

City of Northfield Planning & Zoning Board
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Minutes: March 6, 2008

Notice of this meeting had been given in accordance with Chapter 231 Public Law 1975, otherwise known as the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting has been given to The Press, posted on the bulletin board in City Hall, and filed with the City Clerk, stating the date, time and place of the meeting and the agenda to the extent known.

The regular meeting of the Northfield Planning & Zoning Board, held on Thursday, March 6, 2008 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:26 p.m. and the following members were present:

Dr. Richard Levitt-Chairman
Clem Scharff-Vice Chairman
Mayor Vincent Mazzeo
Jason O'Grady, Councilman
Chief Robert James
Lou Milone
John Clifford
Ron Roegiers
Henry Notaro
Jim Shippen
Linda Dyrek-absent

Norman Zlotnick Esq., Solicitor
Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

There was a reading of the Sunshine Law and a roll call. There were no applications on the agenda this evening. The purpose of the meeting was to hold a public session on the amendments to the Master Plan of the City of Northfield. The meeting was properly advertised in The Press and notice was sent to surrounding City Clerks (Pleasantville, Linwood and Egg Harbor Township) as well as Atlantic County (who received a hard copy of the Master Plan draft).

Mr. Zlotnick outlined the proper procedure for the public hearing. Anyone present from the public may speak on the matter under oath. Engineer Matt Doran will give his input; the Board will have a discussion, and then will vote on the amendments.

Dr. Levitt began by asking Mr. Doran for comments. He said that the plan contains updated demographics for the School, Fire Department, and the Rescue Squad and the information is accurate as of when prepared. There are some recommendations zone per zone which contain a summary of items missing and minor changes to each individual zone. The major change regarding zoning and bulk requirements involves the Country Club Zone and the need to re-look at this zone which is a large property that could potentially contain a lot of homes. The Board has recommended larger lots, open space, public recreation, and to maintain the historical character and wetlands of the site. This is the perfect time to re-zone the property for the future according to what the Board would like to see at the site. This is the main task zoning-wise outlined in the book. Mr. Doran continued by reading the goals and objectives. Dr. Levitt added that when the Ordinance is re-written, it will be important to look at senior housing, specifically the Arthur Henry site and the Gurwitz site. He also noted that after the regular meeting is closed, there will be a discussion concerning the shade tree ordinance to see if the committee can come up with something that Council can agree to.

Dr. Levitt asked for any questions from the Board. There were none at this time. He then opened the public session. Council President Jimmy Martinez, Councilpersons Cindy Kern and Steve Vain were present as well as Dan Kern, but they did not have any comments. There was no one from the public who wished to speak on the matter, so the public session was closed.

Mr. Doran added that the plan contains upgrades to demographics and includes the zoning map and open space map and the most important part of the plan is the goals and objectives. Dr. Levitt said that there is a part in the plan that discussed coordinating growth with the surrounding community and to provide for good traffic flow. He thinks besides the Country Club, there is another area of town that is a potential concern. This is the proposed development at Mill and Fire Roads in Egg Harbor Township which includes shopping centers and offices and has the potential to be a huge project. Mr. Doran stated that this is broadly covered in the coordination of transportation since the transportation is what would affect Northfield. Dr. Levitt explained that basically Mill Road is a one lane road which funnels into a stoplight at New Road and since his office is located at that corner, he is well aware that there are problems now. There is no easy access now and he anticipates road and infrastructure problems up ahead. Atlantic County input may be necessary once the project gets underway.

At this point, Chairman Levitt asked for a motion. Mr. O'Grady made the motion to accept the amendments to the Master Plan and Chief James seconded. There was a roll call vote of all the members present and the vote was unanimous for approval. The Master Plan will now go to City Council. Mr. Zlotnick commented that an ad needs to be published in the Press of Atlantic City and a copy of the ad and the final draft of the Master Plan needs to be mailed to Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development. Mr. Doran will supply 6 copies of the final draft to the Secretary and Mr. O'Grady will see that the final draft is put on the web page.

Chairman Levitt said he has two Board members for the Zoning Ordinance committee-himself and Mr. Scharff. One more volunteer is needed to help revise and update the Ordinance. Mr. Scharff asked what the x-ed out sections in the Master Plan are. Mr. Doran answered that they are items not included presently in the Ordinance which need to be there. Mayor Mazzeo asked what the time limit was for getting the work completed. Dr. Levitt thought the City was already in violation. Mr. Doran told the Board that the Master Plan is required to be updated and revised every six years and the Zoning Ordinance is updated if Council requests it.

Mayor Mazzeo stated that he was in Trenton today and that the City's state aid of \$232,000 was cut. He asked what the budgeted request amount for rewriting the Ordinance is. Chairman Levitt said he thought Mr. Doran estimated the amount to be \$24,000. The Mayor said they are presently reviewing the budget and the amount available may be around \$12,000. He needs to see how the budgeting goes. Dr. Levitt said it is imperative to get the Country Club Zoning squared away since it has changed ownership and an Investment management Company now owns it. He feels there is no more upper echelon dedication or concern with the history of the property. Also, zoning conflicts need to be resolved and senior citizen zoning needs to be addressed. Dr. Levitt felt this could be done without getting into major hours. He suggested the committee meet and devise a list of priorities and then Mr. Doran could give an estimated cost for the most necessary items. Mr. Doran commented that the Country Club will be a major re-writing in the Ordinance. Dr. Levitt said that revising this zone would be a cheap investment and stressed the importance of having a complete re-written ordinance. Dr. Levitt added that the SIC code rewriting will also be a major project and perhaps that could wait until more money is available. Dr. Levitt asked again for a third volunteer and Jim Shippen volunteered. Dr. Levitt set the meeting for next Monday at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Dr. Levitt and Mr. Scharff briefly discussed senior housing and planned unit development which involves compatible uses in one zone; for example, medical offices, stores and senior housing in one zone.

There were three resolutions to memorialize. Mr. Zlotnick asked for roll call votes. The first was for Lynn & Thomas Fitzpatrick ("D" variance-self service dog wash). Mayor Mazzeo, Jason O'Grady and Mr. Shippen abstained. All other members present voted unanimously in favor. The second was for Richard Simon, Trustee ("C" Variances-signage). Mr. Clifford and Mr. Shippen abstained. All other members voted unanimously in favor. The third resolution was for Michael Ahearn whose application for a "D" variance was denied. Mayor Mazzeo, Mr. O'Grady and Mr. Shippen abstained. All other present members voted unanimously in favor.

The meeting closed at 8:00 p.m. with a motion from Mr. Scharff and a second from Mr. Milone.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board