

City of Northfield
Planning and Zoning Board
1600 Shore Road
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Minutes: May 5, 2005

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, May 5, 2005 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was called to order by Chairman of the Board, Dr. Richard Levitt at 7:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Mayor Frank Perri	Mr. Lou Milone	Mr. Nick Droboniku
Mr. Mike Turon, Councilman	Mr. Ronald Roegiers	Chairman Richard Levitt
Mr. Rich Stevens, Construction Official	Mr. David Notaro	
Ms. Alice Chambers	Mr. Clem Scharff, absent	
Mr. Art Barrera		

Solicitor-Tom Subranni, Esq.
Engineer-Deborah L. Wahl for Matt Doran

There are three applications scheduled to be heard on the agenda this evening. The first is Por Sen Jaw (Block 68, Lot 14) which is a continuation from the last meeting. Mr. Todd Gemmel, representing Mr. Jaw, gave a recap of the application at 319 New Road. Most of the site plan issues have been resolved. The concern was over the possibility of a merge between lots 13 & 14. Lot 13 is zoned residential and is vacant and Lot 14 is zoned commercial. Both Mr. Gemmel & Mr. Subranni believe that a merger is not taking place. Mr. Subranni reported that there is not sufficient unit of ownership and therefore no merger. All conditions of the Engineer's report have been agreed to-800 sq. feet will be professional with the balance residential, mechanicals will be screened, the signage will be building mounted; any free standing sign will need Board approval. Landscaping and lighting will be approved by Mr. Doran, storm water runoff will remain on site, trash will be removed privately, a fence along the rear will be installed as a buffer to neighboring residential homes, there will be no medical use allowed and the applicant will maintain common areas. The Chairman asked for a motion to accept the application. Mr. Milone made the motion and Mr. Stevens seconded it. Mr. Drobonik abstained and Ms. Chambers did not vote since this is a continuance. All other members voted unanimously to accept the application.

The second application is from Jolanta Jucha who jointly owns a residence with Bogden Milczanowski at 21 Cove Avenue (Block 160, Lot 8 on the tax map). Plans were completed by Gary Mednick. The lot is angled with the dwelling occupying 700 square feet. They want to add an additional 1200 sq. feet consisting of a garage, 2 bedrooms upstairs and 1 and ½ baths. They will need a "C" variance for problems with setbacks. Chairman Levitt swore in the applicants. Debbie Wahl gave the Engineer's report and discussed the non-conformities. The lot is

undersized and does not meet required setbacks. The property is located in an R-1 Zone. Variances will need to be granted on both sides and the rear. Photos of the residence were shown to the Board. Chairman Levitt asked for public input. Mr. Paul Jeffries, a neighbor, was sworn in. He has no problems with the applicants building this addition. His home is approximately 80ft. away. There was no other public input. The concerns of the Board involve the proximity to the rear property and the number of variances necessary for the project. Chairman Levitt suggested reducing the sq. footage by 5 feet on the side to eliminate 3 of the variances and to conform. The applicants do not want to do that because it would mean eliminating the garage. Purchasing 5 ft. of property from the neighbors was discussed. No decision has been made on that issue. Mr. Jeffries, on the right side, does not want to sell any property but gives his full support to the project. The board waived adding sidewalks since there are no sidewalks on Cove Avenue. The applicants agreed to plant an additional shade tree. Chairman Levitt asked for a motion for variance approvals for lot area, width, depth, side, rear, building coverage and total coverage. Concrete pads, a walkway and a shed will be removed. The motion was made by Mr. Drobonik and seconded by Mr. Milone. The vote was unanimous for approval.

The third application heard this evening is Block 78, Lot 14 (2605 Shore Road, LLC), also known as House & Garden Plaza. The plans were prepared by Arthur W. Ponzio & Associates and the Architectural Plans were prepared by Daniel Scott Mascione. The applicants are represented by Nicholas F. Talvacchia of Fox Rothschild in Atlantic City. The applicants which form the LLC are George Smyrnios and Robert and Carol Urlwin. The property is located in the R-3 Zone. The applicants seek both "C" and "D" variances, a "D" variance for non-conforming use and major site plan approval. They are proposing the addition of 7 offices and 7 retail stores within the approximately 50 year old building.

Jon Barnhart and Daniel Mascione were sworn in by Chairman Levitt.

Mr. Tavacchia gave an overview of the project. Mr. Smyrnios currently utilizes over 20,000 sq. feet for Coastal designs which is a medium to high end outdoor furniture business. The current sq. footage is 68,000 sq. feet and this will remain unchanged. The LLC wishes to reduce the retail use and increase office space (attorneys, accountants, insurance brokers). There will be no medical use and the idea of adding a restaurant is no longer in the plans. There are currently 106 parking spaces (86 front and 20 back) and they want to increase the parking by 36 spaces. There will be new landscaping, lighting, and two new drainage systems.

Mr. Barnhart discussed the plans in detail. He explained that the building is currently underutilized and needs an upgrade to current day standards. He believes that increased office use will decrease the intensity of use and stressed that there is a lot of commercial use in the general area (Church & Synagogue, Dentist, Hair Salons, Dance Studio, Wholesale Pharmacy, Pet Grooming). The proposal also will improve the flow of traffic and eliminate confusing entrances and exits. The Board discussed several concerns. Chairman Levitt stressed that parking is a serious issue and he believes that the office use will be too numerous and that this will increase the need for more parking than will be available. Mr. Stevens produced parking calculations based on 23,000 sq. feet of usable space per floor and reported that 235 spaces will be needed. Signage was discussed. Mr. Barnhart stated that the building signs will face the Church and will not be on Shore Road. The free-standing sign will remain.

Mr. Mascione discussed the architectural designs and layout of the floor plans.

Mayor Perri is concerned that the mixed use may be a rezoning issue not specifically a variance issue since it is unknown exactly what types of businesses will be occupying the property. He would like clarification of this since this mix of Office Professional and Retail does not exist in Northfield. The Mayor stated that the Board cannot grant a use variance without knowing what the use is going to be. Mt. Talvacchia is not prepared at this time to give details on specific businesses.

Chairman Levitt opened the Meeting to public comment. All speakers were sworn in. The following residents voiced their opinions and comments:

Richard Knule, an Oakcrest Avenue resident, is concerned about traffic issues.

Bob Keane of Revere Avenue is concerned about traffic and air quality.

Cindy Barber, an Oakcrest Avenue resident has issues with safety for children due to increased traffic.

Lenny Ratowski, who lives on Oakcrest Avenue is concerned about the mixed use facility and parking issues and feels the neighborhood does not want this project.

Romaine Stanton of Oakcrest avenue has concerns with traffic and truck deliveries.

Kathy Griest, who lives at Oakcrest and Shore Road, is currently having difficulty with parking and trash and is concerned that these issues will increase.

Jennifer Swift of Shore Road feels House & Garden doesn't belong in a residential area.

James Swift is concerned about 1 business becoming 14.

William Griest discussed history, traffic, and parking.

Barbara Wilson of Oakcrest Avenue is concerned with traffic, safety issues and parking.

Andy Bozarth of Oakcrest Avenue misses the residential feel of the neighborhood.

Mr. Cibotti of Oakcrest Avenue has traffic and safety issues and is concerned about the nearness to the Bike Path.

Jennifer Cramrow feels the area is too busy now and is concerned about parking.

Pat McGowan feels that rezoning is needed and that hardship variances are not an issue.

Bob Watts of Revere Avenue believes that traffic problems will create a dangerous situation. He would like the Erie Avenue exit blocked off.

Bill McConville doesn't want the business to increase. He wants it to be left as it is. Councilman

Jimmy Martinez stated that the increase in business will affect surrounding areas more than they currently are.

Seeing no other residents who wished to speak, Chairman Levitt closed the public portion of the meeting.

Mr. Tavecchia requested a continuance and it was determined that June 2nd is available to hear the continuance. The Chairman waived further notification.

There was 1 resolution for memorialization for the Fetter application. The Mayor made the motion to accept the resolution. Chairman Levitt asked for a voice vote. All members who heard the original application were in favor. The Mayor noted that Mr. Mark Dougherty has given his resignation to the Board and the Mayor will bring the written resignation to the next meeting. The Chairman noted that the Fire Department has requested a revised plan to review (Duran-My Beauty application) due to the substantial changes that have been required by the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 with a motion made by Mayor Perri and seconded by Ms. Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas-Clinton, Secretary to the Board