

City of Northfield Planning Board
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March 5, 2020

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.

This **REGULAR** meeting of the Northfield Planning Board held on Thursday, March 5, 2020 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:01 p.m. with the reading of the Sunshine Law and the roll call with the following members present or absent as noted:

Peter Brophy
Mayor Erland Chau
Jim Leeds
Dr. Richard Levitt
Chief Paul Newman
Henry Notaro
Dan Reardon
Ron Roegiers-absent
Derek Rowe
Clem Scharff
Jim Shippen-absent
Councilman Paul Utts
Steve Vain

Joel M. Fleishman, Esq.-Planning Board Solicitor
Matthew Doran, PE, PP-Planning Board Engineer

Dr. Levitt congratulated Mr. Fleishman on his appointment as Board Solicitor for 2020 and welcomed him to the Board.

There was one application on the agenda. The applicant was CBA Funding, LLC, Block 64, Lots 6,7,8 located at 500 Burton Avenue in the R-1 zone. The location was previously approved in July 1993 for business and professional office use. CBA Funding, LLC purchased the property in April 2019 and operates the office as a vehicle protection and insurance product business. The attorney was Elias T. Manos, Esq. and John Barnhart, Engineer was also present for testimony. The owner of CBA Funding, LLC, Cary B. Berman, was also present for testimony. Dr. Levitt swore in Mr. Barnhart and Mr. Berman.

Mr. Manos addressed the Board and described the three signs. The current 24 sf dilapidated free standing sign will be removed. The proposed sign is 25 sf. The setback for the sign is 5 ft. from each street corner and 1.5 ft. from Cresson Avenue and 5 ft. from Burton Avenue is proposed and will be situated outside of the sight triangle. The proposed main building mounted sign is 24 sf (8' x 3') and

faces Cresson Avenue and the entrance sign is 18" x 14" and identifies the entrance to the building. The applicant is requesting variance relief for the signs which are not allowed in the R-1 zone and a site plan waiver.

Mr. Barnhart displayed Exhibit A-1 which showed the plot plan that was also part of the application packet. The property is across from the Tilton Shopping Center and ACE Hardware. Mr. Barnhart said the new signage package will make the business more visible for clients coming to the site. They are proposing three signs. The old free standing sign will be completely removed. He displayed Exhibit A-2 which showed photographs of the proposed signs. This sign is 84 inches above ground and is not a large sign at 25 sf. It is considered free standing due to its structural type. The small building signs are appropriately sized at 24 sf for the façade sign and 1.75 sf for the entrance identification sign. Mr. Barnhart noted that Mr. Doran included in his report a setback issue in that the sign is not in the sight triangle, but it would be helpful to move it back. The applicant agreed to keep the 45 degree angle with a 10 ft. setback. Mr. Doran agreed this would open the sight triangle even greater. The property is in the R-1 zone which does not permit signs and they are seeking a variance.

Mr. Barnhart discussed justification for the variances. The signs will help promote the free flow of traffic, they will be aesthetically pleasing, and will keep with the theme of the business. There are no negative criteria. The site was deemed for a commercial use previously and there is no detriment to the zone or the public good. The sign will not be lit and Mr. Berman operates a daytime business. The upgraded signs will a benefit to the surrounding residential properties. Mr. Manos added that the signs are not excessively sized. Mr. Barnhart continued by saying there would be no changes to the site and they will continue to maintain it and they requested a waiver of site plan.

Dr. Levitt asked Mr. Berman about the gear-like structures in the sign. Mr. Berman said he runs a clerical office and they sell protection products for autos and insurance and their logo is a gear. They have very few visitors and they want the facility to look nice. He worked with the City to make sure renovations were done properly and he is thrilled to have the business in Northfield. He wants to do the right thing. He contacted various sign companies and was told he needed a variance form the Zoning Department.

Mr. Doran said the testimony covered everything except the inclusion of the address somewhere on the sign. Dr. Levitt agreed that it has to be somewhere on the sign and asked where they would like to put it. Mr. Berman said below the logo would work. Dr. Levitt informed him that it would only have to be the actual number not the full street address. Mr. Berman agreed. Mr. Barnhart said it will be placed at bottom of circle and it won't be part of the sign calculation. Mr. Doran noted that if they intend to add landscaping under the sign as shown in the sign plan it has to be below 30 inches. Mr. Berman said the Building Department made him cut down all the shrubs. Mr. Manos added that it will take about six weeks to make the signs. His concern was that there may not be a meeting next month to memorialize the resolution. If that is the case, his client could move forward at his own risk of someone appealing the decision.

Dr. Levitt asked for questions from the Board. Mayor Chau asked if there were any moveable parts. Mr. Berman answered no. Dr. Levitt asked about materials. Mr. Barnhart said it will be brushed aluminum. Mayor Chau asked if it would be illuminated. Mr. Berman said no.

Mr. Brophy asked if the Board is going to make a motion to vote on a waiver, did the residents in that neighborhood get a chance to have input. Dr. Levitt said all property owners within 200 ft. were noticed by certified mail and the secretary has copies of the notifications and it has also been properly

advertised in The Press. Mr. Fleishman said there needs to be a motion to open the public session and it was duly noted that no one was present. Dr. Levitt closed the public session. Mr. Fleishman advised that this needs to be on record.

Mr. Fleishman said the motion will be for a "C" variance for the signage package and the site plan waiver can be included with the vote. Dr. Levitt described the motion discussed during the testimony. Mr. Fleishman added the condition that they will move the sign back 10 ft. as well as the contents of Matt Doran's letter. Mr. Manos added that there is mention in the Ordinance that all signs have to be setback 15 ft. Dr. Levitt said we will include a setback variance for 10 ft. where 15 ft. is generally accepted. Mr. Fleishman agreed with this.

Mr. Scharff made the motion for the "C" variance for new signage including the 10 ft. setback and the Site Plan waiver. Mr. Vain seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Peter Brophy-no vote as Alternate #3-9 voting members present

Mayor Chau-yes

Jim Leeds-yes

Chief Paul Newman-yes

Henry Notaro-yes

Dan Reardon-no vote as Alternate #4-9 voting members present

Ron Roegiers-absent

Derek Rowe-yes

Clem Scharff-yes

Jim Shippen-absent

Councilman Paul Utts-yes

Steve Vain-yes

Dr. Richard Levitt-yes

The motion carries.

Dr. Levitt said the Board looks forward to Mr. Berman fixing up the property and he welcomed him to Northfield.

Dr. Levitt spoke about charging stations being added to the Ordinance and said it is the wave of the future and he asked Mr. Doran to review this. Mr. Doran suggested a committee. Mr. Vain added we don't want to see them popping up all over town. Dr. Levitt said there should be a minimum number of charging spaces in a lot, signage should be regulated, and it should be determined whether or not the city will permit pay stations similar to vending machines. He added that Northfield may be the first municipality to have an Ordinance on this matter. Egg Harbor Township and Linwood don't have charging stations written into their Ordinance. Mr. Scharff and Dr. Levitt discussed that a permit would be needed as well as an electrical inspection to make sure they were properly installed. Dr. Levitt said it would also have to be a secondary use and agreed it should be restricted. Charging stations wouldn't be a primary use and there a lot of question and issues to be discussed. Mr. Vain asked about residential uses. Dr. Levitt said that wouldn't be a land use issue since you would be using your own driveway and power. Dr. Levitt asked who would like to serve on a committee. Mr. Vain, Mr. Scharff, and Mr. Rowe volunteered along with Dr. Levitt.

Mr. Scharff mentioned that Bootleggers is still a problem and they now have an animated bottle in front of the building. Dr. Levitt asked him to call the Zoning Officer. He also mentioned that there is a business

on Tilton Road with very bright white window border lights. The lights don't move, but they are very bright during the day.

There was no further business. Mr. Scharff made the motion to close the meeting and Mr. Rowe seconded the motion. Dr. Levitt closed the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board