

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

June 6, 2024

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 of Atlantic City on May 25, 2024 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. Digital copies of the application documents, exhibits, and the Planning Board Engineer's report have been uploaded onto the city website as well if applicable.

The **REGULAR** meeting of the Northfield Planning Board was held on Thursday, June 6, 2024. ***In following with the decisions of Mayor Chau and City Council, the Planning Board will be eliminating the mandatory observation of Covid-19 related social distancing measures at their public meetings. In addition, the Planning Board will continue to air the regular meetings on Zoom video conferencing for convenience of those who do not wish to appear in public.*** Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

City of Northfield Planning Board is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: City of Northfield Planning Board

Time: Jun 6, 2024 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89039404956?pwd=dXE2NnRXWFJUaGRQSkprbWJtOGpnZz09>

Meeting ID: 890 3940 4956

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Meeting ID: 890 3940 4956 Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdCpvLidpL>

The meeting was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:00 p.m. with the reading of the Sunshine Law and the roll call. The following were present or absent as noted.

Peter Brophy

Matthew Carney

Mayor Erland Chau-absent

Councilwoman Carolyn Bucci

Dr. Richard Levitt

Henry Notaro-absent

Dan Reardon

Ron Roegiers-absent

Derek Rowe
Clem Scharff
Jim Shippen-absent
Paul Utts
Joel M. Fleishman, Esq.-Planning Board Solicitor
Matthew Doran, PE, PP-Planning Board Engineer

The Board had a discussion with Tiffany Morrissey (CuvIELlo), a Professional Planner consultant, who was present on Zoom. The Board had a resolution referred by the governing body for consideration. They want the Board to agree to recommend that Northfield should be designated as an area in need of rehabilitation. Mrs. Morrissey compiled an analysis titled "Rehabilitation Designation Municipal Wide, City of Northfield Atlantic County", dated May 16, 2024. This report is not as detailed as a Redevelopment analysis would be. The governing body is considering this since Northfield meets the criteria with more than half the housing being over 50 years old, and the water and sewer systems meet two of the 6 conditions. This will provide reinvestment opportunities for businesses. At this stage, they are referring this to the Planning Board for modifications and after 45 days, the governing body can adopt with or without the Planning Board's input.

Mrs. Morrissey read through her report and said the city wants to attract addition liquor licenses called "pocket licenses" from adjacent municipalities. This is possible through new state legislation and would go thorough the Division of Community Affairs. It would not affect any zoning changes. Dr. Levitt questioned how it would be an incentive for development. Mrs. Morrissey said this would be an investment into the community and the city can negotiate with developers through the rehab. They would negotiate with the city first and then come before the Planning Board for approvals. She said there is no sunset or time limits and the city can revoke the rehab at any time. Dr. Levitt noted that the ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control Division) have not written the rules yet. Mrs. Morrissey said this can also improve obtaining grants. Dr. Levitt had concerns about city image and property values.

Mrs. Morrissey mentioned other towns who have gone with the rehab designation. Galloway did this in 2016, Egg Harbor City in 2009, and Mullica, Hamilton Township, Ventnor, and other smaller towns have followed suit. Pleasantville is an urban enterprise area, which is different. Somers Point has some areas of designation. Mrs. Morrissey said this designation does not mean detriment or blight. Dr. Levitt said there are only a few areas on Tilton Road and the Gurwicz property that would be areas needing redevelopment. Mrs. Morrissey said she would have to do a more in-depth analysis if the entire municipality were not designated rehabilitation. The city can focus on any areas as appropriate. Mrs. Bucci said she would never want to see commercial development on Shore Road. Mr. Brophy asked who determines if a property is in need of redevelopment. Mr. Fleishman explained that a rehab declaration is really nothing until a redevelopment plan is put in place. He gave an example that occurred in Somers point where a redevelopment of a commercial building was occurring and the city was able to negotiate improvements to the intersection. Mr. Fleishman said the developer would approach the city and negotiate and then bring the redevelopment plan before the Planning Board. Mrs. Morrissey said Northfield is currently looking at this for pocket liquor licenses, but tax abatements and overlay zoning could also occur. This will provide positive opportunities and does not mean a negative stigma. Mr. Utts

said he does not hear any downside to this and this could help with many different types of improvements. Dr. Levitt thanked Mrs. Morrissey for her time this evening. The Board will continue this discussion after the applications and other business are heard and taken care of.

Mr. Brophy led the Board in the flag salute.

The first application was from Robert Pattillo, Block 106 Lot 14, 212 Infield Avenue, for “c” variances and total coverage in the R-2 zone. He was sworn in and stated he wants to install a pool in his back yard and needs a setback variance where 10 ft. is required and 4.9 ft. is proposed and coverage of 47% where 45% is permitted. Dr. Levitt pointed out that the pool does absorb rainwater. Mr. Pattillo said they are creating a French drain and trench for runoff. Mr. Doran asked what was behind his house and Mr. Pattillo said it is an empty lot at this time. Mr. Doran said it is important that water doesn’t run onto his neighbor’s property. Mr. Pattillo added that all equipment would be located next to the house. Mr. Doran said two shade trees are required and Mr. Pattillo testified that he has 7 or 8 Oak trees over 30 ft. high. Mr. Doran noted that curbs and sidewalks exist and there is an existing fence. Mr. Carney asked if he was removing any trees and Mr. Pattillo said no. Drainage was discussed and Mr. Pattillo said he has an irrigation system that drains into the grass and there are no runoff problems. Mr. Doran noted that the pavers will be close to the property line. If this becomes a drainage issue, Mr. Pattillo would have to correct that. This will be a condition of approval. Mr. Pattillo agreed.

The public session was opened and Miriam Boudreau of 210 Infield Avenue was sworn in. She was in favor of the project.

Mr. Scharff made the motion for “c” variance relief for a rear yard setback of 4.9 ft. where 10 ft. is required and total coverage of 47% where 45% is required with the condition that if the pavers create a drainage problem, this will be addressed and corrected. Mr. Brophy seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Brophy-yes

Councilwoman Bucci-yes

Mr. Carney-yes

Mr. Reardon-yes

Mr. Rowe-yes

Mr. Scharff-yes

Mr. Utts-yes

Chairman Levitt-yes

The motion carries.

The second application was from Adam and Rebecca Barker for 609 Herzel Avenue, Block 42, Lot 1.22 for “c” variance relief in the R-1 zone. The relief is for building coverage of 30% where 25% is allowed and side yard coverage of 19.67 ft. where 25 ft. is required. The Barkers were sworn in. They are planning to add an addition to increase the living area for their kids. They testified that they are not impacting light, air, and open space, the addition will aesthetically benefit and enhance their home, and the addition will increase the habitability of the home. The single-family dwelling will remain and there

is no detriment to the neighborhood or zone plan. The Board waived the need for street trees. There was no one from the public who spoke on the application.

Mr. Scharff made the motion for the “c” variance relief and Mr. Reardon seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Brophy-yes

Councilwoman Bucci-yes

Mr. Carney-yes

Mr. Reardon-yes

Mr. Rowe-yes

Mr. Scharff-yes

Mr. Utts-yes

Chairman Levitt-yes

The motion carries.

The Board voted by voice vote to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2024 meeting with a motion from Mr. Scharff and a second from Mr. Reardon.

The Board voted by voice vote to memorialize the resolution for Homes for All, Inc., Block 92 Lots 25,28,29,33, & 34 at 1823 Wabash Avenue for three one-year extensions for zoning change protection. The voice vote was all in favor with Mr. Rowe and Mr. Utts abstaining.

The Board discussed at length the discussion with Tiffany Morrissey earlier in the meeting and the Resolution the Board was asked by City Council to consider. Dr. Levitt said it is hard to vote for something that is not fully understood and there are legal and professional costs to consider without knowing if this will fulfill the aims it is intending to. He did not think the entire city should be considered as in need of rehabilitation. Mr. Brophy thought the Board would be giving up control and questioned whether the residents would even want another liquor license. Councilwoman Bucci said they would be opening up the door for opportunities for more ratables with the increase in expenses. Mr. Fleishman took a practical outlook having been on both sides. He said developers don't want to spend a lot of money to take the risk to come before the Board. He referenced the Webster application that ended up withdrawing. If this was in place, the doctors could have come before the city for an overlay. The public is still involved and the Planning Board as well. This does kind of get around the zoning issues and that is the weight here. Dr. Levitt said the Board has not turned down an application for development and they negotiate. Councilwoman Bucci said they would never want to see commercial development in a residential zone. Mr. Utts felt there are opportunities under a rehabilitation designation. Mr. Brophy said the city does welcome new business, but he is unsure people want another liquor license but they do want more revenue. Mr. Rowe thought the Board should find out the incentives for being designated as a rehab zone. Mr. Fleishman said this would open the door for incentives for redevelopment. If this is not adopted, they would have to recommend a more specific study which is more extensive and more expensive and the city would have to pay for it. This would allow a developer to go to Council to work with them first. This was just done on Dolphin Avenue with the overlay for the Diocese. Mr. Fleishman added that if there is a vote, it should be in the affirmative to recommend that City Council adopts this

with these recommendations. If the Board does not adopt, City Council can move forward after 45 days. The Board has 45 days to respond after May 21, 2024.

The Board commented. Councilwoman Bucci is in favor of adoption. Mr. Utts didn't see a downside. Rateables are needed and he felt when one site gets improved, others will follow. Mr. Rowe said he hasn't heard any compelling incentives. He wants to see the focus on commercial zones for rehab. Mr. Brophy agreed with Mr. Rowe and felt this doesn't reflect the direction Northfield residents want to go. Mr. Carney said he was leaning toward a "yes", but he wants more information. He agreed with Mr. Rowe that this should be directed toward commercial properties. Mr. Scharff agreed with Mr. Rowe and said there are many sewer grants out there to improve infrastructure. Mr. Reardon also agreed with Mr. Rowe and is unsure where the incentives are coming from and he also wants more information. Councilwoman Bucci reminded that tax abatements are not incentives and this plan will open the door to a lot more grants. She suggested a list of questions that she can take back to City Council. She also can ask Mary Canesi to put this on their agenda to discuss the questions. It was decided that a committee of four Board members would go to the next City Council meeting to ask questions and inquire about a waiver of the 45 days. Councilwoman Bucci thought it was great that the committee will be coming to the meeting as it is important to all be on the same page. Dr. Levitt, Mr. Scharff, Mr. Brophy, and Mr. Utts will form the committee with Mr. Carney as an alternate if needed. The Planning Board will hold a Special Meeting on June 20, 2024 if the 45-days are not waived.

The meeting was closed by Dr. Levitt with a motion from Mr. Brophy and a second from Mr. Scharff.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board