

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL ONLINE SPECIAL MEETING – JUNE 12, 2020**

Mayor Heller *calls the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.* announcing that all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

PRESENT: Mayor J. Heller, Deputy Mayor J. Huelsebusch, Mr. J. Albanese, Mrs. BA Fort and Mr. B. Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator Mekovetz, Attorney S. Dragan

ABSENT: None

Mayor Heller led those present in the *Salute to the Flag*.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ***A Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Readington Approving the Creation and Administration of an Emergency Temporary Approval Process for Outdoor Dining and/or Business Operations due to the COVID-19 Pandemic***

Mr. Albanese explained that the Governor issued an Executive Order (No. 150) to allow temporary outdoor dining in establishments normally not be permitted to do so if it was not approved in the original site plan when the development was constructed. Mr. Albanese continued that it is incumbent upon the businesses following the proper guidelines as outlined in the Executive Order along with the State Department of Health Directive (No. 20-014).

Administrator Mekovetz briefly explained the application process and indicated that holders of liquor licenses are also required obtain a permit through the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control POSSE system and, with the proper municipal approvals, the license would then be issued through the State of New Jersey.

Mrs. Fort maintained that many of the restaurants in town are located in strip malls where there may not be a designated outdoor dining location; therefore, the businesses may wish to appropriate parking spaces for the outdoor dining. Administrator Mekovetz stated that the applicant would be submitting a sketch of the designated location which will be reviewed by the Police Department to ensure the safety of the patrons.

Mayor Heller inquired if the patrons would have access to the indoor bathroom facilities. what sanitizing procedures would be in place and how they will be monitored. Attorney Dragan stated that the restaurants must be in compliance with the Executive order and the County Board of Health would be responsible for the enforcement.

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2020-61

***A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
READINGTON APPROVING THE CREATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF AN
EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROVAL PROCESS FOR OUTDOOR DINING
AND/OR BUSINESS OPERATIONS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC***

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey, through Executive Orders 103, 104 and 107, et seq. forced the closure of and otherwise restricted eating establishments, bars and other retail businesses deemed “non-essential” due to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

Resolution #R-2020-61 cont'd:

WHEREAS, as a result of the Governor's Executive Order No. 150 issued on June 3, 2020, beginning on June 15, 2020 at 6:00 a.m., the State will begin to relax these restrictions, allowing restaurants, bars, dining establishments and non-essential retail businesses to operate either indoors in a limited capacity, outdoors only or a combination of both; and

WHEREAS, restaurants, cafeterias, dining establishments, food courts, bars and all holders of a liquor license with retail consumption establishments (collectively "food or beverage establishments") will be permitted to offer in-person service at outdoor areas only, provided they operate in accordance with the conditions set forth in Executive Order 150, which requires among other things, that they conform to applicable local, State and Federal regulations and that social distancing guidelines are followed in accordance with CDC and DOH safeguards, including ensuring that patrons remain appropriate distances while dining, providing smoke-free environments and other changes of operations; and

WHEREAS, the State Department of Health has issued Executive Directive 20-014 setting forth further compliance requirements for food and beverage establishments; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Readington does not currently have an ordinance permitting outdoor dining; however, it recognizes that restaurants and businesses are critical to the vibrancy of Readington Township and to ensure that our local restaurants and businesses can be successful, the Township Committee desires to provide opportunities to quickly and easily expand to outdoor dining space to promote compliance with the Governor's orders; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has determined that this resolution is an appropriate emergency measure, that it shall take effect immediately and that it is imperative to provide assistance to Readington Township's food and beverage establishments to help them continue their operations under the orders of the Governor and to maintain public safety while doing so.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Committee does hereby authorize the following in support of continuing and expanding business operations within the Township:

1. The Township Committee authorizes the Zoning Official to implement an abbreviated and emergency application process to allow food and beverage establishments to quickly, safely and efficiently utilize outdoor areas to conduct operations consistent with the State's modified requirements as set forth in the Governor's Executive Order 150 and Department of Health Executive Directive 20-014, copies of which are attached hereto and made a part hereof.
2. The process for the abbreviated application is intended to result in an approval by the Zoning Official of a temporary and emergency zoning permit to conduct the required operations outdoors, in parking areas, grassed areas and drives, so long as they are done in a manner consistent with the safety of the public and all patrons, the expressed conditions of Executive Order 150, State Department of Health Executive Directive No. 20-014 and any subsequent Executive Orders which continue to place limitations on such businesses.
3. The Zoning Official shall consult with the Township Engineer, Township Administrator, Police Chief, Construction Code Official, Fire Official and County Board of Health to ensure consistency with her determination of safety.
4. In response to the State Alcoholic Beverage Commission's actions providing an abbreviated process for the expansion of licensed premises to both contiguous and non-contiguous areas in order to expand the consumption areas to these expanded areas, the Township Clerk is authorized, upon consultation with the Police Chief, to approve such expansion of premises applications through the State's system.

Resolution #R-2020-61 cont'd:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to each of the following officers of the Township:

- A. Police Chief
- B. Zoning Official
- C. County Board of Health
- D. Township Attorney
- E. Construction Code Official
- F. Township Engineer
- G. Township Fire Official

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Albanese to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Smith with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were none.

As there was no further business, A ***MOTION*** was made at 8:30 a.m. by Mrs. Fort to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Respectfully Submitted:

Vita Mekovetz, RMC/MMC/QPA
Municipal Clerk