

City of Northfield Planning Board
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Minutes: February 4, 2010

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 had 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 Board, held on Thursday, February 4, 2010 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Dr. Richard Levitt at 7:00 p.m. and the following members were present or absent as noted:

Dr. Richard Levitt-Chairman
Clem Scharff-Vice Chairman
Mayor Vincent Mazzeo
Councilman Jimmy Martinez
Chief Robert James
Lou Milone
John Clifford
Ron Roegiers
Henry Notaro
Jim Shippen
Linda Dyrek

Norman Zlotnick, Solicitor
Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

There was one application on the agenda for John & Jane Burke who reside at 12 Locust Drive, Block 93, Lot 5 in the R-2 zone. They are requesting a "C" variance for a front yard setback to enclose a portion of an existing covered front porch. Chairman Levitt swore in the Burkes and their architect and planner, Edwin Howell, RA, PP of Ocean City.

Mr. Burke began by stating that they have owned the property for over 30 years and the home is small in size (less than 900 sf). They want a larger house to better enjoy the amenities the property has to offer. Most of the changes involve moving the walls inside the house and extending the house toward the rear and all the development is in compliance with the ordinance except for the enclosed porch. Mr. Howell said they are not extending the house closer to the street. The existing porch has a roof over it and they are enclosing only half and the rest will be the entryway to the foyer. Mr. Doran said the existing house on the 10 ft. side has a 6.7 ft. setback and the addition toward the back will be pushed back to the 10 ft. line. The addition is compliant. The Bilco door on the side is closer than 25 ft. to the front setback. This door is a new entrance door to the basement and should be setback 25 ft. but will be 22 ft. Mr. Howell said Mr. Burke is an avid mill worker and needs the new access to transport wood to his basement. This will also add another ingress and egress and creates a safety consideration for the home. There currently is a rear door for basement access, but this will be concealed with the addition. The door is in the 25 ft. setback and will be about 30 inches tall above ground which Mr. Howell feels is a low feature at the front of the building.

Mr. Howell added two exhibits to the record. Exhibit A-1 is a photograph collage showing surrounding properties looking east and west from Mr. Burke's property. Exhibit A-2 is a photograph of the catch basin at the curb. The first exhibit showed the general neighborhood scheme of surrounding property setbacks which are closer to front yard property lines than 25 ft. The Burke's property will be no closer to the front yard line than it currently is. Mr. Howell said the applicant is asking for a waiver or variance for a second parking space on the lot. Currently they only have one and to add space for a second car, they would have to not only widen the driveway, but they would also have to increase the curb cut. Exhibit A-2 shows the catch basin at the curb which leads to the underground storm water pipe which exists due to a 10 ft. drainage easement. There will be no intensification of use at the property and the Burke's only have two bedrooms. Mrs. Burke parks her car in the street and they have been fine with this situation for over 30 years. Dr Levitt commented that there appears to be room for stack parking on site if needed.

Mr. Doran referred to his engineer's report and said the Board should hear testimony as to positive and negative criteria for the C (2) variance and noted there are curbs and sidewalks in the front, but the Board needs to discuss trees. Dr. Levitt said the ordinance requires two shade trees 30 ft. on center and said they have room to add a tree in the side yard without obscuring the site triangle. The Burke's agreed to add one shade tree.

Mr. Howell addressed positive and negative criteria and said there is an aesthetic benefit from the improvements they will be making and there is no detriment to the public good. The general neighborhood scheme is a setback similar to what the Burke's are proposing with their enclosure and the neighborhood will benefit from the aesthetic appeal. Dr. Levitt asked if the stairway will be located where the overgrown shrub is currently at the right side of the porch. Mr. Howell said yes and added the shrub blocks the view and will be removed and the area re-landscaped with smaller shrubs. Dr. Levitt suggested referring to the Atlantic County Board approved list of trees. Mr. Howell said they also will be replacing the curb. Dr. Levitt suggested putting the tree behind the sidewalk between the driveway and fence.

Dr. Levitt noted there was no one present from the public who wished to speak on the matter. There were no further questions from the Board.

Mr. Scharff made the motion for a variance for a front yard setback for the single family home where 25 ft. is required and 14.4 ft. is proposed, stacked parking is existing so there is no need for a waiver. The motion includes one shade tree and foundation plantings as shown on the architectural sketches. Mr. Roegiers seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Clifford-no vote as 2nd alternate, 9 voting members present, Mrs. Dyrek-yes, Chief James-yes, Councilman Martinez-yes, Mayor Mazzeo-yes, Mr. Milone-yes, Mr. Notaro-no vote as 1st Alternate, 9 voting members present, Mr. Roegiers-yes, Mr. Scharff-yes, Mr. Shippen-yes, Chairman Levitt-yes. The motion for the setback variance carries.

There was one resolution to memorialize for Giro Enterprises, Inc., Block 82, Lot 4, 2322 New Road for an Interpretation and Amended Preliminary and Final Site Plan for on-site stacked parking. Dr. Levitt commented that the resolution should include that the stacked parking can also be used for patient parking and the applicant will install signs permitting this. Mr. Clifford abstained. The voice vote was all in favor of memorialization with the amendments so noted.

The Board discussed the current meeting schedule. Dr. Levitt said Matt Doran has a work conflict with the 2nd Thursday meeting of the month. Deborah Wahl is available to fill in for the 2nd

monthly meetings if necessary. Dr. Levitt commented that development and applications being submitted have slowed due to the economy and there have been few commercial projects. Mr. Doran noted that Egg Harbor Township now has only one meeting per month as do most other municipalities. Dr. Levitt suggested meeting only the 1st Thursday of each month but leave the option of the second Thursday of the month for special meetings if necessary. Mr. Milone agreed and suggested only scheduling the 1st Thursday for applications. Dr. Levitt said hopefully the economy will turn and things will pick up. Mr. Zlotnick said legally the best thing to do is to change the schedule for the entire year and advertise the change. Dr. Levitt said the Board can always advertize for a second meeting if something comes up with a lease agreement or sale issue. Chief James made the motion for the Board's regular meeting schedule to be changed to the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion.

Mr. Doran noted that the Burke's application is a good example of a complete application submission. Dr. Levitt said that application checklists are being addressed for the updated land Use Ordinance.

Chairman Levitt closed the meeting at 7:32 p.m. with a motion from Mr. Milone and a second from Mr. Scharff.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board