

City of Northfield Planning Board
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Minutes: May 6, 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, May 6, 2010 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Dr. Richard Levitt at 7:04 p.m. and the following members were present or absent as noted:

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

Norman Zlotnick, Solicitor
Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

There was one application scheduled for this evening. The applicant, Raddev, LLC, requested approval for a minor subdivision of Block 126, Lot 6, 424 Fairbanks Avenue, located in the R-3 zone. The lot is currently vacant land as the previous house located on the property has been demolished.

David Frisch was the attorney for Raddev. He substituted for James E. Robertson of Linwood. He was sworn in with the project's professional engineer, Rami Nassar, of Schaeffer Nassar & Scheidegg of Mays Landing who signed off on the plans. Mr. Frisch said the new lots are conforming and he stated the proposed lots are lot 26 and lot 26.01. Mr. Nassar added that they propose to subdivide the lot into two single family lots and that no variances or waivers will be required. They are proposing to service the two units with public water, sewer and natural gas. Mr. Nassar commented on Mr. Doran's report and agreed that contractors will obtain any permits necessary for any work done in the right of way to ensure all work is done properly. Dr. Levitt asked about street trees and curbs and sidewalks. Mr. Nassar said curbs and sidewalks are existing and they are proposing street trees. Mr. Nassar said the dwelling has been torn down and is now vacant land and they will service all sewer, water and gas hook-ups. Dr. Levitt said the application is a bi-rite subdivision. Mr. Roegiers asked about the driveway. Mr. Nassar said there will be two on-site parking spaces and the plans show a garage. If the garage is not constructed, there will be three on-site parking spaces. Dr. Levitt asked if the street trees could be moved inside the property line on the other side of the sidewalk so that the trees don't lift the sidewalk. He asked that the trees be setback a few feet. Mr. Nassar said they could do that and

Mr. Doran agreed there would be enough room. Mr. Doran asked if the Tax Assessor verified the lots and Mr. Nassar said he has a memo from the Assessor verifying the lot numbers.

There was no other discussion. Mr. Scharff made the motion for the minor subdivision, to include all the Engineer's notes, and to place the shade trees within the property line as agreed to. Mr. Milone seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

There were three resolutions to memorialize which were approved at the April 1, 2010 meeting. They were for Bradford and Lauren Cooke, Block 168, Lots 9 & 10, 424 Fairbanks Avenue for a "C" variance (front yard setback), The County of Atlantic, Block 69, Lot 1.01, 201 New Road, for a minor subdivision (land swap with the City of Northfield), and Atlantic One Tilton, Inc. (Chido Burrito Restaurant), Block 59, Lot 2.03, 807 Tilton Road, for a site plan waiver for outdoor seating. Mr. Martinez and Mr. Scharff abstained. Chairman Levitt called for a voice vote of the other five members present (Mrs. Dyrek, Chief James, Mr. Milone, Mr. Roegiers and himself) and the vote was all in favor of memorializing the three resolutions.

Mr. Scharff brought up the new LED street lights that have been installed from City Hall toward Tilton Road on Shore Road. There are six or so lights that have been converted to different types of LED lights. Mr. Scharff commented that they are somewhat glaring. Councilman Martinez commented that the lighting is still in the testing phase. Chief James said there is a grid on the street to measure the lumens or the light output from several different varieties. Mr. Scharff said that one of the types puts out an obnoxious glare, but he added that the lights produce slightly dimmer lighting and probably use not even 1/10 of the power. He asked the Board members to take a look at them at night. Dr. Levitt said the Board can discuss their opinions on the lighting at the next meeting and if there are preferences, the Board can email Atlantic Electric. Chief James commented that Northfield is one of three towns involved in the testing and the Electric Company will use the results to determine what kind of lighting they will use in the future. Mr. Scharff said that LED lighting has not been perfected and he has found at work that occasionally they work fine, but at other times they can pop out. He added that LED lighting is still expensive for home lighting. Dr. Levitt commented that LED stop lights do not produce any heat and when they become snow covered, the snow doesn't melt. Mr. Scharff concluded that LED lighting is getting better and better, but some of the first generation lights are failing. Dr. Levitt thanked Mr. Scharff for bringing this to the Board's attention.

Councilman Martinez told the Board that a committee was formed at the last City Council meeting consisting of Mayor Mazzeo, Councilman Brian Smith and himself to look at the idea of city property use for cell towers to create revenue for the city. Mr. Martinez noted that City Hall wasn't chosen as a site for the Coastal Design tower because of the coverage they were trying to create. Dr. Levitt said cell towers are already a permitted use. Mr. Martinez said Council wants to justify creating these revenues and wants to be on the top of the list if a cell tower application comes in. Dr. Levitt said there is a hierarchy written into the ordinance which says public property is the first preference for towers followed by regional commercial, local commercial with residential at the bottom of the list and justification must be shown. Location also has to do with the cell tower company needs rather than the city needs. But the Board will ask any applicants if they have looked at public property and if they have not, they will need to explain why they have not done so. Mr. Milone added that coverage areas needed dictates where towers are usually placed. Mr. Zlotnick said that he recently received word that the Coastal Design monopole will not be constructed. After engineering re-calculations were done, it was found that the building cannot take the weight of the structure.

Dr. Levitt asked for an update on the Hansen case. Mr. Zlotnick said they seem to have settled all their differences with Harrah's and The Gove's and the only thing holding them back is that Harrah's has not yet signed off on the agreement. Dr. Levitt reminded that the Board is under no obligation regardless of what the litigants have agreed to. If they come back with a presentation, the Board will hear it fairly. Mr. Zlotnick said he is surprised that they have not tried to settle the case with the Board. Normally, with a contested case, you try to settle with all of your adversaries. They are taking a hybrid approach to the case. If the Board doesn't put a stamp of approval on the settlement, he believes they will comeback before the Board with a by-rite subdivision.

Chairman Levitt said there will be an ordinance subcommittee meeting immediately following the close of this meeting. Dr. Levitt and Mr. Scharff are on the committee and a total of four members are allowed to be present. Mayor Mazzeo is expected to be a the meeting later and since Mr. Shippen is absent, he invited up to two Board members to be present at the meeting and would appreciate any further input.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m. with a motion from Chief James and a second from Mr. Martinez.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board