

City of Northfield
Planning & Zoning Board
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Minutes: November 15, 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, November 15, 2007 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:32 p.m. and the following members were present:

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

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

There were no applications scheduled for this evening. The Board held a work session meeting. It was noted that Councilman Steve Vain was present. There was no one from the public present.

Chairman Levitt began with a discussion of the revised Tree Ordinance that was provided by City Council. Mr. Martinez said this ordinance is informational at this time. He noted that Council felt the original ordinance was too restricted and had too much to do with the residents and was based on a few individuals who did not follow through with what they promised. The majority of Council agreed it was too restrictive and sent the ordinance to Keith Bonchi, Esq. for review. The Board discussed the changes at length. Chairman Levitt expressed that the revised ordinance only deals with commercial properties with trees in buffer zones and that the original ordinance was not aimed at hurting the residents. He felt there would be no protection provided by this version of the ordinance for the City. Mr. Doran commented that the goal is that Council does not want the ordinance to affect individual lots and single family homes. Dr. Levitt reminded the Board that the residents were furious about what has occurred on certain lots in town and he feels the ordinance needs to reach a middle ground. Mayor Perri commented that enforcement of the ordinance was also an issue for Council. Mr. Subranni commented that there needs to be a penalty clause and that any violators would be fined. He added that all commercial approvals should become deed restricted to avoid problems and that the approved resolution should be attached to the deed for the property. This should include major and minor subdivisions and

commercial applications. The Board continued to discuss enforcement issues and the need for more protection from the tree ordinance. Dr. Levitt asked that the ordinance be taken back to Council to see that protections can exist in zones other than commercial. Mayor Perri suggested that two ordinances concerning trees will be needed. One with the Land Use Ordinance for developers and a stand-alone ordinance for the City pertaining to residents who do not need to come before the Board seeking a variance, etc. Mayor Perri commented that the wording should not be "buffer" but should be changed to setback. He said the language does not coincide with our ordinance and Dr. Levitt agreed stating that the character of the City is at issue.

Dr. Levitt asked if Councilman Vain wished to speak. He said that Council was given the ordinance late in the evening at the meeting and he feels Council was worried about residents not being allowed to cut down trees on their property. He does feel the ordinance should be specific about what trees are allowed to be cut down. Mr. Doran commented that everything is covered in the ordinance except single family lots. Mr. O'Grady referred to the tree fines at \$1,250 to \$5,000 per tree and Mayor Perri added that would work for developers but not for residents.

Mr. O'Grady made the motion that the revised tree ordinance would be taken back to Council for review since the ordinance deals with the commercial buffer zone and doesn't affect anything else in the City. Included would be the language of "setback" rather than "buffer". Mr. Scharff seconded. All voted in favor by voice vote. Mr. Martinez will take the ordinance back to Council.

There were 6 resolutions to memorialize. All voting was by voice vote and was unanimously approved. The first vote was for Kevin & Michele Scanlon and Edward Colett approved at the October 4, 2007 meeting. Mr. Scharff and Mr. Roegiers abstained. Mayor Perri did the voice vote for Dr. Richard & Deborah Levitt. Mr. Scharff, Mr. Roegiers and Dr. Levitt abstained. The next three resolutions were memorialized together. They were for Brett Perlman, T-Mobile Northeast, LLC and Commerce Bank, NA approved at the October 18, 2007 meeting. Mr. Martinez, Mr. Scharff and Mr. Schlachter abstained.

The next item for discussion was presented by Chairman Levitt. He stated that Council is sending Michele Verno to Egg Harbor Township in opposition to the Margate Bridge Road project involving the construction of condominiums at the Hackney's Boatyard site. The proposal involved twenty-four buildings at a height of 48 ft. The site is zoned marine-commercial and only 30 ft. height is allowed. A variance from EHT would be needed. Dr. Levitt expressed concerns that such a project would create a possible burden on City services, the site is in a flood zone, there are safety concerns and it would be an aesthetic disaster. The Chairman asked that the Northfield Planning & Zoning Board draft a resolution asking EHT to consider the aesthetic and safety concerns. He also noted that boat storage is needed and to getting rid of this boat storage facility may create more boats being parked on City streets. Mayor Perri added for the record that he could not be involved in the vote since he has a conflict with the owner and the developer. Mr. O'Grady made the motion and Mr. Martinez seconded. The voice vote was all in favor. Dr. Levitt will write a resolution in letter format and give it to the Secretary for typing and distribution to the necessary parties. The resolution will be added to these minutes as an attachment when available.

The final item for discussion concerns the Master Plan draft. The plan was reviewed by Mr. Doran and the Board page by page and changes were noted concerning typo and wording changes as requested by the members. Mr. Doran will re-type the draft and add page numbers for easier reference. Some highlights involved SIC codes, cell towers, COHA and EMT service. All discussion is available on the recording of the session and is incorporated into these minutes.

The next meeting will be December 6, 2007 and Chairman Levitt declared that the December 20, 2007 meeting is to be canceled. There are no pending applications at this time.

The meeting closed at 9:20 p.m. with a motion from Mayor Perri and a second from Mr. Roegiers.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board