

**TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON**

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DONATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC PARKLAND PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 73, LOTS 23.01 AND 25 ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF READINGTON TOWNSHIP AND BLOCK 28, LOT 1 AND BLOCK 37, LOT 1 ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF RARITAN TOWNSHIP, AND LOCATED ON 20 AND 24 RIVER ROAD, AND 189 AND 191 ROCKAFELLOW'S MILL ROAD, TO THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, FOR CONTINUED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION AND PASSIVE RECREATION PURPOSES**

**Ordinance #26-2024**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Readington ("Township") owns property known as Block 28, Lot 1 and Block 37, Lot 1, (commonly known as 20 and 24 River Road) in the Township of Raritan, and Block 73, Lots 23.01 and 25 (commonly known as 189 and 191 Rockafellow's Mill Road) in the Township of Readington consisting of a total of approximately 15.611+/- acres, (hereinafter "Property" or "Parkland") which was purchased pursuant to Ordinance # 10-2023 with the intention of preserving it for open space, conservation, passive recreation, and/or other public purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Property purchase was funded through a 50% NJ Green Acres Grant of \$333,000, Grants of \$111,000 each provided from the Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Fund to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Raritan Headwaters Association, and Hunterdon Land Trust, and contributions of \$13,000 each from Readington and Raritan Townships. Upon closing with the former property owners (Beitz), those entities transferred their interests to the Township of Readington for \$1.00 for eventual conveyance to the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection ("State of New Jersey DEP") for management by New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife, as part of the South Branch Wildlife Management Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Property is adjacent to other parkland owned by the State of New Jersey which is managed by the New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife, and the bulk of the Property is subject to Green Acres rules and regulations in accordance with the conditions of funding, as well as the County of Hunterdon's Open Space Trust fund rules as regulations, as set forth in the Township's deed; and

**WHEREAS**, the donation and transfer of the Property to the State of New Jersey DEP, with the existing Green Acres restrictions will result in the permanent preservation of the Parkland for the same goals and purposes as purchased by the Township and its funding partners so that it is not necessary for the Township to hold title to it on behalf of the public; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township is permitted to donate, convey and transfer ownership of the property pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12-13 et seq., 40A:12-20, N.J.A.C. 7:36-25.5, et seq., Readington Township Code Section 39-1, etc. pertaining to its Open Space Trust Fund, and any other applicable law.

***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED*** by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey, as follows:

Section 1. The aforementioned preambles are incorporated herewith as if fully set forth herein.

Section 2. The Township of Readington shall donate and convey to the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection the public parkland owned by the Township known as Block 28, Lot 1 and Block 37, Lot 1, (commonly known as 20 and 24 River Road) in the Township of Raritan, and Block 73, Lots 23.01 and 25 (commonly known as 189 and 191 Rockafellow's Mill Road) in the Township of Readington consisting of a total of approximately 15.611+/- acres, (hereinafter "Property" or "Parkland"), as a donation, subject to Green Acres rules and restrictions against disposal or diversion to a use other than open space, conservation and passive recreation purposes, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:8C-1 and N.J.A.C. 7:36, as may be amended or supplemented, as well as the restriction of the Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Plan, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:12-15.1, et seq., as may be amended and supplemented.

Section 3. On behalf of the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Township Administrator, Clerk and Township Attorney, or Special Counsel, as appropriate, are authorized to prepare and sign any and all documentation necessary to effectuate the donation of the Property to the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection in accordance with Section 2 above, together with any other documents required by the State of New Jersey, and shall take all action necessary to transfer the property pursuant to Green Acres rules and regulations pertinent to administrative transfers set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:36-25.5, et seq.

Section 4. Severability.

If the provision of any article, section, subsection, paragraph, subdivision or clause of this Ordinance shall be judged invalid by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such Order or Judgment shall not affect or invalidate the remainder of any such article, section, subsection, paragraph or clause and, to this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

Section 5. Effective Date.

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon final adoption and publication according to law. A copy of this Ordinance shall be recorded in the Hunterdon County Clerk's Office.

A TRUE COPY THE ORDINANCE WHICH IS PRINTED ABOVE WAS INTRODUCED AT THE MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE ON **SEPTEMBER 3, 2024** AND IT IS THE INTENTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON TO TAKE PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITS REQUEST TO TRANSFER THE PARKLAND TO THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEP AND CONSIDER PASSAGE OF SAID ORDINANCE AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

TO BE HELD AT THE READINGTON TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 509 COUNTY ROUTE 523, WHITEHOUSE STATION, NEW JERSEY 08889, ON **OCTOBER 21, 2024** AT 7:45 P.M. AT WHICH TIME AND PLACE, OR AT ANY TIME OR PLACE TO WHICH THE MEETING SHALL BE FROM TIME TO TIME ADJOURNED AN OPPORTUNITY WILL BE GIVEN TO ALL PERSONS WHO MAY BE INTERESTED THEREIN TO BE HEARD CONCERNING SAID TRANSFER REQUEST AND ADOPTION OF SAID ORDINANCE.

Alternatively, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:36-25.5 (a) (3), written comments on the transfer of ownership may be directed to: Karin Parker, Township Clerk, Readington Twp. Municipal Building, 509 County Route 523, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889, Phone number: (908) 534-4051, ext. 223, or via email at: [parker@readingtontwp-nj.org](mailto:parker@readingtontwp-nj.org), and shall be accepted until 14 days after the public hearing date at which time the public comment period shall end. Please send a copy of any comments submitted to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration, Public Land Compliance Section, P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 401-07B, Trenton, N.J. 08625-0420 or to [PublicLandCompliance@dep.nj.gov](mailto:PublicLandCompliance@dep.nj.gov).

Transfer of the parkland is subject to the approval of the Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration.