

City of Northfield

Planning & Zoning Board

1600 Shore Road

Northfield, New Jersey 08225

(609) 641-2832 Ext. 127 Fax (609) 646-7175

Minutes: November 16, 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, November 16, 2006 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:29 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-absent

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.

The first application of the evening is from John Vetter of 23 Haddon Avenue, Block 147, Lot 2. The property is located in the R-2 Zone. The applicant is requesting a "C" (2) Variance for a front yard setback. 25 ft. is required by ordinance and he is requesting 21 ft. Mr. Vetter was sworn in by Dr. Levitt and is representing himself.

Mr. Vetter testified that there is an existing concrete foundation which is currently a porch. Mr. Vetter wants to expand his living room over the foundation and enclose the area. He is not intending to go beyond the footprint of the porch as questioned by Chairman Levitt. Mr. Vetter commented that the concrete foundation can support the intended structure. Mr. Doran commented that there are 2 existing non-conformities involving the front and side yards. There is an existing 6 ft. side yard setback where 10 is required and 18 ft. off Broad St. where 25 ft. is required. Curbs and sidewalks exist and street trees need to be discussed.

Dr. Levitt commented that the existing trees look adequate from the photographs provided. The Chairman asked for testimony that will justify the variances. Mr. Vetter stated that the project will rid the house of the overhanging porch which rattles when windy. They will not be intruding on the property and the home will look better. There will also be more space indoors for his family.

Mr. Roegiers recapped that the porch area will be 18 x 8 enclosed and will expand the existing indoor living room. Mr. Vetter added that he will not be expanding the area of the structure. Dr. Levitt asked for public comments and seeing no one who wished to speak, closed the public session.

Mr. Scharff made a motion and summarized. The motion is to grant 2 front yard setbacks and 1 side yard setback. Mr. DaPrato seconded the motion. Mr. Doran added that street trees will be waived at 30 ft. on center. Mr. Scharff commented that the property already has 4 street trees. Dr. Levitt stated that additional trees will not be required but will be welcomed. A roll call vote of all members present this evening was unanimous in favor of approving the variance and nonconformities.

The second application was presented by Seth Brilliant, Chairman of the Library Board, on behalf of the Northfield Library located on Mill Road, Block 92, Lots 23 & 24. The zone is R-1. The Library is proposing to construct a distinguishing sign on the lawn. They presently have a sign on the building and it is not very visible from the road. People have complained that they cannot locate the library.

Mr. Brilliant described the new sign. There will be two 6x6 posts in the ground to support the sign. The oval sign will be fiberglass on both sides that will look like carved wood in appearance. Eventually they want to have the posts bricked up by a professional mason. They will have a reader board with one line of 6 inch high lettering. This will advertise events. The lettering will be a classy dark blue. The sign itself will be twice as far back as originally proposed. Exhibit A-2 was presented to the Board members at the meeting. This Exhibit shows a color version of a slightly larger version of the sign. It is 6 ft. long with a 7 to 8 ft. base. It is 6 ft. tall. There is 2 and ½ ft. from the ground to the reader sign. For a free standing sign, 3 ft. from the ground is required and they are proposing 2 and ½ ft. They will also make the sign a ½ ft. taller. The setback for the sign was originally measured incorrectly. The sign will actually be set back 5 to 6 ft. further from the property line. Mr. Doran commented that sign height is allowed to be 15 ft. The library sign complies.

It was noted that City Councilman, Mike Turon has expressed concerns about the lighting at night. Mr. Brilliant commented that the Library closes at 8 p.m. at the latest. There is no point in keeping the site lit all night. The flood lights can be set on a timer to go off at 11 or 12 midnight. They will be properly shielded and face in toward the building.

Mr. Scharff commented that the sign is in the site triangle. Mr. Doran agreed, but stated that those exiting the site will be able to see fine and that the County has completed their improvements on Mill Road and is aware of the sign placement and has no problem with it. Mayor Perri stated that the County approves of the sign according to the old standards which is appropriate.

Dr. Levitt asked about the changeable lettering behind the screen. Mr. Brilliant said the double-sided cabinet will be key-locked to prevent vandalism and letter tampering.

Advertising was waived since the City owns the property. It was discussed that a variance would be unnecessary since the Library is a Governmental entity and is a conforming use in a residential zone as a public building. The sign would go along with the building.

Dr. Levitt asked for public input, and seeing none, closed the public session. Mayor Perri thanked the Board for their consideration regarding the sign.

Dr. Levitt asked for a motion for a site plan waiver. Mr. Scharff made the motion and Mr. DaPrato seconded. The motion includes the library sign at a maximum of 2 and ½ ft. off the ground, 2 and ½ ft. wide, 6 ft. long and 7 to 8 ft. long. The sign can be smaller if desired. The optional illumination will not interfere with neighbors and public view will be free from glare at the street. The lighting will be timed with the parking lot lighting. The vote was unanimous for approval.

Mr. Brilliant commented that they will need a Resolution to obtain the necessary permits. He thanked the Board and invited them to visit the Library.

The third application of the evening is from Sigano's Realty, LLC at 1317 Tilton Road, Block 41, Lot 22. Mr. Robert M. Milstead, the Attorney presenting the application, approached the Board and stated that they wish to be rescheduled since there are only 5 voting members who are eligible to vote on the "D" variance (Mayor Perri and Councilman Schlachter cannot vote as elected officials). The hearing will be rescheduled for January 4, 2007 after re-organization. The applicant will not have to re-advertise as public notice at this meeting will serve as advertising and notification of the rescheduled date.

Dr. Levitt asked about completion of the Master Plan revisions. Mayor Perri stated that funds are available for the City to hire a Planner. Dr. Levitt mentioned Mr. Landgraf as a possible candidate. Mayor Perri will contact Council President Vince Mazzeo about placing this matter on the agenda.

Dr. Levitt commented that required Planning Board member education has been pushed back to January 2008 as a date for completion.

There were two resolutions to memorialize this evening. Mr. Subranni commented on the 801 New Road, LLC resolution. He stated that revised plans are required to be submitted to Mr. Doran and the Zubin easement must be granted. Mr. Doran stated that final plans will not be signed unless every condition of approval has been met. The other resolution is for Tilton Properties, LLC.

The first resolution, Tilton Properties, LLC passed unanimously with no abstentions. Mr. Roegiers made the motion and Mr. Scharff seconded. The second resolution for 801 New Road, LLC required Mr. Scharff and Mr. Roegiers to abstain. All were in favor.

Mr. Subranni informed the Board that he has been in contact with Counsel for Palombo's Pharmacy and discussion is going on as to a possible agreement between the City and Palombo's. They are considering asking the City to create a timeline to allow them to relocate and to possibly rezone the property to commercial to allow a suitable tenant to operate in the present building. Possible timelines were discussed and two years was a possibility. Mr. Subranni said Palombo's were thinking along the lines of 2 years with a 6 month extension if needed. Mayor Perri commented that the O-PB zone for the site might be more suitable with a no food or medical clause. Mr. Schlachter commented that the parking lot should not be allowed to be sold separately. Mr. Doran commented that 2 years would be reasonable if they were relocating to an existing building, especially in Egg Harbor Township where it can take up to a year to come before the Planning Board. If they are building from the ground up, they may need more time. Mr. Subranni stated that there should be a clause about not being able to operate 2 buildings at once while waiting for the 2 year period to lapse should they relocate more quickly. Mr. Subranni asked the Board to authorize him to present to the applicants the following noting that full consideration at this point is important: O-PB zoning with no medical, waive the Pharmacy if

possible, a two year window for relocation, with at least a 60 day transmission period, no two locations operating at the same time will be allowed, the 2 year period will begin from the date of agreement and settlement will be given publicly. Mr. Subranni will report back at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8:30 p.m. with a motion from Mr. DaPrato and a second from Mr. Schlachter.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas-Clinton, Secretary to the Board