

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
December 19, 2019**

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Goodwin at 7:35 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

Albrecht, C.
Goodwin, M.
Harwick, A.
Kirk, T.
Maurer, C.
Mittleman, K.
Mueller, A.
Ryan, P.
Tropello, S.

Others Present:

Board Attorney Steven Warner, Board Planner Michael Sullivan, Board Engineer John Hansen and Board Secretary Ann Marie Lehberger

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Harwick noted one minor typo correction. Chair Goodwin abstained.
Mr. Harwick moved, and Mr. Mueller seconded, a motion to approve the October 17, 2019 minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTIONS

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
Approved with conditions 10/17/19

Board Attorney Warner read a proposed change to condition #4 as follows:

“The applicant shall submit an operations plan that sets forth the changes that have been represented by the applicant to already have been made, and to continue prospectively, to the way the business operates (i.e., diverting truck traffic to other locations, hydraulic lifts, wrapping the kegs, etc. and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Township Zoning Officer and the Township Planner, in their reasonable discretion”

Mr. Harwick questioned whether a time frame should be set for the applicant to submit the operations plan. The Board agreed that the applicant would be required to submit the operations plan for review within 60 days of the date of the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Mueller moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded, a motion to approve the resolution for Hunterdon Brewing Company as amended. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albrecht		X	X					
Goodwin								X
Harwick			X					
Kirk			X					
Mueller	X		X					
Ryan			X					
Tropello			X					
Mittleman (Alt #1)			X					
Maurer (Alt #2)							X	

PUBLIC HEARING

Countryside Veterinary Hospital
 Appl# ZB 19-009
 Block 72 Lot 23.02, 1025 County Road 523
 Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan with Variances- Addition

Anthony Koester, Esq. was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Koester described the location of the subject property. He explained that the site is 2.148 in size and is improved with a one-story ranch-style building that has been used as an animal hospital for approximately 30 years. Mr. Koester stated that the applicant’s proposal is to expand the existing building to modernize the facility and bring it closer to what the technological veterinary standards are today. He explained that the proposal includes an 1,844 square foot expansion that would bring the total square footage of the building to 6,238 square feet. Mr. Koester noted that there were previous approvals on the site that were granted in 1982, 1986, 1990, and 1993. He also stated that the applicant’s current proposal requires a d (1) variance for the expansion of the non-conforming use, a d (4) variance for FAR as well as other site plan exception relief.

The following individuals were present for the applicant:

- Dr. Wayne Randolph, applicant
- Wendy Randolph, applicant
- George Folk, PE, applicant’s engineer
- Edward O’Brien, AIA, applicant’s architect
- James Kyle, PP, applicant’s planner

Exhibits presented:

- A-1 Colorized rendering of the sheet 3 of the plans
- A-2 Aerial photograph
- A-3 Plans showing the existing and proposed conditions
- A-4 Colorized version of sheet PRE-A-2, depicting the lower level layout
- A-5 Colorized version of sheet PRE-A-1, depicting the main level layout
- A-6 Colorized version of sheet PRE-A-3, depicting the proposed elevations

Dr. Wayne Randolph, Wendy Randolph, George Folk, PE, James, Kyle, PP and Edward O'Brien, AIA were sworn in for testimony. Board Planner Michael Sullivan and Board Engineer John Hansen were also sworn.

Dr. Wayne Randolph was present and explained that he and his wife Wendy operate the veterinary hospital. He provided testimony as follows: The veterinary hospital serves residents in the Readington and Flemington areas. The proposed improvements are necessary because the existing building is 55 years old and needs to be repaired and brought into compliance with current operating standards. The practice treats companion animals, such as dogs, cats, rabbits, and guinea pigs but not larger farm animals. The office is open six days a week from 8:00 am to 7:30 pm. There are currently 16 parking spaces on the site which is more than adequate so there will not be a need for additional parking. Dr. Randolph stated that he currently has nine employees and noted that he does not plan to hire any additional staff because he does not expect to have additional clients as a result of the expansion. He explained that the proposed expansion is designed to help improve his ability to provide the best possible services to his existing clients.

The Board questioned if it would be possible to modernize the facility using the existing footprint without expanding. Dr. Randolph explained that the expansion will increase the number of exam rooms from two to four rooms and will make it easier for the employees to go between exam rooms, treatment areas, surgery suite, and pharmacy. He also noted that the additional space will also help reduce conflicts between animals.

The Board questioned if they plan on remaining open during construction. Mr. Randolph stated that they intend to stay open.

The Board questioned if he is the only veterinarian at the practice. Dr. Randolph explained that he is currently the only veterinarian, but noted that, in the past, he has had another doctor available.

Chair Goodwin opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Dr. Randolph. There were no questions.

George Folk, PE, the applicant's engineer was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. Folk described the existing and proposed conditions on the site. He provided testimony as follows: The proposal is to demolish the northern half of the building that exists today and rebuild it slightly larger with bigger rooms that will be more efficient. An ADA compliant parking space and new walkway to the entrance will be installed. The proposal also includes a new septic system that has been approved by the Board of Health. There is an existing frame barn in the back of the property that will be used for cold storage items. Mr. Folk stated that the applicant agrees to comply with the comments in the Board Engineer's review letter.

Mr. Folk explained that there are currently decorative lights along the driveway and the applicant proposes to install four 12-foot-high light poles in the existing parking area. Mr. Sullivan, the Board Planner, recommended that the Board grant the requested site plan exception relief for the distance between the light poles. Mr. Folk stated that the applicant

would agree to shield the proposed light fixtures so that they will not produce glare onto Route 523. The applicant also agreed to use a timer for the lights so all lighting, except for any security lighting would be shut off by 10:00 pm. Mr. Folk also noted that they plan to use a storage pod during construction.

The Board questioned how they would be able to remain open during construction. Dr. Randolph explained that they will temporarily reconfigure the remaining portion of the building.

The Board questioned where garbage is stored. Dr. Randolph stated that they are big recyclers and just use the containers for regular garbage pickup. He also noted that they use a company to come in to take away any deceased animals or medical waste.

Chair Goodwin opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Folk. There were no questions.

Edward O'Brien, AIA., the applicant's architect was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. O'Brien explained that he began working with the applicant 10 years ago and noted that over that time, the applicant considered many different options to attempt to modernize the building without having to expand the footprint. Mr. O'Brien further explained that the applicant determined that such an expansion was necessary to allow them to make the necessary improvements. Mr. O'Brien described the existing layout and the proposed renovations. He provided testimony as follows: The size of the building is not going to dramatically change, it will look nicer, but most importantly it will allow the applicant to improve the functionality of the office. The lower level currently functions as a surgical and treatment suite for animals. The existing stairs to the lower level are not currently code compliant so new stairs will be installed that will be code compliant. The balance of the lower level will house a furnace, water treatment equipment and electric panels. The main level will be renovated to have a large room with a pharmacy, treatment areas and a lab. The new exam rooms will be 8 feet by 10 feet in area and will include an examination table, sink and a chair. He explained that employees will be able to access the exam rooms from a rear door that connects to the pharmacy, lab, and treatment areas. Mr. O'Brien advised that the renovations would be ADA compliant and would also improve the functionality of the building for handicapped people. Mr. O'Brien explained that the proposal will require the installation of a different HVAC system and that the applicant will retain a mechanical engineer to design the system if the application is approved. He also noted that the ramp in the front of the building will be compliant with ADA requirements as noted in the memo from the Township Construction Official.

The Board questioned the location of the HVAC units. Mr. O'Brien explained that there are currently ground mounted units that will be replaced with new ones in the same area. He explained that the lower level of the building operates at a different temperature than the main level and confirmed that the applicant will work with the mechanical engineer to locate the units in an appropriate place with the required screening.

Mr. O'Brien described the proposed building materials and architectural style. He explained that the building would have a green metal roof, horizontal siding, residential style

windows, columns, and exterior colors that will complement the rural character of the neighborhood.

The Board questioned whether a lift is proposed to help get larger animals down to the surgical area. Dr. Randolph stated that one was not proposed, noting that he did not believe it would be necessary as their current system is working well.

The Board questioned if a generator is proposed. Dr. Randolph stated that one was not proposed at this time.

Dr. Randolph also noted that they do board a very limited number of animals at different times that is restricted to only their patients.

Chair Goodwin opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. O'Brien. There were no questions.

The Board took a ten-minute break at 9:00 pm and returned at 9:10 pm with all members present.

James Kyle, PP, the applicant's planner was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. Kyle summarized the requested variance relief and the existing conditions at the site. He provided testimony as follows: The use began as a home occupation in the 1980's and was then expanded to be just a veterinary practice in 1990. The site is particularly suited for the veterinary use because the use has existed in different intensities since the 1980's without any issues. The location of the property on a major highway makes it easily accessible to clients from Readington and Flemington. There are a limited number of residential neighbors and Schaefer's Farm own's the lot to the west. The proposal will benefit the general welfare by creating a better experience for the clients and a more modern facility that is ADA compliant. It provides enough space for a variety of uses, and facilitates the more efficient use of land, particularly because the renovation allows the applicant to maintain his practice in its current location, rather than relocating it. The number of patients and employees is not anticipated to increase as a result of the expansion and the hours of operation will remain the same. The property is also substantially buffered. Mr. Kyle noted that the applicant would work with the Board Engineer or Planner to have a night light test done on the property to ensure there is adequate lighting at the site. Mr. Kyle stated that the existing sign will be removed, and it will be replaced with a smaller sign that is 14 square feet in area.

The Board questioned whether the sign would be internally lit. Mr. Kyle stated that lighting is not proposed for the sign. He noted that the sign will be an improvement and will help clients find the entrance.

Chair Goodwin opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Kyle. There were no questions.

Chair Goodwin opened the public portion of the meeting for comments.

Paul Dos Santos of 1027 Route 523 was sworn and stated that he has lived next door to Dr. Randolph's office for the past 10 years and has had no issues. He stated that he was in full support of the application.

Mr. Koester provided closing comments and the Board began deliberations.

Mr. Mueller moved, and Mr. Tropello seconded, a motion to approve the application for Countryside Veterinary Hospital with conditions. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albrecht			X					
Goodwin			X					
Harwick			X					
Kirk			X					
Mueller	X		X					
Ryan			X					
Tropello		X	X					
Mittleman (Alt #1)								
Maurer (Alt #2)								

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryan moved, and Ms. Kirk seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Ann Marie Lehberger
 Zoning Board Secretary