

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
February 16, 2023**

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Mittleman 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.

ROLL CALL

Bola, E.
Hendry, D.
Kirk, T.
Mittleman, K.
Maurer, C.
Nees, S.
Roglieri, C.
Saad, A.
Coates, E.

Others Present:

Attorney Matt Flynn for Board Attorney Steven Warner, Esq., Board Planner James Clavelli, Board Engineer Rob O’Brien, and Board Secretary Ann Marie Lehberger

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Coates abstained
Ms. Kirk moved, and Mr. Nees seconded, a motion to approve the January 19, 2023 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTIONS

Hunterdon Brewing Company, LLC

Block 36 Lot 44.02 – 12 Coddington Road
Appl# ZB17-011-Request for 1-year extension of time to file Final Major Site Plan Application

Ms. Kirk moved, and Mr. Nees seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution for Hunterdon Brewing Company LLC. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Bola							X	
Hendry			X					
Kirk	X		X					
Mittleman			X					
Nees		X	X					
Maurer							X	
Roglieri			X					
Saad (Alt #1)							X	
Coates (Alt #2)			X					

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Joy & Clarke Hedrick
Appl# ZB22-015- Variance- Deck Expansion
Block 51.02 Lot 38- 6 Springtown Road

Attorney Erica Edwards was present on behalf of the applicant. Ms. Edwards explained that the prior owner of the property received an approval from the Board in 2019 for the construction of the home. She stated that the applicant is present this evening seeking variance approval for some modifications of that approval.

The following were present and sworn in for the applicant:

Clarke Hedrick, applicant
James Mantz, applicant's engineer
Mark Remsa, applicant's planner

Board Engineer Rob O'Brien and Board Planner James Clavelli were also sworn.

Clarke Hedrick, the applicant was present and explained that he and his wife purchased the property a year ago when they moved from Long Island to live closer to family. He stated they were before the Board seeking variance relief to correct some drainage issues they are having and to beautify the lot with some new plantings, fencing, walkway, and expanded deck.

The Board asked for more detail on the drainage issues. Mr. Hedrick explained that there is pooling of water in the yard that gets worse with each rainstorm as well as water in the basement during bad storms.

Chair Mittleman opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Hedrick. There were no questions.

James Mantz, the applicant's engineer was accepted by the Board as an expert witness.

Mr. Mantz presented the following exhibits that were marked into evidence as follows:

- A-1 Colorized updated variance plan
- A-2 Copy of variance plan enlarged to show detail
- A-3 Photograph of rear of property
- A-4 Photograph of north of house
- A-5 Photograph looking east into conservation easement area
- A-6 Photograph of northwest of home
- A-7 Photograph of onsite flooding
- A-8 Photograph of neighboring property to south
- A-9 Photograph of neighboring property to south
- A-10 Planting sketch
- A-11 Planting list

Mr. Mantz provided an overview of the existing conditions on the property as follows: It is a residential property that is 88,000 square feet in size with frontage along Springtown Road.

The Pleasant Run tributary sits across Springtown Road to the west of the site. There is a heavily wooded area containing a man-made ditch that qualifies as a stream to the east and other homes to the north and south. He explained that as part of the prior approval in 2019, the then-owner received wetlands and flood hazard delineations and a permit to construct the principal residence from the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection). He noted that Township Ordinance requires 150-foot stream corridor/riparian buffers and any non-permitted activity in those buffer areas requires variance relief. Mr. Mantz further explained that the prior owner obtained variance relief from the Board to construct the home and associated improvements within the stream corridor area and into the conservation easement. He described the current proposal as follows:

- Extend the existing deck to the rear by approximately 14 feet
- Install a blue stone walkway with grass-separated steppingstones and landscaping into the rear lawn area
- Replace existing split-rail fence with an aluminum fence along the backyard area, a portion of which is also in the eastern conservation easement
- Stormwater management improvements to address issues on the property

Mr. Mantz explained that the existing split-rail fence does not contain the applicant's dogs in the yard. He also noted that there is ponding of stormwater to the north of the existing home which appears to be a result of the dwelling settling into the soil following its construction in 2019.

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

The Board asked for clarification on the DEP regulations versus the Township regulations regarding the stream corridor.

The Board asked what type of vegetation was currently in the easement. Mr. Mantz explained that it is mostly meadow grass and thistle.

In response to a question from the Board regarding the flow of stormwater, Mr. Mantz explained that the proposal involves installing three one-by-one-foot inlets to capture stormwater and a two-foot-wide stone-filled trench with pipes to discharge the water collected from the inlets westerly into the conservation easement area.

The Board asked for clarification as to the changes to the plan from the original submission.

The Board questioned what was underneath the deck. Mr. Hedrick stated that there is soil and gravel underneath.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Hedrick confirmed that the existing foundation of the deck will remain but he will be replacing the floorboards and repairing a damaged footing.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Mantz confirmed that the propane tank is underground.

The Board questioned if the new proposed fencing could be constructed outside of the conservation easement. Mr. Hedrick stated that it would conflict with the propane tank existing unground.

Board Attorney Flynn noted that approval from the Township Committee is required for any proposed site work in the dedicated conservation easement.

Mr. Hedrick described the photos he took that were marked as exhibits A-6 through A-9.

The Board questioned what the proposed walkway would be constructed of. Mr. Remsa stated that it would be stepping stones with grass in between.

The Board expressed concern about additional water that may go into Pleasant Run Tributary since there is already an existing flooding problem there. The applicant agreed to install an energy dissipator at the outlet point of the proposed drainage pipe and ensure all inter-trench piping was properly perforated.

The Board questioned the width of the stone walkway. Mr. Mantz stated that it will be 2 feet wide.

In response to a question from Board Engineer Rob O'Brien, Mr. Mantz confirmed that most of the water that they are dealing with on the property comes from offsite.

In response to a question from Board Planner, Mr. Mantz confirmed that no trees will be removed.

The Board questioned if drywells were considered. Mr. Mantz stated drywells are not proposed.

Chair Mittleman opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Mantz. There were no questions.

Mark Remsa, the applicant's planner was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Referencing exhibits A-10 and A-11, Mr. Remsa described the landscaping that is proposed around the foundation and out to the stone area. He stated that all of the plant material that will be used are native species that are deer resistant readily available in the area.

Mr. Remsa provided planning testimony and described the variances that are needed for the application as follows:

Variiances

- §148-50.b(2) Deck in stream corridor.
- §148-50.b(2) Bluestone walk in stream corridor.
- §148-50.b(2) Plantings in stream corridor.
- §148-50.b(2) Fence in stream corridor.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion- 2022 Annual Report

The Board discussed the 2022 Annual Report and new recommendations. It was noted that it will be added to agenda for the March meeting for further discussion and adoption.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Hendry 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