

READINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
September 12, 2016

The Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Filler at 7:06 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law have been met and that this meeting had been duly advertised.

Present: John Albanese, Julia Allen, Jerry Cook, Cheryl Filler, Betty Ann Fort, Alan Harwick, Christopher John, Ronald Monaco

Also present: Trishka Waterbury-Cecil, Esq.
John Hansen, Engineer
Andrea Malcolm, Planner
Dr. Stephen Souza, Environmental
Jay Troutman, Traffic

Absent: Elizabeth Duffy – recused herself

Chair Monaco led those present in the *Salute to the Flag*.

MINUTES:

A Motion was made by Ms. Filler, seconded by Mr. Harwick, that the Minutes of July 25, 2016 be approved as circulated. Motion was carried with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

PUBLIC HEARING

**Federal Insurance Company
Block 3.01, Lot 5.01
Amended Site Plan**

Present for Applicant: Glenn Pantel, Esq.
Greg Pannell, Sr. VP of Federal Insurance Company
Robert Clerico, Engineer
Karl Pehnke, Traffic
James Kyle, Planner

Attorney Pantel advised that Applicant is requesting to install an additional 165 parking stalls. The reason for the request is that Chubb was recently acquired, and has made a renewed commitment to this facility and to Readington Township (the "Township"). This locale will become their home office for operations encompassing North America. Chubb will be increasing their employee commitment to this site, resulting in the need for the additional

parking stalls. Applicant understands this site has to accommodate 100% of its employees with on-site parking, and the number of additional spaces will allow Chubb to do that. Timing is important because Chubb intends to move additional employees on-site by end of 2016.

Attorney Pantel advised of the variances requested with the application; including impervious coverage, elevation change, use of a retaining wall within a stormwater basin, parking stalls within a stream corridor and wall height in a front yard. Applicant has also requested several design waivers including parking stall size, parking area trees and street trees.

Mr. Pannell testified that this application is a significant investment on the company's part. The Readington Township location will be Applicant's largest presence in any single location around the globe. This locale will house top executives, underwriters, actuaries, human resources, legal and finance with a total of approximately 2,600 employees. Approximately 30-40% of Chubb's workforce will telecommute on a daily basis; many other employees travel.

BREAK at 7:27 p.m.

RECONVENE at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Clerico walked the Board through the proposal, reviewing Sheet 1, 4.1 and 4.2 of the Site Plan. The improvements are mainly located in the southwest corner, along Halls Mill Road. There will be no change to the access points into the site. Applicant is proposing to add eighty-eight (88) parking stalls, seventy-four (74) in the front and fourteen (14) in the rear. The fourteen (14) rear parking stalls are located against the building, and is a good location for service vehicles.

Exhibit A-1 was introduced: Parking Level A dated April 6, 2015 showing upper parking deck

There are no proposed changes to the upper parking deck, but Applicant is proposing to restripe parking stalls on Level B and C of the parking garage. A total of 390 compact car parking stalls will be created. Of those, 332 stalls will be 8 feet x 18 feet and the remaining 58 will be 8.5 feet x 18 feet.

Mr. Clerico testified that storm drainage is located in front, abutting the parking deck with its own system. The roof and surface water discharge to underground pipes and ultimately to a retention basin. Applicant does not propose any changes to the current system. The front basin is overcompensating for runoff because Applicant lacks room in the rear lot to alleviate run off.

Applicant will create a new retention basin which will include a six and one half (6 ½) foot high retaining wall. Applicant will not go too far south with the basin, so as to not disturb a walking path and vegetation. This basin will connect to an existing inlet via a pipe.

Exhibit A-2 was introduced: Line of Site prepared by Van Cleef

Mr. Clerico testified that the proposed retaining wall will prevent vehicles from seeing the facility and parking deck.

Mr. Clerico described Sheet 6.1 as a view of the front lot landscaping along the edge of the basin which will include a berm. The berm is to compensate for loss of the hill that screens the parking deck. Mr. Clerico advised that he will work with Clarke Caton Hintz on the types of trees to be planted.

Exhibit A-3 was introduced: Cut Fill Exhibit prepared by Van Cleef

Mr. Clerico advised that **Exhibit A-3** indicates where Applicant will exceed the two (2) foot landform disturbance. Applicant will distribute the fill against the parking deck in order to provide appropriate grade for the rear lot.

It was noted that Ms. Fort left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Exhibit A-4 was introduced: Stream Corridor and Steep Slope Exhibit prepared by Van Cleef, dated September 12, 2016.

Mr. Clerico indicated that **Exhibit A-4** is the same as Sheet 1, but larger in scale and in color. It depicts the steep slope and shows the easement line put in place after the original application. There are steep slopes adjacent to where Applicant placed fill as part of construction. All of the proposed disturbances are to man-made slopes, Applicant will not be disturbing any natural slopes. **Exhibit A-4** also shows updated FHA for the North Branch of the Rockaway as well as how the Township measures the stream corridor. The Township line goes through the middle of the buildings and parking deck. The rear parking lot is beyond any wetland buffers and outside any regulated area, other than the Township stream corridor.

Mr. Clerico advised that Applicant seeks to limit land disturbance to accommodate the additional parking. Most of the new spaces are in the parking deck, and seventy-five percent (75%) of the total stalls will be below grade or on the upper parking deck.

Mr. Clerico addressed Clarke Caton Hintz's comments regarding fence height and pedestrian circulation. He advised that the pedestrian path will be relocated against the edge of the lot as requested. No additional crosswalks will be added, as the site cannot accommodate them. The front fence height is four feet, as such no variance is required.

Applicant is providing .75 spaces per employee, but their previous counts show that the maximum demand is .6 spaces per employee. ADA requires thirty (30) parking stalls, as the site already has thirty-seven (37) parking stalls, no additional handicapped stalls will be provided.

Mr. Clerico indicated that the proposed lighting will mimic what is already in place and meet the Township ordinance requirements.

Mr. Hansen questioned the signage for compact car parking. Mr. Clerico indicated that the parking stalls will be stripped and painted 'compact car.'

Mr. Pehnke submitted a traffic evaluation on June 6, 2016. He performed traffic counts at the driveways and on adjacent roadways and completed two (2) days of on-site parking surveys. Mr. Pehnke prepared projections at the full proposed occupancy and saw no changes to the site access. There was also no substantial changes to the on-site circulation. Mr. Pehnke reiterated that Applicant has a flexible work program and the nature of the business involves a lot of travel, as such, all employees are never on-site at one time. With the increase in employees at the site, Mr. Pehnke projected that peak demand would be approximately 1,800 vehicles. He looked at providing additional stalls beyond peak demand, in accordance with industry standards; 1,922 stalls should be provided, and Applicant is proposing a total of 1,938. Circulation and aisle width will remain the same. The size of the stalls are distributed among each level of the parking deck.

Exhibit A-6 was introduced: Four color photos of Property – Views from Roads

Exhibit A-7 was introduced: Three color photos of Property

Mr. Kyle testified about the variances requested by Applicant. He indicated that all of the requested variances meet C(2) standards if they are looked at in their totality. He testified that if Applicant added levels to the parking deck, there would be a greater visual impact to the surrounding area. By using the current surface areas, it gives a less developed look to the site.

Mr. Kyle advised that the stream corridor meets C(1) and C(2) standards, and a change to the Township stream corridor ordinance placed more than 50% of the site in the stream corridor. The impact to the site with the proposed additional parking is limited given the context and location.

Mr. Kyle testified as to the fill and advised that it was man-made. The retention basin is a C(1) variance and is design driven by the topography of the land. The basin will be placed between the building and existing vegetation. Applicant would rather keep the existing vegetation and require a retaining wall than disturb the vegetation and replant. Applicant will address the visual impact of the basin with a berm and additional buffering.

The two foot vertical change is a C(2) variance. The landforms are man-made and Applicant proposes limited areas of disturbance.

Mr. Kyle advised that Applicant is requesting a waiver for the street tree requirements as there is currently vegetation on-site. As the planting is already very dense, Applicant will not plant

additional trees in the parking lots. Applicant will meet the ordinance requirements as to the number of trees, but proposing them in an alternate location.

The parking stall sizes are smaller than the ordinance requires, but Applicant would rather restripe than create new stalls with land disturbance.

Dr. Souza advised that he has exchanged information with Mr. Clerico and brought up three (3) critical items. He indicated that Mr. Clerico addressed his concern with the out-dated data establishing the boundaries in that all the improvements are outside all boundaries so there will be no impact to environmentally sensitive areas. Dr. Souza recommended that no trees be planted in the basin as it impacts the maintenance, and Applicant has advised that they will plant deep-rooted grasses instead. Dr. Souza addressed Applicant's use of porous pavement and indicated that the type of paving on the four stalls would have to be clarified.

Mr. Hansen advised that he saw no large issues with the application. He was pleased that the retention wall was reduced in height because of maintenance concerns. Mr. Clerico's testimony addressed his key issues.

Ms. Malcolm agreed that the trees should be removed from the basin. She will work with the Applicant in reducing the lighting intensity onsite. She advised that a recent reexamination report recommended that the Township support the viability of existing business in the Research Office zone.

Mr. Troutman recommended that the number of compact parking stalls be reduced to eighty (80) by eliminating thirty-four (34) spaces, and would put Applicant just under their ideal number of spaces.

Chair Monaco discussed banking some of the parking stalls. Mr. Pantel advised against it as Applicant does not want people driving around look for a place to park. There are no off-site parking options, and Applicant would rather have too many spaces than too little.

The Board agrees with Chubb's proposal and sees no need to eliminate the number of compact spaces.

Mr. Pannell advised that they will look into adding charging stations for electric cars.

The Board discussed the requested variances and waivers.

A Motion was made by Ms. Filler, seconded by Mr. Cook, that the application be approved with requested variances and waivers.

Motion was carried with the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Mr. Albanese, Ms. Allen, Mr. Cook, Ms. Filler, Mr. Harwick, Mr. John,
Chair Monaco

Nays: None recorded.

ADJOURNMENT:

A Motion was made by Ms. Filler, seconded by Mr. Albanese, to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 P.M. The motion was carried with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebekah Harms
Planning Board Secretary