

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**June 10, 2024**

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Villa 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.

**ROLL CALL**

**Board Members in Attendance**

Allen  
Barton  
Becker  
Hendrickson  
Izzo  
John  
Mueller  
Panico  
Villa  
Hindle

**Others Present**

Board Attorney Jonathan Drill (virtually), Board Planner Michael Sullivan, and Board Secretary Ann Marie Lehberger.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Panico moved, and Mr. Mueller seconded a motion to approve the May 13, 2024, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

There were no resolutions presented for Board consideration.

**ADJOURNMENTS OF ANY SCHEDULED HEARINGS OR MOTIONS**

There were none

**TRC UPDATE**

Chair Villa stated that the TRC will continue to work on the new application checklists.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were no public hearings.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ryland Inn Property LLC  
Block 14 Lot 49- 111 Old Route 28  
Request for Extension of Time

Attorney Jay Bohn and Engineer Brian Murphy were present on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Bohn explained that the applicant was seeking an extension on previous approvals for the following:

- Preliminary approval as to Phase III and zoning protections associated therewith, for a period of one year, from February 8, 2024, to February 8, 2025
- Final approval as to Phases IB and II and zoning protections associated therewith, for a period of two years, from February 8, 2023, to February 8, 2025
- The time within which to obtain a certificate of occupancy as to Phases IB and II, from March 30, 2023, to February 8, 2025

Mr. Murphy provided an overview of the phases on the site stating that Phases 1A and 1B are completed, Phase II, the hotel, is currently under construction and Phase 3 is still undetermined. He noted that they received preliminary approval for a catering hall for Phase III.

Mr. Murphy explained that they have experienced delays in obtaining the necessary materials to complete the construction of the hotel.

The Board questioned if they were considering something different for Phase III. Board Attorney Drill explained that if it is an insubstantial change, they can submit an amended final site plan application but if it is a substantial change, it will be a new application and an amended preliminary site plan application would be required and, therefore, subject to the current zoning requirements.

Mr. Bohn reviewed the prior approvals and extensions that the applicant received from the Planning Board.

The Board questioned what stormwater requirements the applicant was under for the project. Mr. Murphy stated that they were under the 2020 requirements.

The Board questioned the status of the installation of the stormwater improvements.

In response to a question from the Board Planner Michael Sullivan, Mr. Murphy stated that the entire site would have to be redesigned in order to comply with the 2022 stormwater regulations.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Sullivan confirmed that the issues on the site from 2017 regarding trees have been resolved.

The Board questioned the stormwater flow on site. Mr. Murphy stated that the bulk of the water stays on the site.

The Board questioned if they were keeping the banked parking. Mr. Murphy stated that that they were keeping it but do not expect to need to construct it.

The Board questioned if the hotel would be open to the public. Mr. Murphy stated that it would be primarily used for wedding and other event guests.

Mr. Panico moved, and Mr. Mueller seconded, a motion to approve the extension request for Ryland Inn Property LLC. The roll call vote follows:

Member	Motion	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Not Eligible	Recused
Allen			X					
Barton			X					
Becker			X					
Hendrickson			X					
Izzo			X					
John			X					
Mueller		X	X					
Panico	X		X					
Villa			X					
Hindle							X	

**OLD BUSINESS**

Chair Villa reviewed and provided updates on the old business as follows:

1. Sign Ordinance- Ongoing
2. Municipal Climate Resilience Planning-Ongoing
4. Application Checklists-Ongoing
5. Business Corridor Subcommittee-Ongoing

Mr. Becker spoke to recent amendments to the MLUL (Municipal Land Use Law) that require municipalities to incorporate a climate change related hazard vulnerability assessment into the master plan and conduct a build out analysis when amending the master plan.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan explained that the MLUL has been amended a few times since 2018 and the requirements governing the preparation of a municipal land use plan element have been amended to require the incorporation of a build out analysis and a climate change related hazard vulnerability assessment. He noted that any amendment to, or new, land use plan element must include those components in order to comply with the statute.

Board Attorney Drill explained that if the governing body wanted to do an amendment to the zoning ordinance that was totally inconsistent with the master plan, the Board could amend the land use plan element of the Master Plan, or the governing body could adopt the ordinance under the existing land use plan element but would have to adopt a statement of reasons explaining why the ordinance amendment that was inconsistent with the Master Plan was being adopted. Mr. Sullivan confirmed that amending the Master Plan was not triggered by zoning but rather by the need or desire to update the land use element of the master plan. Attorney Drill read the MLUL requirements outlined in N.J.S.A 40:55D-28b.

Chair Villa noted that the Business Corridor Subcommittee will be meeting again and will bring the discussion on the Route 22 Corridor to the full board on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

## **OTHER DISCUSSIONS**

### **Discussion- Sign Ordinance Amendments**

Board Planner Michael Sullivan reviewed the proposed changes as follows:

- Align with the US Supreme Court decision in the matter of Reed v. Gilbert, 2015, which mandates a “content-neutral” approach to the regulation of signs
- Align with the 2021 US Supreme Court decision in the matter of City of Austin, Texas v. Reagan National Advertising of Texas Inc., which allowed the regulation of off-site signs in a different manner than on-site signs, provided such regulation does not apply “...to particular speech because of the topic discussed or message expressed.” (in other words, the regulation of off-site signs is content-neutral)
- Prohibit billboards and off-site signs
- Simplify temporary sign regulations while providing ample opportunity for political speech in all zones of the Township
- Establish a maximum size of temporary signs, but eliminating the maximum permitted number of temporary signs that may be displayed on a property
- Reduce the administrative burden on the regulation and enforcement of temporary sign regulations by exempting conforming temporary from having to obtain permits
- Ensure the ability for the agricultural industry, located within the rural and agricultural districts that also permit single family residential uses, to display permanent signs
- Updating the zone districts that require zone-specific sign regulations within this chapter
- Update the requirements for changeable copy signs to reflect contemporary operation of digital, changeable copy signs
- Classify and define flagpoles and flags as a permanent type of sign, differentiating from other classes of temporary signs, and permitting in all zone districts
- Increase the number and size of flags that may be displayed on a flagpole
- Amend several definitions in Article II related to signs to effectuate the amended regulations

It was noted that there was a typo in the ordinance reference under sign illumination.

The Board discussed more clearly defining what a flagpole is and the importance of enforcement of the ordinance.

The Board also questioned how the Historic Districts would be referenced in the ordinance.

Mr. Sullivan will make changes as discussed and send it to the Board secretary to forward to the Township Committee for their consideration.

### **Discussion- Second Dwelling Ordinance Draft**

Mr. Panico explained that based on the feedback from the Board at the last meeting the subcommittee discussed and proposed doubling the minimum number of acres required to 20 acres in the RR zone, 32 acres in the AR zone and 40 acres in the SRR zone which affects a total of 45 total properties. He noted that he provided a spreadsheet for the Board to review.

Ms. Allen stated that she reviewed all the properties and noted that some are preserved bringing the total down to 41 properties. She questioned the goal of the ordinance.

Mr. Panico stated that the goal of the ordinance is based on feedback received from other neighboring towns within the county and within the region to allow residents who own large properties to build a second home on their property to make the land generational because their feedback says that it preserves open space, protects from development, and keeps people within the town.

Ms. Allen expressed concern about impacting the agricultural viability of the property and protecting the environmental features not covered by regulation.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding what would be required by the Township for the construction of the home.

Mr. Mueller spoke to putting a second 3,000 square foot home on a large property having a negligible impact on a farm's viability.

Chair Villa asked if bulk standards could be created for two dwellings on a lot.

Mr. John spoke to the consistency of the ordinance with the master plan.

Mr. Hendrickson spoke to climate resiliency and questioned the demand, noting that there is a protocol in place for them to go to the Board of Adjustment,

Mr. Becker questioned whether residences have to meet the stormwater regulation requirements per section 148-65 C(1) of the ordinance. Board Attorney Drill indicated that the stormwater regulations would apply to a single family home because it is not preempted by RSIS (Residential Site Improvement Standards) and the regulations that will apply will either be those that apply to a minor development or those that apply to a major development as per Township ordinance.

Chair Villa stated that he would like to carry the discussion to another meeting noting that he would like to see specifics in writing from people that want bulk requirements, setbacks, floor area ratio, impervious coverage, and stormwater requirements.

It was suggested that the Board Engineer and Zoning Officer be present for the continued discussions.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Mueller moved, and Mr. Panico seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Marie Lehberger  
Planning Board Secretary