

City of Northfield

Planning & Zoning Board

1600 Shore Road

Northfield, New Jersey 08225

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Minutes: January 18, 2007

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, January 18, 2007 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Mayor Frank Perri at 7:26 p.m. with a Flag Salute and the following members were present:

Dr. Richard Levitt-Chairman-absent
Clem Scharff-Vice Chairman-absent
Mayor Frank Perri
Jimmy Martinez, Councilman
Jeffrey Bruckler, City Administrator
Ron Roegiers-absent
Nick Droboniku-absent
Pete DaPrato
Henry Notaro
Guy Schlachter
Lou Milone
Jason O'Grady-absent

Thomas Subranni, Esq.- Solicitor
Lance B. Landgraf, Jr. of Aqua Terra, PA for Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

There was a reading of the Sunshine Law and roll call with the absent members noted above.

There was one application on the agenda this evening from McDonald's Corporation. The location is 1201 Tilton Road, Block 41, Lot 2 and they are seeking Site Plan approval with a C-variance for on-site signage. The zone is C-B and the use is Restaurant. They are proposing a slight variation to the drive-thru which is permitted as a conditional existing use.

Chris Baylinson, Esq. of Perskie, Nehmad & Perillo of Somers Point is the attorney for McDonald's. The Engineer is Michael E. Jeitner, PE of Bohler Engineering, Inc. Mr. Baylinson began by telling the Board that McDonald's is currently reconstructing hundreds of their restaurants across the country. The location in Northfield was rebuilt ten years ago as a modular building. McDonald's has found that these buildings are problematic and create code issues. They are rebuilding the restaurants as stick-built buildings.

Construction at the site is basically complete and the restaurant has re-opened for business. The applicants want to change the drive-thru ordering process to expedite service and to improve car stacking at the side of the building which is a parking area. They want any car stacking that occurs to be at the top of the building facing New Road.

This McDonald's previously had one order location and one pick-up window. They now would like to have two order windows and two pick-up windows. They are taking away two signs and adding one. This one sign is larger than the two being removed. This will create additional sign square footage which is the purpose of the application as a "C" variance will be required.

Michael E. Jeitner, P.E. of Bohler Engineering was accepted by the Board as a Professional Engineer and sworn in. Mr. Jeitner discussed the concept of McDonald's tandem drive-thru operations that will increase flow and efficiency. Currently, McDonald's operations are 60% to 70% drive-thru and 40% to 30% dining room. The Northfield location is 60% to 40%. The tandem system has two menu boards back to back. The site plan shows the first menu board (Sign F) as existing and is located at the Northeast corner of the building adjacent to New Road. The proposed second menu board (also Sign F and equal in size, area and composition) would be closer to the middle of the building. Mr. Baylinson commented that there is a change in the number of on site signs and a change in square footage of on site signage and this will require a "C" Variance. Mr. Jeitner continued to explain that there are 2 smaller points of purchase signs existing which precede the main menu board. These are considered advertising signs that show pictures of food items. They are 11.8 sq. ft. These are to be eliminated and replaced with one new menu board which is 43.3 sq. ft. The menu board delineates menu items and prices. This will cause an increase in signage of 19.7%. They will be reducing the number of signs by removing two and adding one, but will increase total signage. This will require a variance.

Mr. Baylinson discussed positive criteria. He stated that aesthetic enhancement and a better flow of traffic will occur which justifies granting the variance. Mr. Jeitner agreed that the signs would not be readable from Tilton Road and will not be a distraction. The tandem drive-thru will reduce the stacking that now occurs before the menu board near the parking area. Back to back menu boards will create two order points which will extend the stacked cars throughout the entire length of the drive thru. The drive thru process will be expedited as two customers can order at the pedestals at the same time. This will increase circulation efficiency. Mr. Baylinson ended the testimony and stated the Bob Traa, the owner and operator of the facility is present for questions if needed.

Mayor Perri asked if anyone from the public wished to speak and seeing no one, closed the public session. The Mayor asked for comments from the Board. Mr. Schlachter commented that the proposal is a good concept. He asked the applicants how the first stacked car will know to proceed. Mr. Baylinson conferred with Mr. Traa and answered that both signs are camera monitored and the attendant monitoring the first sign will inform the car to proceed. Mayor Perri asked about night hours and if the signs would turn off when closed. He was told that they would go off at closing. The Mayor also asked if the speaker boxes were included with the signage percentage and was told that they were. Mr. Jeitner stated that the speaker pedestals sit in front of the menu boards. There were no closing statements.

Mayor Perri asked for a motion. Mr. Milone made the motion for the "C" variance. Mr. Schlachter seconded. A roll call vote of all members present was unanimous. The motion for site plan approval was made by Mr. Schlachter and seconded by Mr. Bruckler. The vote was also unanimous for approval.

There was one resolution to memorialize from the last meeting for Chris and Amy Murray for a "C" variance. Mr. Milone abstained. A voice vote was all in favor for approval.

Mr. Subranni gave an update on the Palombo's situation. He reported that Mr. Talvacchia, Palombo's attorney, Mayor Perri and Mr. Subranni will meet next week to review their proposal and a hearing date to put everything on the record will be determined after that meeting. He will report back at the next Board meeting scheduled for February 1, 2007.

Mayor Perri lastly brought to the Board's attention a letter from Mike Dattalo, the City's Zoning Officer, which discussed certain situations where current ordinances leave many uncertain questions. Mr. Bruckler will report on this at a future meeting.

Mayor Perri closed the meeting at 7:48p.m. with a motion from Mr. Bruckler and a second from Mr. Schlachter.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas,
Secretary to the Board