

READINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
February 23, 2015

The Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Filler at 7:36 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

Members present: Julia Allen, Jerry Cook, Elizabeth Duffy, Cheryl Filler, Betty Ann Fort, Christopher John, Ronald Monaco, Ben Smith

Also present: Attorney, Trishka Waterbury Cecil
Engineer, Steve Brightly
Planner, Michael Sullivan

Members absent: Marygrace Flynn

MINUTES:

A Motion was made by Ms. Fort, seconded by Ms. Allen, that the Minutes of January 12, 2015 be approved as circulated. Motion was carried with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

CORRESPONDENCE:

It was noted that Steve Foster, Chair Environmental Commission, and Samuel Tropello, Township Committee, are in attendance at the hearing scheduled for February 23, 2015 to discuss the Pleasant Run Loop proposed by Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company.

OTHER BUSINESS

A Motion was made by Ms. Fort, seconded by Mr. Smith, to appoint Harold Maltz, Hamal Associates, Inc., as traffic engineer. Motion was carried with the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Ms. Allen, Mr. Cook, Ms. Duffy, Ms. Filler, Ms. Fort, Mr. John, Mr. Monaco, Mr. Smith

Nays: None recorded.

PUBLIC HEARING

**Ryland Inn Property, LLC
Block 14, Lot 29
Site Plans**

Present for Applicant: Jay Bohn, Attorney
 William Tanner, Engineer
 Gabe Bailer, Planner and Project Manager
 Jose Carballo, Architect
 Frank Cretella, Owner

Attorney Cecil advised the Board that Applicant noticed the hearing several times due to postponements at the request of Applicant or cancellations due to weather. An extension was granted until the end of January. The Board confirms with Applicant, that the extension has been granted through this evening's meeting.

Attorney Bohn confirmed the extension. He advised that since October, the Applicant has submitted revised plans, met with and received approval from the Historic Preservation Commission ("HPC") and conducted a productive meeting with the professionals.

Attorney Bohn advised that Applicant was before the Board seeking preliminary approval of Phase IB, II and III. The phases will include a catering hall, renovations and reuse of buildings currently on-site and a hotel.

Exhibit A-4 was introduced: Architect Plans, dated February 19, 2014 (submitted December 9, 2014) prepared by Jose Carballo

Mr. Carballo described the property that consists of the main building (Ryland Inn), two (2) houses, a stone cottage, barn, stable, silo, cottage and a bakery building. Applicant will be renovating the buildings on-site and building a hotel on the western side of the property and a second banquet hall behind the Ryland Inn. He testified that the two (2) houses will be converted with new exteriors and interiors. The addition of a handicap-accessible bathroom will replace the current porch on one house. The first floor of this house will include a foyer, game room, bedroom/bathroom, sitting area, dining room and kitchen. The second floor will include four (4) bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms and a barber room. This house will primarily be used by the groom and groomsmen ("Groom's Dwelling").

Mr. Carballo advised that the second house would have no additions or expansions. The first floor includes a sitting room, dining area, kitchen and bedroom with handicap-accessible bathroom. The second floor includes four (4) bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms, sauna,

Jacuzzi, beauty parlor and mani/pedi area. This house will primarily be used by the bride and her attendants ("Bride's Dwelling").

Mr. Carballo indicated that the cottage would be cleaned up both internally and externally. The inside would include a sleeping area, lounge and bathroom.

Mr. Sullivan inquired as to whether Applicant had provided materials and colors to the HPC for approval.

Mr. Carbello testified that decisions had not been made regarding colors at this time.

Mr. Carbello described the barn and stable as being at a ninety (90) degree angle to one another. Applicant intends to join the buildings with a central area that will include bathrooms. The intended use of the buildings is as a conference hall and demonstration kitchen. In addition, Applicant intends for this space to include an outdoor, covered breakfast area. The second and third floor of the barn will be removed, opening the space to twenty-six (26) foot ceilings.

Mr. Carbello advised that the stone cottage will remain as-is, the exception is the addition of a handicap-accessible ramp. The bakery will be resided, this being the only change to the building.

Applicant is proposing a hotel on-site. It will be located in the western most portion of the property. The building will be three (3) stories and include forty (40) guest rooms.

Mr. John confirmed that the height of the building is forty-five (45) feet.

Mr. Monaco inquired as to the next highest elevation on the property.

Mr. Carbello explained that the Ryland Inn stood at the same height.

Several Board members expressed concern regarding the size of the hotel and the implementation of a lot of empty space in the plans.

Applicant also proposes a building that will be comprised of a banquet hall and ceremony space. The building will be located behind the Ryland Inn on the eastern side and be designed as a series of barns. A silo will be included in the design of this space that stands forty-five (45) feet in height.

Mr. Sullivan expressed concern about the height of the silo as it is not a principal structure. As such, the maximum height cannot exceed thirty-five (35) feet. (See Readington Township Land

Development Ordinance §148-22.2) Mr. Carbello advised that Applicant would lower the height of the silo to conform to the applicable ordinance.

It was noted that the plans exceed the requirements for impervious coverage in the zone, but at this time the Board does not know the extent of the deviation.

Exhibit A-5 was introduced: Phasing Plan page 6 of 32, dated December 5, 2014

Mr. Tanner described the phasing of the project and the on-site parking lots. He advised that there would be 229 parking stalls, which is lower than the required number of stalls, but is sufficient for this site. Most of the parking on-site will be valet. As the site will accommodate week day business conferences, and weddings (or similar functions) on the weekends, there will be no overlap and enough parking stalls to function adequately.

Applicant advised that timing for the various functions is essential in a venue such as this. It allows for less stress on the kitchen and better traffic flow.

Mr. Tanner testified that the pavement on-site will be porous. He advised that porous pavement decreases the amount of run-off and acts as a way to clean storm water. Mr. Tanner expressed that the advantages of porous pavement far exceed the disadvantages. Under the parking lots is one (1) of two (2) detention basins. They are utilizing an underground system because of the porous pavement.

Exhibit A-6 was introduced: Site Plan Phase IB, page 7 of 32, dated February 11, 2015

Mr. Tanner indicated that the patio outside of the barn is the closest "building" to the property line, at approximately 101.7 feet. He indicated several trees to be kept on site, but also showed several that will be removed in order to accommodate drainage and sidewalks. Mr. Tanner advised that the site would be serviced with public water, with the connections completed in Spring 2015. At the request of American Water, the meters will be located in the basement of the Groom's Dwelling as the area is heated and easily accessible. There will be two (2) fire hydrants on-site; one in front of the stone house and one behind the restaurant.

Mr. Sullivan advised that Applicant should seek out the opinion of an arborist to determine the root zones during and after construction.

Exhibit A-7 was introduced: Landscaping Plan – Phase IB, page 15 of 32, dated January 21, 2015

As Mr. Tanner is not the landscape architect, he wanted to introduce these plans to show some of the landscaping that has been agreed to by Mr. Bailer and the Landscape Architect.

Exhibit A-8 was introduced: Landscaping Plan – Phase II, page 16 of 32, dated January 21, 2015

Mr. Tanner testified that a four (4) foot high wall will be constructed beyond the frontage of the hotel because the property drops off drastically north to south in this area.

Exhibit A-9 was introduced: Landscaping Plan – Phase III, page 17 of 32, dated January 21, 2015

Mr. Tanner advised that **Exhibit A-9** shows the brick pavers and water features behind the Ryland Inn. He continued his testimony by answering some of the key issues in the report submitted by Ferriero Engineering, Inc. dated January 13, 2015. As advised by the Board in October, Applicant's professionals redesigned the phases so that they could stand by themselves. The restaurant has been built to accommodate 125 seats and the catering hall will seat 175; lowering the requirement for the sewer flow.

Mr. Tanner advised that beginning with manhole #4, the sanitary sewer will be owned by Applicant. A "dog house" will be built over the storm sewer connection in the existing box culvert on Old Highway 28.

Mr. Turner further testified that due to the way the storm water is detained on-site, the flow has been lessened into Old Highway 28. The drainage under the new parking lot has been revised because the front parking lot has been dropped. Mr. Tanner advised that because the parking lots drain east to west and runoff is not an issue with porous pavement, holes will not be punched into the walls for drainage. Inside the drainage, there are holes and walls to slow down the flow, these will be poured as part of the precast structure.

Mr. Brightly inquired about the lighting, asking if Applicant would be utilizing LED.

Mr. Tanner indicated that a brand new lighting plan is being created and will be submitted shortly.

Exhibit A-10 was introduced: Access Routes Plan, (page 32A of 32), dated February 11, 2015

Exhibit A-10 essentially shows all access points, slopes, and elevations on the property. It also shows the new handicap-accessible ramp for the stone cottage.

Exhibit A-11 was introduced: Cut and Fill Analysis Plan, page 32B of 32, dated February 11, 2015

Mr. Tanner indicated on **Exhibit A-11** where the parking lot to the east would be dropped. Applicant will add fill north of the barn complex and in front of the hotel. It was noted that 4,167 square yards of fill will be moved.

Mr. Sullivan advised that the Applicant must specifically identify the amount of deviation as it is a requirement of Readington Township Land Development Ordinance §148-60.1.

Ms. Duffy asked to see the sunken parking lot in front of the Ryland Inn as the plans indicate a 432 foot retaining wall.

Exhibit A-12 was introduced: Series of Photographs of Ryland Inn from Old Highway 28 – Rendering of Wall at Various Heights.

Mr. Cretella advised that they will have a five and ½ foot high wall visible from the parking lot looking towards Old Highway 28. The street view of the wall will not be as high as the lawn will be graded.

Exhibit A-13 was introduced: Wall Height, dated November 14, 2014

Ms. Duffy asked to clarify the view from the Bride's/Groom's Dwellings.

Mr. Cretella advised that gardens and paths will connect the two (2) houses with the barn and landscaping will be added at the edge of the road. As such, the parking lots will not be visible from the Groom's and/or Bride's Dwellings.

Mr. Monaco reiterated that his concerns are focused on the hotel.

Several Board members requested that Applicant provide a list of variances required for each phase.

Mr. Bailer indicated that Applicant was requesting C variances. He indicated that Phase IB would require site grading above two (2) feet. Phase III required several variances including thirty-five percent (35%) topographic changes, an increase to impervious coverage and site grading that exceeds two (2) feet.

Several Board members expressed concern about the variances. Mr. Sullivan requested detailed facts be included with the variances.

Mr. Bailer advised that he would provide the Board with a memorandum identifying each variance as it pertains to each phase. He would also show the variances on the site plans.

Attorney Cecil approved an extension until March 9, 2015 or the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

A Motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Duffy, to adjourn the meeting at 10:31 P.M. The motion was carried with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebekah Harms
Planning Board Secretary