

City of Northfield Planning & Zoning Board
1600 Shore Road
Northfield, New Jersey 08225
Telephone (609) 641-2832, ext. 127
Fax (609) 646-7175

Minutes: May 15, 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 had 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, May 15, 2008 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Vice Chairman Clem Scharff at 7:32 p.m. and the following members were present:

Dr. Richard Levitt-Chairman-present at meeting 7:48 p.m. due to emergency
Clem Scharff-Vice Chairman
Mayor Vincent Mazzeo
Jason O'Grady, Councilman
Chief Robert James
Lou Milone
John Clifford
Ron Roegiers
Henry Notaro-absent
Jim Shippen
Linda Dyrek

Norman Zlotnick, Solicitor
Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

Vice Chairman Scharff began the meeting with the Resolution memorialization for Gary & Marvene Goodin, 230 St. James Place, Block 136, Lot 13 who received "C" Variance approval May 1, 2008. Mr. Roegiers and Mr. Clifford abstained. Mr. O' Grady made the motion and Ms. Dyrek seconded. The roll call vote was unanimously in favor. Mayor Mazzeo, Mr. O'Grady, Chief James, Mr. Milone, Mr. Scharff, Ms. Dyrek and Mr. Shippen voted yes.

There was one application on the agenda for this evening. The application was a continuance from the April 17, 2008 meeting when the applicant was rescheduled due to conflicts with their professionals. The change was announced at that meeting and served as noticing and advertising. The applicant is 450 Tilton Road LLC located at 450 Tilton Road, Block 16.01, Lots 49 & 50 in the RC District. The attorney for the applicant is John W. Daniels, Esq. of Fleishman-Daniels in Northfield. Mr. Zlotnick swore in the professionals who consisted of Gary Mednick, AIA who did the architectural plans and Peter J. Dolcy, PE and Professional Planner of Galloway who completed the plans of the site. Also present and sworn in was Michael G. Cohan, the managing partner of the LLC.

Mr. Daniels submitted an Exhibit List to Mr. Zlotnick and for the record consisting of:

- A-1 Architectural Rendering of Proposed Sign
- A-2 Architectural Building Elevations
- A-3 Sign Variance Plan
- A-4 Sign Location Inventory Plan
- A-5 Existing Sign Exhibit-West Side of Tilton Road
- A-6 Existing Sign Exhibit-East Side of Tilton Road
- A-7 Atlantic County Letter dated April 10, 2008
- A-8 Existing and Proposed Sign Detail

Mr. Daniels began by explaining the LLC and the acquisition of the property about a year ago. He described the sign plan. The applicant wants to replace the existing freestanding sign with a re-designed freestanding sign and a building mounted sign package for the façade of the building. They are not proposing any site plan changes. Mr. Daniels said that Tilton Road is constantly improving and Mr. Cohan's efforts will increase this. Mr. Daniels questioned Mr. Cohan about the tenants. Mr. Cowan stated that the tenants currently are mostly professionals consisting of Attorneys, Doctors, Kinko's and Congress Title Agency. Leases are mostly mid to long term and any new tenants will be professionals and ultimately they will have an upscale building. The square footage is 31,000 sq. ft. and currently 7,000 sf is vacant. Mr. Cowan said there is a need for improved signage and he believes the current sign to be the ugliest along Tilton Road. The sign is not visible and is not conducive to the professionals they want to attract. The sign also does not go architecturally with the building. New building signage is needed because the building is not linear to the road and also is very deep. They need to attract customers and tenants.

Mr. Gary Mednick, whose business is next store to the 450 Tilton Road, LLC property and who has been in business for 25 years, testified next. He described Exhibit A-2 (Building elevations). He described the master plan as ultimately

being a complete renovation. The purpose of the building signs is to identify each business and address (by number) since there is no common corridor to connect the businesses and all need their own signs. Mr. Mednick referred to Exhibit A-1 (Rendering of free-standing sign) and Mr. Daniels asked if the new sign would be compatible with the appearance of the building. Mr. Mednick replied yes and stated that the sign will match any improvements and is consistent with the street and building. Mr. Scharff asked about the height of the sign. Mr. Mednick said the sign is 20 ft. 2 in. and is 6 ft. lower than the building at 26 ft. high.

Mr. Peter Dolcy, a Professional Planner and Engineer for over 20 years, testified next. He prepared the sign variance plan. He described Exhibit A-4 which denotes all the signage in the vicinity to observe the impact of the new sign. Looking west, most of the signs are compatible at 26 to 28 ft. Sir Speedy is the only sign out of line at 21.7 ft. He then described Exhibit A-8 which is a photograph of the existing sign at 14.6 ft. high, 10 ft. wide with an advertising area of 116 sq. ft. They will be reducing the advertising area on the new sign to 72 sq. ft. which is a 35% reduction. The post or pilaster will show the address (450) and will be of variable height (20 ft. at the short end and 24 ft. at the high end). The advertising area is 20 ft. 4 in. and is less than existing. Mr. Dolcy commented that the address on the pilaster is important to the sign. He addressed the three variances. The first is for the three foot clearance required from the ground to the sign. They are proposing "0" ft. clearance due to the pilaster. The advertising area (450) is 8 ft. from the ground. The second variance is for area. 32.3 sf is allowed and 77 sf is proposed. The "450" address area will be 5 sf. The third variance is for height. 15 ft. is allowed and 24 ft. is proposed. Mr. Daniels added that the sign is more than the 15 ft. required setback from the road and is located within a curbed, grass island. Mr. Dolcy referred to Exhibit A-3 (Sign Variance Plan) which shows the 15 ft. setback and that the sign is not located in the site triangle. He added that the new sign is necessary for safety reasons in identifying the driveway and for the free flow of traffic.

Mr. Dolcy described the façade sign package using Exhibit A-3. He described three fronts to the building. Fronts A (furthest from the road) and C face Tilton Road and Front B faces the parking lot. Wall A has a 73 ft. wall width and 26.6 ft. is allowed. They are proposing two signs. The first will be a 6 ft. x 6 ft. sign on the column at the back corner of the building with a square footage of 36 ft. The second sign will be in the middle of the building near the entrance for identification. This signage will need a variance. The B wall elevation is the longest elevation. They are allowed 100 sf and are proposing 53 sf, which is less. The C elevation is allowed to be 29 sf and they are proposing 27 sf.

Mr. Dolcy referred to Exhibits 4, 5 and 6 which showed the sign location inventory and photographs of signs on the West and East sides of Tilton Road

within 1000 ft. on either side of 450 Tilton Road. Height and advertising area are as follows:

Radio Shack 27.2 ft. high 128 sf area

Kitchen Bath 28.5 ft. high 155 sf area

Sir Speedy 21.7 ft. high 162 sf area

Mainland Professional 26.9 ft. high 185 sf area

Wendy's 38.3 ft. high 206 sf area

The signs across the street are larger signs. Mr. Dolcy confirmed that there are no changes to the previously approved site plan and no added square footage. They intend to add to the upgrading of the Tilton Road corridor and want to improve safety issues and to better identify the driveway. They will be improving on safety issues, visual impact, and the free flow of traffic and there will be no detriment to the public good and will also benefit the zoning ordinance. Mr. Dolcy added that the County has waived site plan approval. Mr. Daniels submitted the letter from the County as Exhibit A-7 and part of the record.

Mr. Scharff asked if any Board members had questions for the applicant. Mr. Clifford expressed concerns with the 3 ft. closed base of the sign and questioned whether there would be any adversity or safety issue with people pulling out of the lot. Mr. Doran addressed the issue. He said he had an interpretation to bring before the Board which may eliminate the need for the variance for the three ft. open space at the bottom of the sign. If the Board considered the pilaster to not be a sign, the 3 ft. sign opening would not apply. The pilaster becomes a sign if advertising is on it. The "450" is an address, not an advertising sign. Mr. Doran added that the sign is clearly shown out of the site triangle on the plans. Mr. Clifford agreed that the pilaster is an address marker. Mr. Doran stated that he agreed with the other variances that are needed.

Dr. Levitt asked how the sign will be illuminated and asked about the colors in the advertising section. He also noted that he will abstain from voting since he was late to the meeting due to an emergency. Mr. Dolcy said the lighting will be internally illuminated. Mr. Mednick added the sign will be white plexy panel with colored letters. Dr. Levitt asked if the sign could be more subdued. Mr. Mednick said that signs do change as tenants change and they want the flexibility that the internally lit panels will offer to change the signs when needed. They are easy to change and can be easily illuminated at night. A permanent sign lit from the ground will not work to their advantage. Dr. Levitt asked for a guarantee that 'creeping signs' will not occur and that the pilaster will not have signage on it in the future. Mr. Cohan commented that he has moved his offices from Ventnor to this site and will enforce this. Mr. Zlotnick added that there can be a provision in the resolution restricting the signage on the pilaster to the address. Mr. Daniels state that '450' is truly an address and is not the name of the building. His clients would need a variance if they wanted to change this in the future.

Mr. Scharff asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. Seeing no one, he closed the public session. Mr. Scharff asked Mr. Doran for his Engineer's report. Mr. Doran commented there are no site improvements. If the Board agrees that the pilaster, which is solid to the ground, is an address sign, a variance will not be necessary. He agreed with the other variances-height and area for the freestanding sign and size and vertical height for the façade sign. Mr. Scharff asked about landscaping. Mr. Cowan and Mr. Mednick agreed the landscaping will be retained. Mr. Daniels added that the freestanding sign is in the middle of a planting bed. Mr. Zlotnick commented that he agreed that the '450' is really an address and that a variance would not be necessary. Mr. Scharff added that he has backlighting concerns and reminded about using the 'clock face' as a rule of thumb. The sign can be white-faced, but not too bright.

Mr. Milone made the motion for the variances for total height (15 ft. is allowed, 24 ft. is proposed) and for total area square footage (50 sf is allowed, 72 sf is proposed) for the freestanding sign and for the façade sign, a variance for the vertical face (height) of the sign (5 ft. maximum required and 6 ft. proposed). The sign is a second story sign at a height of 20 ft. and is unique in that it is an entrance sign for a business in the back of the building far off Tilton Road. A variance will not be needed for the pilaster not having a 3 ft. opening at the base as required since it was agreed the sign is an address and not an advertising sign. Mr. Clifford seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote. Mayor Mazzeo, Mr. O'Grady, Chief James, Mr. Milone, Mr. Clifford, Mr. Scharff, Mr. Roegiers, Ms. Dyrek, and Mr. Shippen all voted in favor of the variances.

Dr. Levitt asked for an Ordinance sub-committee report and asked if Lance Landgraf was ready to begin. Mr. Doran will call him tomorrow and set up the next meeting. Dr. Levitt asked about the status of the Tree Ordinance. Mr. O'Grady reported that the Ordinance has been finalized by Mr. Doran and will be on Council's agenda for Tuesday evening. Mr. Roegiers commented about the now completed Swim-Mor store in the Tilton Shopping Center. He recalls that the applicant was to improve the driveways to avoid driving off the curb. The secretary will provide a copy of the minutes and the Resolution for Tilton Properties, LLC to Mr. Doran for review.

Vice Chairman Scharff closed the meeting at 8:15 p.m. with a motion from Mr. O'Grady and a second from Mr. Clifford.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board

