



# The Readington News

Memorial Day

Happy Mother's Day!

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A Community Newspaper Serving All of Readington Township, NJ

## Hotly Contested Nelson Street Project Approved

The Readington Township Committee and Planning Board last month approved the controversial 6-plus acre Nelson Street Redevelopment Plan for affordable housing, over the course of lengthy meetings with heated protests from residents. Officials said they had no choice but to accept the grossly unpopular rental complex to comply with state affordable housing rules.

Township Planner Michael Sullivan at a March 20 meeting provided background for the current affordable housing debacle: Affordable housing rules began with the Mount Laurel case in 1975 forcing every municipality to provide low- and moderate-income housing units. Readington was fully compliant with the first (1987-1993) and second rounds (1994-1999) of Council on Affordable Housing rules. Years of litigation over COAH continued throughout the state, and COAH was eventually dismantled. The state Supreme Court ruled in 2015 that in the absence of COAH, the Superior Courts would decide the AH obligations for each municipality. Municipalities like Readington with third round certifications were given temporary immunity from builder's remedy lawsuits if they met all of the court deadlines. These deadlines have been extended a few months at a time as the court cases plod on. The current immunity date is August 2017.

The Nelson Street parcel, east of Main Street in Whitehouse Station, was purchased by the town in parts, first in 2009, and then in 2014, with an eye toward affordable housing. The Township Committee recently selected Ingerman (<http://www.ingerman.com>) as the builder. By law, the project must conform to the Township's Master Plan, be located within public water and sewer, and walkable to public transit,

and meet residential site improvement standards. For plan details see <http://www.readingtonwp.org/notices/FINAL-Nelson-St-%20Redev-Plan.pdf>.

Ingerman representatives have described the project as 72 rental units contained in 6 buildings, 2.5 stories tall, and a seventh building containing a community center for tenants. There is a stream on the border of Whitehouse Village which would be protected by a 150 foot riparian and visual buffer for village residents.

Residents against the project formed a nonprofit group, Whitehouse Welands Tributary Preserve, and passionately debated officials at four public meetings in recent weeks.

Sullivan noted that because the complex is all rentals, it would give the township 144 credits towards the affordable housing obligation. It is likely the first of several required affordable housing developments. Readington's other option would be to wait for the courts to decide an AH number, which could be as high as 1000, and then developers could potentially build at a ratio of 5 market rate units to 1 affordable unit. Readington has 6000 homes, so this outcome would have the potential to double the population of Readington.



**Buffalo Babes** - Whitehouse Rescue Squad hosts the 19th Annual Buffalo Watch with Antique Show, Collectables & Craft Fair on Saturday, May 13, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Readington River Farm, 937 Route 523, Readington Township. Rain or Shine. Take a wagon ride past the newborn buffalo calves. The event also features pony rides, face painting, live music, wine tasting, antique and craft vendors, Civil War regiment re-enactors, and great food including BBQ.

**Grand Champion** - Brian Armstrong, an Arrow of Light Scout in Readington Pack 1980, won the grand championship at the Hunterdon Arrowhead District Pinewood Derby on April 8 at Round Valley School. The derby was open to all Cub Scouts in Hunterdon County who had finished in the top three in their home pack. Brian's "Iron Man" themed race car took top honors racing against all other cars designed by boys his age. Brian's car then raced against the winners of all other ranks, besting all of them to be the fastest car of the 127 Cub Scout cars competing at the district race. Each year, more than a million boys in first through fifth grade team up with their parents to build and race cars in local pinewood derby competitions. To find out more about how your son can have fun in scouting, visit [www.njpack1980.org](http://www.njpack1980.org) or [www.beascout.org](http://www.beascout.org). - Submitted by Cindy Barckholtz



## Readington Road Closed Until July

Busy Readington Road (Route 637) has been closed between Dreahook Road and Harlan School Road in Branchburg since late March, sending many motorists on a detour over Solberg Road.

A bridge near Baird Road is being replaced, a traffic light added, and the road is being widened through that one-mile section, according to Somerset County Public Works.

The road is expected to reopen by July 4. Work will then continue for one to two more months with daytime lane closures. The road will be open for the weekend of the New Jersey Festival of Ballooning, according to the Public Works website.

## Memorial Day Parade May 29

The Readington Township Committee and Recreation Department are planning the 12th annual Memorial Day Parade to be held on Monday, May 29.

This year's parade will once again begin from the Whitehouse Mall parking lot, corner of Route 523 and Route 22 East. The parade will kick off at 10:30 a.m. and continue along Main Street to the Municipal Building, immediately followed by a flag-raising ceremony commemorating fallen service personnel.

Following the ceremony, walk over to Pickell Park where the Recreation Department will host Community Day, with games and activities for all ages. Hot dogs and soda will be available for everyone.

All Township residents, clubs, organizations, teams, businesses and collectible car owners are encouraged to participate in the parade. If you would like to join the parade or spend a few hours volunteering on Parade Day, contact Deputy Mayor Betty Ann Fort at [readingtonparade@comcast.net](mailto:readingtonparade@comcast.net).

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