

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
August 15, 2019**

The Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Harwick at 7:30 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting had been duly advertised.

Board Attorney Warner swore in the Board members as follows:

1. Christina Albrecht- Regular Member
2. Samuel Tropello- Alternate #1
3. Karen Mittleman -Alternate #2

ROLL CALL

Albrecht, C.
Harwick, A.
Kirk, T.
Mittleman, K.
Ryan, P.
Tropello, S.

Board Members Absent

Goodwin, M
Mueller, A.

It was noted that Chair Goodwin is recused from the Hunterdon Brewing Company application and Mr. Mueller was out of town on business.

Ms. Kirk moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded a motion to approve Ms. Goodwin and Mr. Mueller absences as excused. The motion carried unanimously.

Others Present:

Board Attorney Steven Warner, Esq.,
Board Planner Andrea Malcolm
Board Engineer John Hansen
Scott Kennel for Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman
Board Environmental Consultant Jack Szczepanski
Christina Schwartz, Zoning Officer
Board Secretary Ann Marie Lehberger

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ryan moved, and Ms. Kirk seconded a motion to approve the July 18, 2019 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Hunterdon Brewing Company LLC

Appl# ZB 17-011

Block 36 Lot 44.02 – 12 Coddington Road

Preliminary Major Site Plan with Variances for Site Modifications

Nicole Voigt, Esq. was present on behalf of the applicant. Ms. Voigt gave a brief historic background on the applicant Hunterdon Brewing Company noting that they took occupancy of this site in 2012 and explained that the current application was for

Preliminary Major Site Plan with "C" variances as well as 1 "D" use variance for the screening of outdoor storage. She further explained that the application includes improvements that have already been installed on site that they were not aware required site plan approval. These include repaving of the parking areas, new concrete mechanical pads, trees and new exterior lighting fixtures. The applicant also proposes additional improvements that include an automatic driveway gate to prevent third-party trucks from entering the site in the evening, the construction of a fence in the side yard to screen outdoor storage and changes to the fire suppression basin. In addition, to address the noise concerns from the adjoining residents on Ditmar Blvd., the applicant proposes a landscape buffer at the rear property line as well as other daily operational changes.

The following individuals were present for the applicant:

Paul Sterbenz, PE, applicant's engineer
Brian McGuire, VP of Operations for Hunterdon Brewing Company
Ryan Walsh, Operations Manager for Hunterdon Brewing Company
James Kyle, PP, applicant's planner
Ed Caballero, PE, applicant's stormwater engineer
Jack Zyburra, PE applicant's noise consultant

The applicant's professionals and the Board's professionals were sworn .

Exhibits presented:

- A-1 Colorized Version of Sheet #2 of Site Plan -Existing Conditions
- A-2 Colorized Version of Sheet # 4 of Site Plan- Dimension Plan
- A-3 Aerial Map of Site dated 1978

Paul Sterbenz, PE was sworn and accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. Sterbenz described the property and provided testimony as follows: The existing conditions on the site contains an existing building that is 146,000 square feet, driveway, sidewalks, parking areas, loading areas and a retention basin that is used for fire suppression. There is also an undeveloped portion of property on the westerly boundary that is primarily wooded. There is a band of wetlands in the wooded area. The applicant has received a letter of interpretation from the state of NJ. There was previous site plan approval on the property in 1978. There was an increase to the impervious coverage of 15,883 square feet since the approval in 1978, 4,000 of which was installed by the current owner. There were no records found of approvals for the increase of impervious coverage. It was suggested by the Board's professionals that the applicant request a variance for the entire 15,883 square feet of increase in impervious coverage.

A member of the Board questioned if any approvals were received from the DEP regarding the stream that runs in the back of the property. Mr. Sterbenz noted that their stormwater engineer will address the stormwater aspects of the site.

Mr. Sterbenz continued his testimony as follows: The applicant plans to continue the current wholesale warehouse office use with some operational changes to address the noise complaints received. The changes made are predominantly between the hours of 10 pm and 7 am. The main purpose of the application is to install landscaping along the

westerly and southernly boundaries to screen elements of the use from the adjacent residential development, install a vehicular gate to prevent third party truckers from entering the facility after 10 pm and install stormwater management improvements to address the imperious coverage increases. The applicant is not proposing to change parking loading or traffic circulation aisles except for the establishment of a staging area within the main driveway. The purpose of the staging area is to provide a place for loaded trucks to park overnight. There are 93 off street parking stalls and 12 loading stalls for loading and unloading.

The Board expressed concern about emergency vehicles accessing the site if needed with the trucks lined up in the staging area.

Mr. Sterbenz reviewed the variances and design exceptions that the applicant is requesting as part of the application and addressed some of the comments made by the Board's professionals in their reports.

Vice Chair Harwick opened the public portion of the meeting for questions.

Richard Adamecs of 33 Ditmar Blvd. was present and stated that he arrived late to the meeting and asked for the applicant's engineer to restate his name and qualifications.

The Board took a short break and returned at approximately 9:10 pm with all members present.

Brain McGuire, Vice President of Operations of the parent company for Hunterdon Brewing Company was present and provided testimony as follows: Hunterdon Brewing Company is craft beer distributor. They store and distribute craft beer to the entire state of NJ. In 2016 they started receiving noise complaints from the residents on Ditmar Blvd. To address these concerns, they have made several improvements. They repaved the parking lot, which was in poor condition, installed trees and added new lights to direct lighting downward. They also installed backup up cameras in all their company trucks will kill switches that when activated will silence the back- up alarms. Signs were also installed indicating that third party vehicles were not allowed on site at night. They discontinued refueling of the trucks in the evening and added hydraulic levelers that are significantly quieter. They also have had meetings with neighbors to address their concerns.

A member of the Board asked for clarification as to what the third- party trucks are. Mr. McGuire explained that they are craft brewing trucks that are delivering the product to the site for storage and distribution.

A member of the Board questioned the size of their own trucks. Mr. McGuire stated that they do have some semi-trucks but noted that most of the trucks are 20 -foot box trucks.

Ryan Walsh, operations manager for Hunterdon Brewery Company was present and provided testimony as follows: There are 32 vehicles in the Hunterdon Brewery fleet that are used as delivery vehicles. There are four 32-foot tractor trailers, twenty 28- foot box trucks and the remainder are 20- foot box trucks. On an average 24 trucks are used per

day. The sales reps work from home and orders are sent in electronically. Each of their retail accounts has a specific day that orders are processed, and the orders are generally consistent in size.

A member of the Board asked about the number of employees. Mr. Walsh explained that based on how the shifts work, the most employees on site in the warehouse at any given time is 76, noting that the peak times were between 12 pm and 2 pm and that during the third shift which starts at 6pm there would be no more than 9 employees.

Mr. Walsh explained that they have set up an online appointment schedule for the third-party truckers making deliveries to ensure that outside trucks do not come to the site after 5 pm.

A member of the Board asked why a gate was needed. Mr. Walsh explained that this would be a deterrent to ensure that no third- party trucks would access the site in the evening.

Mr. Walsh explained that 24 trucks are loaded each night for deliveries for the following day. The goal is to load the first 12, park them and then bring in the next 12 in to finish loading. All loading is done by 10 pm. There is no truck movement on site after 10 pm. No trucks leave the site before 6 am. Most of the trucks leave the site between 7 am and 9 am each morning.

A member of the Board questioned how many trucks can fit in the staging area. Mr. Walsh stated that up to seven trucks can fit in the staging area.

The Board attorney questioned if their operational procedures are in a written document. Mr. Walsh stated that it was and noted that they would bring a copy to the next meeting for the Board and its professionals to review.

Mr. Walsh also explained that the way the trucks are spaced on the driveway, there is room for two-way truck traffic by utilizing a portion of the grass area.

A member of the Board asked if the gate would be illuminated. Mr. Walsh noted that additional lighting can be added if needed for safety.

A member of the Board asked if anyone would be sleeping in any of the trucks overnight. Mr. Walsh stated that there would not be.

Mr. Walsh confirmed that another facility owned by the same parent company was opened recently in Secaucus NJ that has allowed Hunterdon Brewing Company to divert some of its business to that facility over the past year. This has allowed them to implement the new operational procedures that are currently in place.

A member of the Board questioned if the trucks were diesel fuel. Mr. Walsh confirmed that they were all diesel fueled. He further noted that the engines would remain off in the staging area and would only be turned on in the morning when they were leaving for delivery.

A member of the Board questioned what the gravel area would be used for. Mr. Walsh explained that they store the empty trailers when they are not in use.

The Board Planner requested that all outdoor storage areas be clearly identified on the plans.

Scott Kennel, the Board's traffic engineer questioned how employees will access the site through gate after hours. Mr. Walsh indicated that the department manager who was working at night would have key access to the gate.

Mr. Walsh also noted that all kegs are now loaded onto the trucks on wrapped pallets which avoids any potential noise from kegs being dropped.

A member of the Board expressed concern about safety on Route 22 when the larger tractor trailers are exiting the site during peak hours.

The Zoning Officer questioned if the security guard that they currently have on the site at night would remain after the gate is installed. Mr. Walsh indicated that they would not be there once the gate was installed and in operation.

Vice Chair Harwick opened the public portion of the meeting for questions.

Richard Adamecs of 33 Ditmar Blvd. was present and noted that he recently heard noise from back-up alarms on the trucks that were being used on the site. Mr. Adamecs expressed concern about how the noise would be monitored going forward to ensure they stay in compliance. Christina Schwartz, Zoning Officer confirmed that she as well as a member of the police department have been trained and certified to take noise measurements. Mr. Adamecs also expressed concern about air quality.

A member of the Board questioned Mr. Adamecs as to whether he has noticed a change in the amount of noise at the site after 10 pm over the past year since the new operational procedures have been put in place. Mr. Adamecs was sworn and stated that he purchased his home in 2015 and that there has been some improvement in the amount of the noise after 10 pm but noted that there it is still a lot of noise during the day.

The application will be carried to the meeting on September 19, 2019 at 7:30 pm. with no further notice required.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryan moved, and Ms. Kirk 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
Zoning Board Secretary