

City of Northfield

Planning & Zoning Board

1600 Shore Road

Northfield, New Jersey 08225

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Minutes: October 19, 2006

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, October 19, 2006 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:27 p.m. with the following members present:

Dr. Richard Levitt-Chairman
Clem Scharff-Vice Chairman
Mayor Frank Perri
Guy Schlachter, Councilman
Jerry Nuzzolo, Construction Official & Inspector-absent
Lou Milone
Ron Roegiers
Nick Droboniku-absent
Pete DaPrato
Henry Notaro

Thomas Subranni, Esq.- Solicitor
Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

The meeting opened with a reading of the Sunshine Law and roll call was taken with absent members noted above.

Chairman Levitt commented about the required education status. Planning Board members have until January 2008 to complete the required education hours. He is in touch with Enid Hyberg about organizing a class locally in the spring. The cost will be approximately \$50 per person. He will update the members as details become known.

There is one application scheduled for this evening. Sigano's Realty, L.L.C. had to be postponed. They did not advertise for a "D" variance nor did they pay the proper fees. They will be re-advertising and paying for the "D" variance or will be changing their plans so that a "D" variance will be unnecessary.

The application to be heard tonight is from Tilton Properties, LLC located at the Tilton Shopping Center on Tilton Road, Block 17, Lots 4, 7-12. The property is in the R-C Zone. The property is owned by the Gurwicz family. The attorney is Stephan R. Nehmad of Perskie, Nehmad & Perillo. The Engineer and Planner for the applicant is Jon Barnhart and the Architect & Developer is Rob

Curtain of the Curtain Design Group. All were sworn in as experts. Owners Ed & Mitchell Gurwicz were also present.

The current use of the building in question is a vacant restaurant that was most recently an Asian Restaurant and originally housed Burger Chef as far back as the sixties. They want to demolish the existing structure of 8,000 sq. ft. and build a new state of the art building that may possibly be multi-tenanted. The proposed building will be 9,200 sq. ft. They will have 2 to 4 tenants of a restaurant/retail nature and will add accessory parking and landscaping. The applicants are seeking a front setback variance (D) at Tilton Road where 65 ft. is required and they are asking for 34.5 ft. This footage currently exists and is nonconforming and the setback amount will not be adding to the nonconformity. They are also seeking Site Plan approval and are requesting "C" variances for signage.

Mr. Barnhart began his presentation and answered questions from Mr. Nehmad. He described the entire area for redevelopment as 55,000 sq. ft. He described the surrounding area. There is a shoe store to the north, which used to be Krispy Crème, a bank to the South, and the east contains the shopping center which is retail stores and offices. The entire area is asphalt and under-utilized without defined curbs, landscaping and adequate lighting. The setback from Tilton Road for the new building will be the same setback existing at the closest point and the building will be slightly angled as are other buildings in the area. They do not want to negatively impact any businesses in the shopping center or surrounding and the view behind the proposed building is important for business. They are proposing to build a beautiful restaurant/retail facility with a new asphalt paved parking area, curbs, sidewalks, and improved driveway, and a new green area in front which will decrease the impervious surface by 15%. The 4 existing islands with trees will remain. Mr. Barnhart commented that parking has never been an issue within the shopping center but they will be increasing the parking anyway. Ingress and egress will remain the same, but will be more refined. They want to remove the current building which is blighted and an eyesore and replace it with a more modern and attractive building.

Mr. Nehmad commented that a restaurant is a conditional use in this zone and retail is allowed. Mr. Barnhart added that the site is suitable for a restaurant use since it has been a restaurant for its entire existence. They are proposing to better the site by bringing it up to current standards in the heart of the City's commercial district.

Mr. Barnhart stated that they are requesting a small drive aisle waiver on the east side where 25 ft. is required and they are requesting 24 ft. He again mentioned that the new landscaping will reduce runoff and is a storm water management benefit. He stated that the variance relief setback will not be a detriment to the public good. It will match the existing setback and since the building will be askew, one corner will almost meet the setback. By having the building on a slight angle, the businesses behind the facility will be in better view.

Dr. Levitt commented that the drive aisle near the bank has a poorly defined curb cut. Mr. Barnhart commented that when Krispy Crème was improved, the nearby drive aisle was also improved. As the improvements continue, they will be improving the drive aisles. With this project, there will be vertical curbing on both sides of the aisle and one aisle is being closed off due to the new landscaping. Dr. Levitt thinks that curbing and sidewalks should continue all along the site. Mr. Barnhart said this may affect drainage if too much curbing existed and also they are unsure of what the corner project may be in the future. Dr. Levitt asked that the drive aisles be well defined to avoid driving off the curbs onto Tilton Road.

Mr. Barnhart described the minimal loading zone in the rear for delivery trucks during off hours. They do not anticipate any delivery circulation problems. The applicants will comply with the Fire Department's suggestions and will stripe out areas as proposed. The trash area and dumpsters in

the back will be enclosed with block or screened fencing. Two shade trees will be added as per Matt Doran's report.

Mr. Barnhart discussed parking. He stated that parking is adequate and is not an issue at the site. Parking ratios are devised using seat counts or square footage. They have 96 parking stalls on the plan immediately surrounding the building. The parking is more than efficient using either method. Mr. Barnhart closed by stating that the project meets requirements for site plan approval.

Mr. Rob Curtain of Curtain Design Group gave his testimony next. As the architectural designer, he explained that it is not his intention to create a highly distinctive building. It is the desire of the applicants to have a flexible building that can accommodate multiple tenants. The sides of the building will contain large expansive areas of glass, and above the glass, the company's signage will be displayed in a uniform manner. The signage will be back lighted with channeled lettering. Business logos will be used, but will be uniform. There will be signage on three sides of the building and lettering will be squared off and proportionate to the size of the building. Roof parafits will screen mechanicals. The rear of the building will contain more stucco than windows.

Mr. Mitchell Gurwicz was sworn in and spoke about the driveways and landscaped area. When they develop the new landscaping in the front, they will be adding a stop sign as they have done near the shoe store when that was renovated as Krispy Crème. They will also finish off the curbing and cars will be directed toward the stop sign to exit. The area in front of the bank has not been a problem. The site will be properly illuminated throughout. Mr. Nehmad commented that lighting will comply with the ordinance and Mr. Barnhart stated that 4 new light poles will be added.

Mr. Doran discussed driveways and aprons. Sidewalks along the front of the site are not necessary, but it is important to have an apron with a 30 ft. driveway with a return where the depressed curb is now. Dr. Levitt would also like landscaping in that area, but there is no water access. Mr. Doran discussed points in his report that were not touched upon. The height of the building will be 16 ft. The roof line will be 12 ft. with a 4 ft. parafit. 100% screening of mechanicals is required and the Engineer believes the reduction in asphalt will be sufficient for drainage. Mayor Perry commented that flooding has not been an issue in that area on Tilton Road and drainage has improved in other areas along Tilton Road due to recent County improvements. Mr. Doran commented that the refaced signage will be squared up and will conform with the ordinance. The existing free-standing signs will be re-faced. The squared up or blocked letters proposed are less than what is allowed. The area of the lettering will conform. Mr. Doran gave specifics about the letters. The lettering in the front is allowed 37.5 sq. ft. By blocking off the letters, they will be 33 sq. feet. The side lettering is allowed 65 sq. ft. and they are proposing 50 sq. ft. blocked. Dr. Levitt asked about neon accents and was told by Mr. Curtain that is unknown since the future tenants are unknown. Mayor Perri commented that if any of the future tenants want neon signage, they will have to come back before the Board.

Dr. Levitt opened the public session. There was no one who wished to speak on the application. Dr. Levitt closed the public session.

Mr. Nehmad gave a quick summary and stated that the project will be a betterment for the community. He then referenced the "D" variance. They need a variance for a front yard setback. 65 ft. is required, 34.5 is existing at the closest point. The two points existing are at 34.5 ft. and 48.5 ft. They are proposing 34.5 ft. and 60.3 ft. which will bring them more in compliance. The "D" variance is required rather than a bulk variance because it is part of conditional use language of the land use law. Mr. Scharff made the motion and Mr. DaPrato seconded. Mayor Perri and Mr.

Schlachter could not vote on the "D" variance as elected officials. Mr. Scharff, Mr. Milone, Mr. Roegiers, Mr. DaPrato, Mr. Notaro and Chairman Levitt all voted yes to allow the variance.

Mr. Scharff made the motion and a summary was made for the Site Plan-preliminary and final and "C" variances and waivers. Two shade trees will be added and these shall be out of the sight triangle. There will be a waiver for a 24 ft. driveway where 25 ft. is required. Mechanicals will be screened. The rear architectural design will be compatible with the frontage. The signage shall conform to ordinance and the lettering will be squared off. The Fire Department's letter of August 18, 2006 will be entered into the record and the suggested striping will be added. The 30 ft. drive aisle, defined with curbing, will be added and approved by Mr. Doran and the addition of a stop sign at the southern exit will be included. Mr. Daprato seconded the motion. The following Board members voted to approve the application: Mayor Perri, Mr. Schlachter, Mr. Scharff, Mr. Milone, Mr. Roegiers, Mr. DaPrato, Mr. Notaro and Chairman Levitt. None were opposed.

There were no resolutions to memorialize tonight. Mayor Perri advised the Board that Council is considering a Planner to finalize the Master Plan. He hopes that Council will choose a Planner before the end of the year and that a bid will not be necessary.

It was noted that the next meeting will be the remand hearing for the Palombo's application. Mayor Perri reminded that they will need to re-advertise and notify residents and businesses within 200 ft.

Chairman Levitt closed the meeting at 9:14 p.m. with a motion by Mayor Perri and seconded by Mr. Scharff.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas-Clinton,
Secretary to the Board