

**City of Northfield Planning Board**  
**1600 Shore Road**  
**Northfield, New Jersey 08225**  
**Telephone (609) 641-2832, ext. 127**  
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December 4, 2025

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 November 22, 2025 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, December 4, 2025. ***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.***

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

Topic: City of Northfield Planning Board

Time: Dec 4, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85419912486?pwd=EHn6fdUWeqIpJ19OTSjVta5lzjpOal.1>

Meeting ID: 854 1991 2486

Passcode: 139994

One tap mobile

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Join instructions

[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/85419912486/invitations?signature=MW2bsQelKabFw7X-ZiHLaVf2DnLetMCydZe\\_iPOyLoE](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/85419912486/invitations?signature=MW2bsQelKabFw7X-ZiHLaVf2DnLetMCydZe_iPOyLoE)

The meeting was opened by Vice Chairman Clem Scharff at 7:04 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

Councilwoman Carolyn Bucci

Dr. Richard Levitt

Henry Notaro-absent

Dan Reardon

Ron Roegiers-absent

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

Mr. Brophy led the flag salute.

The Board will delay approving the November 6, 2025 minutes until the January 8, 2026 meeting since they are still being finalized.

The Jennifer Hance application will be postponed until the January 8, 2026 meeting since the noticing was not complete. The utility companies need to be notified of the application.

The first application was for James P. Maga, Block 27 Lot 36, 2513 Herbert Drive for "c" variances for an addition and a shed that were constructed without permits. Mr. Fleishman swore in Mr. Maga. Mr. Maga said he is seeking "c" variances for a shed in his back yard that needs a variance for a side setback at 6.44 ft. where 10 ft. is required and a rear setback of 2.40 ft. where 10 ft. is also required. Mr. Maga testified that he wants the shed where it is for aesthetic purposes and he doesn't want to waste space. He noted that the Fire Department didn't object in their letter to the Planning Board. Mr. Brophy asked if he obtained a permit for the structure and Mr. Maga said no. Mr. Brophy asked if he was aware of city policy for structures and he said he has since applied for permits. Mr. Shippen asked if he applied for permits for both of the sheds. Councilwoman Bucci addressed Mr. Maga and noted that he installed two sheds and a carport without permits. She said that he is aware of permitting since he obtained a variance for the carport and should know the rules at this point. She stated that the city reassess property when a permit is approved. This mistake was done three times. Mr. Maga said that he is in the process of taking care of the permitting and the paperwork involved. Mr. Brophy asked how long the sheds have been on the property. Mr. Maga said one has been there for 20 years and the constructed shed was bought three years ago.

Mr. Fleishman said there are several variances involved here. He explained that the carport was approved for a 6 ft. variance and Mr. Maga came to the Board for a variance for that. The new survey dated 9.16.25 shows that the carport is at a 5.14 ft. setback which is less than the approved 6 ft. setback. Mr. Maga said he was not aware of this discrepancy. Mr. Fleishman said technically the carport will require another variance since it is less than 6 ft. Mr. Maga wanted to know why this had not come up before. Mr. Fleishman asked if he thought he was approved for 5.14 ft. Mr. Doran read the resolution and it was clearly approved for a 6 ft. setback.

The sheds were discussed and Mr. Maga said he put in the concrete pads. Mayor Chau asked how he found out about the shed problems. Mr. Maga said the Code Enforcer visited the property and then he went to City Hall and paid for the Zoning application. He is not sure how Zoning found out about this. Mayor Chau asked about the date of the Fire Department letter. Mr. Maga said the date was 12.3.25.

Mayor Chau asked about the setbacks and Mr. Maga said he doesn't want the sheds in the middle of his yard and was trying to have more space. Mr. Maga said it gives the neighbors a sense of security to have the sheds where they are. Mayor Chau asked what it would do if he moved one of them. Mr. Maga said it would disrupt the privacy. Mayor Chau asked if the neighbors have complained to him about the sheds and he answered no.

Mr. Brophy asked if he were to move the sheds to comply what would that do to the layout of the lot. Mr. Maga said he would have a lot of wasted space in the back. Mr. Maga uses the space in back of the shed for leaf cans and it gives room for garden boxes. Mr. Brophy asked if the neighbors like the trash cans behind the shed. Mr. Maga said he has a 6 ft. high fence and they can't view them. Mr. Brophy asked if there was space to move one into compliance. Mr. Maga said one of the sheds is on concrete and that would be an issue.

Councilwoman Bucci asked about Lot coverage. Mr. Shippen said Mr. Doran did the figures and they are in his report. Mr. Fleishman said the report lists the coverage at 47% where 40% is allowed. He asked if Mr. Doran included the carport in his figures. Mr. Doran did include the carport and he asked Mr. Maga how long the carport has been on the lot. Mr. Maga said 11 years. Mr. Scharff commented that the house itself is not within the setbacks. Mr. Doran commented that the sunporch is off on coverage too. Mr. Doran commented that he used the addendum survey that was submitted and dated a few months ago for his figures. Mr. Fleishman said the rear and side setback for the sunporch are yet more variances that are necessary. Mr. Doran agreed. There are 2 sheds, the carport and the sunroom that need multiple variances.

Mr. Fleishman said that Mr. Maga is entitled to hold off on proceeding with this application. He said he will take a comprehensive approach in light of these findings and since there are a lot of issues, he will ask the Board to give their opinions. Mr. Doran said the carport was already built when it was approved and it was legalized at the wrong measurement using an older survey. Mr. Carney said the permit denials for the sheds were dated March 2025. Mr. Fleishman said if Mr. Maga would like to garner more evidence to support his case he may do so. He will need to add variances for the carport and Lot Coverage. Mr. Fleishman said he is required to get these variances and he needs to show evidence as to why he should have these variances approved. He said Mr. Maga is violating the setback rules and the Board can only take a vote on the evidence presented. Mr. Brophy wanted to know if Lot Coverage was noticed. Mr. Fleishman said he did advertise for any and all variances necessary. Mr. Fleishman asked Mr. Maga if he received a copy of Mr. Doran's report. He said he wasn't sure. The Board Secretary assured that a copy was emailed to him. Mr. Fleishman said there needs to be evidence as to reasons for the issues such as a narrow lot or hardship; the purposes of zoning need to be shown as to how they are advanced. There are over 16 points that need to be reviewed as to these advancements. At least some of them need to be addressed. The applicant needs to prove that there are no negative criteria. The Board is bound by Ordinances. Vice Chairman Scharff suggested seeking legal help to proceed with this application and agreed that the Board is bound by the laws set forth by the city and Land Use laws. Mr. Brophy agreed with the Vice Chairman's statements. Mr. Shippen made a motion for postponement and Mr. Carney seconded. Mr. Maga agreed. Mr. Fleishman said that the public session should not open at this point. Vice Chairman Scharff noted that there are some members of the public present tonight

and Mr. Maga could take some notes as to what the neighbor's want and these notes could help formulate a response going forward. Mr. Fleishman agreed since it may help Mr. Maga to satisfy the legal requirements so the Board can vote and grant the requests. The secretary informed the Board that the continuance won't be on the agenda until February at the earliest.

Mr. Scharff opened the public session. Martin Krantz was sworn in. The property next store is 2511 Herbert Drive and his brother Michael lives in the house. Martin lives in Pennsylvania. He said he did not receive a notice. The secretary had proof that a notice was sent to the Block and Lot for 2511 Herbert Drive. Martin Kratz said Mr. Maga builds things in his yard without obtaining permits. He planted bamboo at the back of the property and he wants it removed and remediated. Mr. Kratz said they had to install cinder blocks at the fence line to keep dirt from coming onto their property. Mr. Kratz said the building happens at night. Mayor Chau question Martin Kratz about the amount of time he spends at the property. He said he bought the house with his mother and now his brother lives there. Martin Kratz said dirt comes through the fence and ruined the side yard. He stated that Mr. Maga argues with his brother Michael and makes up stories. He works on things in the middle of the night and the police and Code Enforcement has been involved. Martin Kratz stated code and Mr. Fleishman said the Board does not enforce what he is stating. That is the job for Code Enforcement. The Planning Board are here to grant relief. Martin Kratz said he wants everything removed and does not agree with granting any variances. He also hates the carport. Mr. Fleishman said the carport was previously approved and has been legitimized. He suggested he obtain a copy of the previous resolution. Martin Kratz asked if the Board could go back and disallow the carport. Mr. Fleishman said not unless there was fraud or misrepresentation. Martin Kratz said this is the first time he has had the opportunity to come before the Board and he gave excuses for not coming previously. He said he never received notifications for anything. Mr. Shippen reminded that certified mail was sent out. Mr. Fleishman reminded that only tonight's hearing should be discussed. Martin Kratz submitted three photographs that were labeled Exhibit O-1. He also submitted codes and statutes that were labeled Exhibit O-2. Mr. Maga declined copies.

Frank Puliti was sworn in and spoke next. He lives at 2515 Herbert Drive which is to the right facing Herbert Drive. He said Jim Maga is an unbelievable neighbor and Mr. Maga has lived there since 2006. He said Mr. Maga goes out of his way to help people and he can do almost anything. Mr. Maga knows his neighbors and went door-to door to obtain signatures for noticing. Mr. Puliti said he has never seen Martin Kratz before and he has only seen his brother Michael. He said Mr. Maga has one of the nicest houses on Herbert Drive and he has been an outstanding neighbor to him.

Michael Kratz of 2511 Herbert Drive was sworn in and spoke next. He said the problem is with the fence line. Mr. Maga cut down a tree and it hit his fence. It wasn't fixed and Michael Kratz used a sharpie to mark the property line. Michael Kratz thinks the line is off by two inches after Mr. Maga measured it for the new fence. He came home from work one day and saw a new fence in place. His sharpie marks were not adhered to. The installer put it where Mr. Maga told him to construct it. On another occasion, he came home to the carport. He discussed a concrete pad and the dirt and wood is pushing earth onto his property. Mr. Maga said he would fix it. He then built a retaining wall but it continued to sink. On his side, the earth started rising and the fence was bulging. Then he came home to bamboo. It has gotten a

lot better, but it needs to be pulled up. The earth coming onto his property pulled up a sprinkler. Michael Kratz said Mr. Maga was going to put in new grass and sprinklers and he talked about trimming bushes. Mr. Kratz complained that concrete is breaking up and he is having water line and gas line problems. There have been arguments and harassment charges were filed against Michael Kratz.

Mr. Brophy asked if a survey was done. Michael Kratz said there was and Mr. Maga said his survey was wrong. Mr. Brophy asked if he ever filed a complaint. Michael Kratz said he has called the police but was never asked to sign a complaint. Mr. Scharff interjected and said this is not the place for this discussion and has nothing to do with the variances. Michael Kratz said he has a big problem with the shed being so close to the house. Last year he was gone for five days and came home to the huge shed. He has a problem with the shed in the back as it blocks light and it is 12 ft. above the fence. Mr. Fleishman said since Mr. Kratz really doesn't have a problem with the other shed, what if he would move the problem shed to setbacks of 10 ft. and 10 ft. Mr. Scharff said there is the problem that there can only be one accessory structure on the lot. Mr. Fleishman said he would need another variance. Michael Kratz said he has an issue with all the violations.

Mr. Scharff closed the public session since no one else wished to speak on the application. This was by a motion from Mr. Shippen and a second from Mr. Brophy.

Mr. Fleishman asked Mr. Maga for closing comments after the public session. Mr. Maga said the comments about the fence are irrelevant. He is not before the Board for the fence or the property line and he completed a new survey recently that was submitted. The fence cost was split between him and Michael Kratz and was put directly where the chain link fence had been located. When Mr. Dattalo was the Code Enforcer he came out to the site and he sent a letter to the owner of record, Michael Kratz. He said this seems like a civil battle. He tries to keep up with his property. He said the boat port and pad have not moved in any way. Mr. Maga said he doesn't know what Mr. Kratz is talking about in reference to dirt moving. He thinks his property is aesthetically beautiful. He said he would go to the city to reopen issues with the boat port. Mr. Scharff suggested he obtain legal representation as he needs to present a good argument. Mr. Fleishman concurred. Mr. Fleishman adjourned this application and Mr. Maga requested that no further notice is to be required. The application is adjourned until the February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 meeting. If the hearing is adjourned beyond that meeting date, Mr. Maga will have to re-notice and will have to obtain a new 200 ft. list. Mr. Brophy made the motion and Mr. Shippen seconded the motion.

There was one resolution to memorialize for Nael Zumot, Block 117 Lot 31, 909 Fuae Avenue for a Certificate of Non-Conformity. Abstentions were Mayor Chau, Councilwoman Bucci, Derek Rowe, and Paul Utts. Mr. Shippen made the motion and Mr. Brophy seconded the motion. The affirmative vote was all in favor and the motion carries.

Mr. Scharff said City Council has changed the code by amending Chapter 215, Article III, Administrated Procedures by Ordinance No. 21-2025 in reference to "no development permits shall be issued unless all municipal taxes, sewerage and other municipal assessments are paid on a current basis". They have referred this to the Planning Board for review. The Board agreed with these changes to the Code with a

motion from Mr. Brophy and a second from Mr. Shippen. The vote was in the affirmative and was all in favor. The motion carries and will be referred back to City Council for final adoption by a letter from the Planning Board.

The final vote for 2025 was to move the January 2026 Re-Organization meeting from January 1<sup>st</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Shippen made the motion and Mr. Brophy seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The meeting was closed at 8:22 p.m. by Vice Chairman Scharff with a motion from Mr. Shippen and a second from Mr. Brophy.

Respectfully submitted,

***Robin Atlas***

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board