

City of Northfield Planning Board
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Minutes: April 1, 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, April 1, 2010 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Dr. Richard Levitt at 7:02 p.m. and the following members were present or absent as noted:

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

Norman Zlotnick, Solicitor
Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

There were three applications on tonight's agenda. The first was from Bradford P. & Lauren R. Cooke, residents of the city, for a "C" variance (front yard setback) to build an addition to their home. The property is located at 206 Oxford Circle, Block 168, Lots 9 & 10, in the R-1 zone. The couple was sworn in by Chairman Richard Levitt. Mr. Cooke stated they currently have a single-family rancher and they are proposing a second story addition. Also sworn in were the architect and planner for the project, Harry S. Harper and Louis Capone of Absecon.

Mr. Cooke testified that he sees a long future in Northfield and wants to raise a family here. Mr. Harper said there is an open front porch currently existing and the house sits on an irregularly shaped lot. Dr. Levitt noted that the house sits on an angle. The house presently is 19.10 feet off the front yard setback and they want to expand and add a roof to the porch, but they would be leaving the porch open. They will then add the second floor. They will be keeping the line of the house exactly the same. They want the front porch to extend all the way across the front to create an architecturally pleasing structure. All other setbacks aside from the front yard setback conform.

Mr. Doran said the expansion requires a "C" variance for the front yard setback where 25 ft. is required and they are proposing 12.66 to the porch. The applicants have curbs and sidewalks as required. They need to address the need for street trees and discuss further the benefits of their project. Mr. Harper said the family wants to stay in town and want the expansion for a growing family. The improvements will enhance the neighborhood and they do not see any negatives

associated with the project. Dr. Levitt noted that there was no one from the public at the meeting. Mr. Roegiers said there is an existing garage and there appears to be plenty of on site parking in the driveway. He asked if there were any tree removal issues. Mr. Harper said they would not be removing any trees. Dr. Levitt asked about shade trees and Mr. Harper said there is one shade tree in front and Mr. Cooke said there are three on the curb strip.

Chief James made the motion for front yard variance approval and Mrs. Dyrek seconded. The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Clifford-absent, Mrs. Dyrek-yes, Chief James-yes, Councilman Martinez-absent, Mayor Mazzeo-yes, Mr. Milone-yes, Mr. Notaro-yes, Mr. Roegiers-yes, Mr. Scharff-absent, Mr. Shippen-absent, Chairman Levitt-yes. The motion for the front yard setback variance carries.

The second application was a presentation from the County of Atlantic for a minor land exchange between the City of Northfield and the County of Atlantic. The property is located on Route 9 and Dolphin Avenue and is shown as Block 69, Lot 1.01 on the Tax Map. The County will convey 1,495 sf to Northfield on the eastern border and will acquire 1,350 sf from the City on the northern border. Chairman Levitt swore in the following gentleman: Glen Mawby, Director of Facilities Management for Atlantic County, John Eberwine, Chief of Administrative Service for Atlantic County, Anthony J. Pagano, Attorney for Atlantic County and David Drake, Architect for W2A Design Group. Mr. Pagano said they are before the Board tonight for approval of a minor subdivision due to an exchange of land between the City and the County.

Mr. Drake testified he has been working with the County on this project for six years in different phases. The project involves a master plan to develop the parcel of County land at New Road and Dolphin Avenue. The initial phase was completed last summer with the installation of a fence around the back of the parcel. Phase one will continue in a few months which involves the construction of a new crew quarters facility for road, tree, and park crews. This includes a shop area, locker rooms and showers, and a lunch room. The crew quarters will serve as a home base for the crews. They will also be installing a new driveway and road system at the site and create a new intersection with Dolphin Avenue. This is what is driving the land swap. A small parcel of land is necessary to accommodate the alignment for the intersection. Phase 2 will involve an Engineering and Planning Office and Mr. Drake is unsure when this will begin. Phase 3 involves a new retention basin and there are two retention basins to be completed in Phase One. Phase 3 also includes an additional parking facility and a general storage facility. Phase 4 will involve relocating Mosquito Control to the existing Transportation Building and removing a building which is falling apart. A new Mosquito Control shop, warehouse, and vehicle storage facilities will be added. No municipal approval is needed for the basins and they have all been approved by CAFRA.

Dr. Levitt asked Mr. Drake to explain the land swap. Mr. Drake said they basically are exchanging a wooded section that Northfield owns for a triangular section of roughly the same square footage (Northfield will be obtaining an extra 100 sf) and it was noted that this exchange will square off the parcel and allow for the intersection alignment. Mr. Eberwine showed a scaled down site plan showing the lands to be swapped highlighted.

Mr. Doran and the Board members had no comments. Dr. Levitt asked about Dolphin Avenue being able to handle sand and gravel trucks. Mr. Drake said the trucks are operating on the road now and they do not expect any changes. Mr. Mawby said part of the plan is to re-align the road and straighten it out a little and this will be an improvement. Mr. Drake added that the new truck wash will be a shared service. He added that in summertime, water is cleaned and recycled and that there are sludge pits within the system. All water is self contained similar to a car wash and will not contaminate any ground water. Water cannot be recycled in the winter since salt water would be recycled back onto the clean trucks.

Mayor Mazzeo commented that there have been a few complaints about County vehicles on Harvey and Maple Drives and asked if they could travel on New Road rather than through residential neighborhoods. The Mayor added that the truck wash is a benefit to the environment which keeps water used to clean trucks out of storm water drains. Dr. Levitt noted that there was no one from the public who wished to speak.

Mr. Milone made the motion for approval of the minor subdivision with changes to the lot lines as shown on the plan. Mr. Roegiers seconded.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Clifford-absent, Mrs. Dyrek-yes, Chief James-yes, Councilman Martinez-absent, Mayor Mazzeo-yes, Mr. Milone-yes, Mr. Notaro-yes, Mr. Roegiers-yes, Mr. Scharff-absent, Mr. Shippen-absent, Chairman Levitt-yes. The motion for the minor subdivision carries.

The third application is from Atlantic One Tilton, LLC, 805 Tilton Road, Block 59, Lot 2.03 in the R-C Zone. Christopher Baylinson, Esq. of Perskie Mairone Brog & Baylinson of Linwood was present as the attorney representing the applicant. He stated that the restaurant is currently operating as Chido Burrito Mexican Eatery and formerly was the site of Stewart's restaurant. The applicant is seeking a waiver of site plan to install four picnic style tables which can hold six people at each table. The question is whether the parking is adequate with the additional seating and Mr. Baylinson discussed the calculations. He noted that however the parking is calculated, they are well within that which is permitted. Based on the number of seats, there are 52 seats inside and 24 proposed outside for a total of 72 seats. At one space per 3 seats, this would equal 25 parking spaces where 26 are required. The applicant has 47 spaces available. To do the calculation by square footage, there are 1628 sf inside and 340 sf outside for a total of 1968 sf. The parking calculation is based on one space per 75 ft. of floor area for a total of 26 to 27 spaces. Again, they have 47 spaces available. Mr. Baylinson said his calculations were very similar to Mr. Doran's in his report. Mr. Doran said he had to guesstimate the interior sf since he did not have the interior floor plan, but he said at the highest estimate, they would be required to have 35 spaces and they have 47 spaces.

Terence Gallagher is one of the owners of the eatery and he was sworn in by Chairman Levitt. He said that business has been good since the opening. They have three exterior trash receptacles and he has bus boys on staff to keep areas clean both inside and out. Dr. Levitt said outdoor trash is a major concern. He said the restaurant is quick serve style or take out. He said he would send bus boys or dishwashers outdoors every 15 minutes to clean the area. He said it would not be desirable to have a dirty restaurant or parking lot. There is no waiter service inside or outside. Dr. Levitt asked about a pathway to the tables. Mr. Doran said there is a path from the entrance to the tables and that it is well protected with curbing. The parking will not be aimed at the people who are seated outside. Mr. Baylinson added that there are metal light stands in front of the tables which also serve as protection from cars.

Dr. Levitt asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak. Seeing no one, he closed the public session. Mr. Roegiers asked if there would only be four tables. Mr. Gallagher said that is the intention now and he asked if the approval could be for a total of 24 seats instead of being limited to 4 tables.

Mrs. Dyrek made the motion for a site plan waiver to permit outdoor seating for 24 seats for this restaurant site. Mr. Notaro seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Clifford-absent, Mrs. Dyrek-yes, Chief James-yes, Councilman Martinez-absent, Mayor Mazzeo-yes, Mr. Milone-yes, Mr. Notaro-yes, Mr. Roegiers-yes, Mr. Scharff-absent, Mr. Shippen-absent, Chairman Levitt-yes. The motion for site plan waiver carries.

There was one resolution to memorialize for John & Jane Burke, Block 93, Lot 5, 12 Locust Drive, for a "C" variance for a front yard setback to enclose an existing front porch. There were no abstentions. A voice vote was all in favor of memorialization.

Dr. Levitt asked about the progress with the Ordinance updating. Mr. Doran said the ordinance is being looked at item by item. Dr. Levitt set a date for the next ordinance sub-committee meeting for May 6, 2010 after the regular Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Zlotnick gave an update on the Hansen situation. There will be another conference call on April 6, 2010 which was set up by Mr. Zlotnick's insistence. If there is no agreement, Mr. Zlotnick is going to ask for the case to be dismissed. The time has long since passed for Mr. Perillo to file his brief and Mr. Plackter, who is representing Harrah's, said there has been no agreement reached. Dr. Levitt commented that this is a suit against this Board litigated by private parties with their own concerns with each other. Mr. Zlotnick agreed and said they have not been able to come to any agreement or close any deal and even if they do, the Board is under no obligation. Mr. Zlotnick said they are playing with the idea of coming back before the Board with the bi-rite plan, which would not require any variances, but would include some modifications to suit the neighbors. Mr. Zlotnick will keep the Board posted.

The meeting was closed by Chairman Levitt at 7:44 p.m. with a motion from Mr. Roegiers and a second from Mrs. Dyrek.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board