raritan Headwaters stream cleanup will be this weekend.

**JUERGEN HUELSEBUSCH**

Mr. Huelsebusch reported that there will traffic safety meetings this week and the next Open Space walk will on the Pleasant Run. Mr. Huelsebusch further reported that they had another successful seedling giveaway event and thanked all the volunteers.

**VINCENT PANICO**

Mr. Panico reported that recreation summer camp is full, and they are continuing to work on planning the Memorial Day parade. Mr. Panico also provided an update on museum programs.

**ADAM MUELLER**

Mayor Mueller reported that the budget process is ongoing. Mayor Mueller also reported that the Department of Public Works is accepting debris drop-off from residents, noting that the information is posted on the Township website.

***COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC***

Barbara Nastro inquired about time restrictions for garbage pickup, stating that LMR is picking up garbage at 5 am. Ms. Nastro also asked for an update on Solberg Airport.

Melissa Adams requested consistent updates regarding Solberg Airport. Ms. Adam inquired about outcome of the alleged harassment by a member of the Recreation Committee against a member of the community.

***COMMENTS FROM THE GOVERNING BODY***

As there was no further business, ***A MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico at 8:20 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Submitted by:

Karin M Parker, *RMC*  
Municipal Clerk