

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING
September 14, 2020**

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Monaco 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.

CHAIR MONACO ANNOUNCED THAT IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR AND IN AN EFFORT TO FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES RECOMMENDED BY THE CDC, THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY FOR ALL BOARD MEMBERS, BOARD PROFESSIONALS, APPLICANT AND APPLICANT'S TEAM, ANY INTERESTED PARTIES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

ROLL CALL

Board Members in Attendance:

Albanese, J.

Allen, J.

Cook, J.

Duffy, E.

Filler, C.

Heller, J.

Mueller, A.

John, C

Monaco, R.

Rohrbach, T

Others Present

Board Attorney Jonathan Drill, Esq., Board Planner Michael Sullivan, Board Engineer Rob O'Brien, Board Conflict Engineer Larry Plevier, Board Environmental Consultant Jack Szczepanski, Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman and Board Secretary Ann Marie Lehberger

MINUTES

Ms. Filler abstained. Ms. Allen moved, and Mr. Cook seconded a motion to approve the August 24, 2020 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTIONS

Bellemeade Development Corporation

Block 2.01 Lots 9.01 & 11

Request for 4.5-year Extension of Final Major Site Plan Approval for Halls Mill Farm Office Complex

Approved 7/13/20

Mr. Mueller moved, and Ms. Allen seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution for Bellemeade Development Corporation. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albanese							X	
Allen		X	X					
Cook							X	
Filler							X	
Heller							X	
John			X					
Mueller	X		X					
Duffy							X	
Monaco			X					
Rohrbach			X					

Ryland Developers LLC

Appl# PB20-001- Block 14 Lots 29.02 & 29.03, Old Route 28
 Preliminary & Final Major Subdivision
 Approved 6/8/20

Ms. Allen moved, and Mr. Cook seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution for Ryland Developers. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albanese			X					
Allen	X		X					
Cook		X	X					
Filler			X					
Heller			X					
John							X	
Mueller			X					
Duffy			X					
Monaco			X					
Rohrbach			X					

PUBLIC HEARING

Bishop & Bishop Lands LLC

Block 21.13 Lot 15, 431 Route 22
 Appl# PB19-013- Amended Site Plan – Site Improvements for Bishop’s Market

Attorney Lawrence Cohen was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Cohen explained that the applicant was present seeking amended site plan approval with variances for a proposed facade update at an existing shopping center known as Bishop’s Plaza.

The following individuals were present and sworn in for the applicant:
 Susan White, property manager for the applicant
 Al Polanski, applicant’s architect
 Ray Liotta, applicant’s planner and landscape architect

Board Planner Michael Sullivan and Board Engineer Rob O'Brien were also sworn.

Susan White, project manager for the applicant gave some history on the property and provided testimony as follows: The site is approximately 44,700 square feet in total. The proposal is to update the currently outdated facade with new colors and finishes that will make it more modern and aesthetically pleasing. Slight modification to the existing lighting, walkways and signage are also proposed. Ms. White stated that there has never been any issue with parking on site noting that no changes to the parking are proposed. She explained that there is an existing water tank on the site that is used for the sprinkler system and it is inspected by the Township yearly. Ms. White confirmed that they were seeking a variance for the number of signs per tenant but explained that the number of signs would remain the same as what currently exists.

The Board questioned if there was another location on site where the pallets could be placed because they are currently stored within the parking area at the rear of the shopping center. Mr. Cohen stated that the site has more parking spaces than required.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan noted that per the Township Ordinance, the outdoor storage of the pallets must be enclosed or screened. The applicant agreed to enclose the outdoor storage of the pallets and amend the plans to eliminate the number of parking spaces needed for the storage area.

Chair Monaco opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Ms. White. There were no questions.

Al Polaski, the applicant's architect was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. Polaski explained that the purpose of the proposed facade design is to update the facility, provide some differentiation, tower elements and redefine the front entrance to the market. He noted that they are proposing to remove the existing sign on the market building and relocate the sign to the main front entry tower of the market. Mr. Polaski noted that the materials proposed for the new facade would be cultured stone, aluminum coated panels, stonewood panels and thin brick veneer. He explained that the use of the different materials would help to differentiate the spaces. He further explained that the colors will be off white, blue, red and gray tones. He explained that the sign on the market will be reduced in size from 75 square feet to 47 square feet and relocated to the entry way for easier identification. He noted that the sign will be white panel with led lights behind. Mr. Polaski also noted that they are proposing a concrete pad and fencing for the dumpster enclosure.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan recommended that masonry wall enclosures be used for both the trash and outdoor storage.

There were some Board members that expressed concern about how the proposed materials for the building facade such as the aluminum panels would blend in with the existing buildings on Route 22 that are mostly brick.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan asked for clarification on the colors of the aluminum panels

that are proposed. Mr. Polaski noted that they would be blue, red, and gray tones.

The Board questioned how the aluminum panels hold up in bad weather. Mr. Polaski explained that they were sturdy composite panels.

The Board questioned if the free-standing signs would be changed to also match the new facade. The applicant agreed to change both free-standing signs to be in line with the aesthetic look of the new facade.

Chair Monaco opened the public portion for questions of Mr. Polaski. There were no questions.

Ray Liotta, the applicant's planner and landscape architect was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr. Liotta explained the variances requested as part of the application as follows:

- **Facade Sign Area Variance**
A new 47.25 square feet facade sign is proposed for Bishop's Market, exceeding the maximum 12 square feet permitted by the ordinance.
- **Facade Sign Number and Area Variances** (One facade sign per tenant is permitted, with a maximum sign area of 12 square feet)
 - 2 signs totaling 23.33 square feet are proposed for Giovanni Pizza tenant
 - 2 signs totaling 23.33 square feet are proposed for liquor store tenant
 - 4 signs totaling 46.66 square feet are proposed for dance studio tenant

Mr. Liotta confirmed that the size of the spaces for those tenants with more than one sign are larger in square footage. He further noted that the number of signs that currently exist for the tenants would remain the same and in the same location. He explained that only the sign for the market will be reduced in size and moved to another location. Mr. Liotta reviewed the proposed lighting plan for the site. He explained that the applicant proposes new building mounted lights which include recessed downlights mounted below the walkway roof, decorative sconce lighting on the support columns for the walkway roof and decorative ribbon lighting along the tower cornices. Mr. Liotta confirmed that the lighting meets the ordinance requirements and will increase the pedestrian area illumination to common retail standards. Mr. Liotta stated that proposal also provides a significant upgrade aesthetically to a site that has existed in the Township for many years and will benefit the public and support the purpose of the zone.

Chair Monaco opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Liotta. There were no questions.

Mr. Liotta noted that the applicant is requesting an exception for the requirement of installing additional screen plantings around the outside perimeter of the parking area along Route 22 because the site is slightly lower and already well landscaped.

Mr. Cohen provided closing comments. The Board discussed and determined that the

enclosure for the dumpster would be masonry and the enclosure for the pallets would be vinyl slat fencing. It was determined that an exception would be granted for the screen plantings along Route 22.

The Board discussed imposing a condition that the applicant would work with the Township Planner to find potential alternative materials and color designs for the facade that would be more consistent to what already exists on Route 22. Chair Monaco asked the Board secretary to poll the Board to for a decision. The roll call vote was as follows:

Member	Yes	No
Albanese	X	
Allen*		
Cook	X	
Filler	X	
Heller		X
John		X
Mueller		X
Duffy	X	
Monaco	X	
Rohrbach	X	

* It was noted that Ms. Allen was present but not audible

Ms. Duffy moved, and Mr. Cook seconded, a motion to approve the application for Bishop and Bishop Lands LLC with the conditions discussed. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albanese			X					
Allen						X*		
Cook		X	X					
Filler			X					
Heller			X					
John			X					
Mueller			X					
Duffy	X		X					
Monaco			X					
Rohrbach			X					

*It was noted that Ms. Allen was present but not audible

Ryland Inn Property LLC

Block 14 Lot 29- 111 Old Highway 28

Appl#PB18-011- Amended Preliminary & Final Site Plan with Variances

Attorney Jay Bohn was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Bohn explained that since the last hearing, all the plan changes requested by the Board’s professionals had been

completed.

The following individuals were present and sworn in for the applicant:
 Brian Murphy, the applicant's engineer

Board Planner Michael Sullivan, Board Conflict Engineer Larry Plevier, Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman and Board Environmental Consultant Jack Szczepanski were also sworn.

Mr. Murphy, the applicant's engineer briefly reviewed the changes that had been made to the plans as requested by the Board's professionals.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan, Board Conflict Engineer Larry Plevier, Board Traffic Engineer Jay Troutman and Board Environmental Consultant Jack Szczepanski confirmed that the applicant had satisfactorily addressed all the outstanding comments in their reports.

Mr. Bohn noted that in addition to the Amended Preliminary Approval for Phases 1B, 2 & 3 and Final Approval for 1B and 2 that the applicant seeking, the applicant is also requesting that the approval restart the statutory period of protection.

There was a brief discussion regarding the installation of a sidewalk.

Chair Monaco opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Murphy. There were no questions.

Chair Monaco opened the public portion of the meeting for comments. There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Filler moved, and Mr. Albanese seconded, a motion to approve the application for Ryland Inn Property LLC with the conditions discussed. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albanese		X	X					
Allen						X*		
Cook			X					
Filler	X		X					
Heller			X					
John			X					
Mueller			X					
Duffy			X					
Monaco			X					
Rohrbach			X					

* It was noted that Ms. Allen was present but not audible

OTHER BUSINESS

Zoning Map Adjustment- Block 38 Lot 4

Board Planner Michael Sullivan explained that a proposed amendment to the zoning map has been prepared in order to address a practical inconsistency in the boundary between the PO Professional Office and R-1 Residential zones. He noted that this amendment is limited to the boundary located on Block 38 Lot 4, a single lot having frontage on both US Route 22 and Coddington Road.

The Board questioned how this would impact the surrounding residential neighborhood. Board Planner Michael Sullivan explained there would be a 50-foot buffer required.

Ms. Duffy moved, and Ms. Filler seconded, a motion to recommend the proposed Zoning Map Amendment for Block 38 Lot 4 to the Township Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

Affordable Housing Update

Board Planner Michael Sullivan provided a brief update for the Board regarding the recent compliance hearing noting that the Township was issued a conditional judgement of repose which means they have 120 days from August 27th to finish the remaining items that were agreed to in the settlement with Fair Share Housing Center and the court. He noted that they are currently working to complete those items.

Ordinance Referral

Ordinance# 26-2020

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 148, Land Development, Article II “Definition of Terms” Section 148-9 “Definitions”, Article IV “District Regulations”, Section 148-15 “AR Agricultural Residential Zone”, Article IV “District Regulations”, Section 148-16 “RR Rural Residential Zone”, Article V “Conditional Uses, Exceptions, Modifications and Critical Areas” Section 148-49 “General Exceptions and Modifications”, Article VI “General Provisions” Section 148-51 “Accessory Buildings and Structures”, of the Code of the Township of Readington.

Ms. Duffy moved, and Mr. Albanese seconded, a motion to advise the Township Committee that the Board finds Ordinance #26-2020 to be not inconsistent with the Master Plan. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albanese		X	X					
Allen						X*		
Cook			X					
Filler			X					
Heller			X					
John			X					
Mueller			X					
Duffy	X		X					
Monaco			X					
Rohrbach			X					

*It was noted that Ms. Allen was present but not audible

Public Hearing
Master Plan Amendment

Amendment to the “Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards” element of the Township of Readington Master Plan

Chair Monaco, Mr. Albanese and Mayor Heller recused themselves and left the meeting. Ms. Allen was also recused and was removed from the meeting by the host. Vice Chair Liz Duffy took over the meeting.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan was sworn. Mr. Sullivan gave an overview of the proposed amendment and explained that the amendment is to the primary introductory component of the Master Plan which is meant to provide an overview of the policies of the Township. He further explained that this proposed amendment addresses a small portion of the goals and objectives related to circulation and replaces the existing language in the circulation section regarding the Solberg Hunterdon Airport.

Board member Rohrbach requested that there be a clarification on the wording on page 5 regarding the location of the critical wildlife habit. It was noted that it would be changed to read “the lands surrounding the airport facility”. Mr. Sullivan also provided clarification on the turf runways.

Vice Chair Duffy opened the public portion of the meeting for questions of Mr. Sullivan. There were no questions.

Vice Chair Duffy opened the public portion of the meeting for comments. There were no comments.

Ms. Filler moved, and Mr. Mueller seconded, a motion to close the public hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Mueller moved, and Mr. Cook seconded, a motion to adopt the Master Plan Amendment with the revision as discussed. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Albanese								X
Allen								
Cook		X	X					X
Filler			X					
Heller								X
John			X					
Mueller	X		X					
Duffy			X					
Monaco								X
Rohrbach			X					

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cook moved, and Mr. Mueller seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marie Lehberger
Planning Board Secretary