

City of Northfield Planning Board
1600 Shore Road
Northfield, New Jersey 08225
Telephone (609) 641-2832, ext. 127
Fax (609) 646-7175

Minutes: April 3, 2014

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, filed with the City Clerk, and posted on the City website, 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 3, 2014 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:00 p.m. and the following members were present or absent as noted:

Councilman Erland Chau
Linda Dyrek-absent
Denise Kintish
Dr. Richard Levitt
Mayor Jerry McGee
Lou Milone
Sgt. Paul Newman
Henry Notaro
Ron Roegiers-absent
Derek Rowe
Clem Scharff-absent
Jim Shippen

Matthew Doran, Professional Engineer-absent
Norman Zlotnick, Solicitor-absent

Dr. Levitt welcomed the new Mayor, Jerry McGee, to the Board and the Secretary read the Oath of Office as a Notary Public. Mayor McGee was officially sworn in as a Planning Board member. Mayor McGee then read the Oath of Office for Lou Milone as a Class IV member and Henry Notaro as Alternate #1.

Dr. Levitt announced that the application submitted by Max Gurwicz and Sons, Inc. for an apartment complex on Cresson Avenue was withdrawn. He asked if any members of the public wanted to speak and seeing no one, he closed the public session.

There was one resolution to memorialize for Jack Trocki Development Co., LLC, Block 40, Lot 23 at 1601 New Road for a "C" Variance for a free-standing sign. The voice vote was all in favor with Denise Kintish, Lou Milone, and Henry Notaro abstaining.

Dr. Levitt spoke to the Board about some issues of importance. He noted that quorums at the meetings are extremely important and he reminded the Board members to

contact the Secretary if you cannot attend a meeting. He also reminded the Board members about abstaining from discussing any application publically before they are brought before the Board. The Planning Board is a quasi-judicial entity and discussions and opinions are not to be voiced before the application is heard. Every application must be heard fairly and impartially and weighed against the standards. Emotions or personal connections cannot enter into decisions and the standards of the law must be upheld. He encouraged the Board members to be familiar with the Land Use code and to also visit the sites of submitted applications. Dr. Levitt stressed that the Board not talk to the media or the public concerning upcoming applications. A Board member could be recused from voting on an application for simply stating his or her opinion and he urged that the Board be careful and mindful of this.

Dr. Levitt addressed the issue of COAH, the Council on Affordable Housing, which is an agency of NJ government responsible for ensuring that all 566 municipalities provide their fair share of low to moderate income housing. Dr. Levitt noted that the City of Northfield is not COAH compliant. The state wants all cities to contribute by complying and if they do not, it gives builders and developers certain rights. It enables them to bypass the planning process and proceed by a Judge's approval for projects. The decision not to pursue COAH compliance was both financial and also that Northfield is densely and fully built up and the risk of a builder's remedy lawsuit seemed small. There could be some available space which could apply in town, namely the old Arthur Henry site on Wabash Avenue, the Cresson Avenue area, 7 acres behind Merritt Drive, and possibly an area on Dolphin Avenue. This subject has become timely again with the Gurwicz application and he suggested that Mayor and Council think about pursuing the COAH issue. Dr. Levitt noted that affordable housing does not mean Section 8 housing. It could apply to new Police and Fire personnel, or single parents, or younger people who cannot afford a home right now. COAH is currently at Round 4 and the City would need to obtain the professional services of a COAH Planner such as Tiffany CuvIELLO who has assisted the City in the past.

The next regular meeting will be held May, 2014. Dr. Levitt closed the meeting at 7:15 p.m. with a motion from Mr. Shippen and a second from Mrs. Kintish.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board