

City of Northfield
Planning & Zoning Board
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Minutes: October 4, 2007

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 has 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 & Zoning Board, held on Thursday, October 4, 2007 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:28 p.m. and the following members were present:

Dr. Richard Levitt-Chairman
Clem Scharff-Vice Chairman-absent
Mayor Frank Perri
Jimmy Martinez, Councilman
Jeffrey Bruckler, City Administrator
Ron Roegiers-absent
Nick Droboniku-absent
Pete DaPrato
Henry Notaro
Guy Schlachter
Lou Milone
Jason O'Grady

Thomas Subranni, Esq., Solicitor
Matt Doran, PE-Engineer

There were three applications on the agenda this evening. The first application was from Kevin and Michele Scanlon for 2131 Steven Drive, Block 11 Lot 6 located in the R-1 Zone. Kevin Scanlon was present and sworn in and was represented by Timothy J. Lowry, Esq. who is with Hill Wallack, LLP of Atlantic City. The applicant is seeking a "C" variance to construct a 222 sq. ft. front porch with a roof.

Mr. Lowry began by stating the lot is irregularly shaped and is non-conforming. The frontage on Steven Drive is 77 ft. The existing home is a split level single family home. Mr. Lowry presented a poster board with photographs and drawings of the property and they were labeled Exhibits A-1 and A-2. The variance is for a front yard setback where 25.1 ft. is existing and 13.10 is proposed. The applicants want to enclose and beautify the front portico to make it more attractive. The house was once a HUD home and they have spent a lot of money improving the home. Mr. Lowry said there is no detriment to the neighbors and there is not view, sun or shading issues. Dr. Levitt asked if the porch would be enclosed. Mr. Lowry said they would not be enclosing the porch, only adding a roof and it would not be living space. The existing structure is a portico with walk-up steps. Dr. Levitt said that if the porch was ever to become living space, the applicant would have to come back before the Board.

Mr. Doran read his Engineer's report. He noted that the plans should show curbs and sidewalks along the front of the property as required. Mr. Lowry said the home is on a cul-de-sac and there are no significant curbs and sidewalks and he asked for a waiver. Dr. Levitt asked about trees on the property. Mr. Lowry said Mr. Scanlon wants to improve on the landscaping after construction is complete. Dr. Levitt asked about the width of the property and was told 90 ft. along Steven Drive. Dr. Levitt said this would require two street trees. The applicant agreed to plant two trees from the County approved list. Mr. Doran's report said the plans need to show two parking spaces on site for compliance. Mr. Lowry asked for a waiver since there is no space on site for parking and there is plenty of street parking available on the cul-de-sac. He added that there is a one car driveway existing that could possibly fit two cars and there is a garage. Dr. Levitt said the applicant won't need a waiver for parking stalls since a driveway and a garage exists which allows for the two required parking spaces.

Dr. Levitt opened the public session. Some of Mr. Scanlon's neighbors were present for support but did not wish to speak. Dr. Levitt closed the public session.

Dr. Levitt asked about the distance to the street. Mr. Doran said about 23 ft. from the edge of the porch to the cart way. Mr. Martinez added that the project is an improvement and the plans look good.

Mr. Schlachter made the motion for the "C" variance for the front yard setback, a waiver for curbs and sidewalks, the condition that the porch will not be living space, and two additional shade trees will be planted in front. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor by a roll call vote.

The second application is from Edward Collet of 528 Ridgewood Drive, Block 26, Lot 22 which is in the R-1 Zone. The application is for a "C" variance involving a side yard setback where 10 ft. is required and the applicant is proposing 6 ft. Mr. Collet was sworn in by Chairman Levitt.

Mr. Collet began by stating that he has a change from his original application. He said his original idea for the addition would require electricals to be moved and would open up the home too much. The addition is for a 2nd story master bedroom, master bathroom and walk-in closet. The home currently is a split level with bedrooms and bathroom on the second floor. Cindy Malloy, who also occupies the home, was also sworn in. Mr. Collet provided copies of his new proposal to the Board members. The new proposal is to keep the one-story garage the same and the parking stalls will be stacked. The addition will be located behind the house rather than in front over the top of the pre-existing structure. The garage will go straight back. There is a pre-existing sunroom (16 x 12 ft.) that will be removed and the addition would be built around this area with the required foundations. He may plan to remove an existing fireplace next year and to re-do the siding. He needs the extra bedroom. The 1st floor will be extended back. Part of the area will be part of the garage for storage of items such as jet skis, motorcycles, and lawnmowers-items the homeowner does not want to store outside. He believes the new plan will increase the aesthetic look of the house from the street. Mr. Collet stated that he is seeking a side yard variance for 6 ft. where 10 ft. is required. The addition will be 6 ft. from the property line. On the side with the addition, he will still be 26 ft. from the neighboring house. Mr. O'Grady asked about the existing deck. Mr. Collet said the existing deck is 8 x 8 ft. and he want to increase it to 10 x 10.

Mr. Doran read his Engineer's report. He noted that there are no curbs and sidewalks. Ms. Malloy stated that there are none on the entire street. Mr. Collet requested a waiver for curbs and sidewalks. He would prefer to have them, but his property would be the only one. Mr. Doran added that Ridgewood Drive is already an established neighborhood and curbs and sidewalks probably would not be installed along the street. Mr. Doran said there are large trees on site and that although there are none directly in front of the house, there are two oak trees on the

southeast side of the 80 ft. frontage property. Dr. Levitt asked that the additional trees be waived. Parking is adequate as two spaces exist plus the garage. Mr. Collet addressed benefits and detriments. He noted he will have additional storage indoors; the addition will go with the look of the neighborhood and will increase the value of his property.

Dr. Levitt opened the public session. There was no one who wished to be heard. Mr. Collet added that his next door neighbor on the addition side is a close friend and has no issue with the project. Mr. Collet said they want to eventually remove the shed and donate it. Ms. Malloy said they will be able to remove this once construction has begun.

Mr. O'Grady made the motion for the "C" variance for the side yard setback, to waive curbs and sidewalks, and to waive the two shade trees at 30 ft. on center. Mr. DaPrato seconded. A roll call vote was all in favor of approval by all the members present.

The third application was from Dr. Richard & Deborah Levitt. Mayor Perri took over as Chairman so that Dr. Levitt could present his application. Dr. Levitt was sworn in by the Mayor. Dr. Levitt and his wife reside at 2204 Bay Drive, Block 158, Lot 51, which is in the R-1 Zone. They are seeking approval to expand their garage to a two-car garage and will require a front yard setback on Bay Avenue for 19 ft. where 25 ft. is required and a front yard setback on Rosedale Avenue of 20.7 ft. (this exists) where 25 ft. is also required.

Dr. Levitt testified that they have a large house with a single car garage. The other homes in the neighborhood have two-car garages. The closest neighbor is 110 ft. away and they want to move the garage 10 and ½ ft. toward Bay Drive. The garage will be 34 ft. from the curb. He also noted that the Board previously granted a variance across the street for a garage for 10 ft. Mrs. Deborah Levitt arrived for the hearing and was sworn in. Dr. Levitt presented photographs to the Board. Dr. Levitt explained that their property has a lot of landscaping and they want to use the space above the garage for storage. Mr. Subranni asked how many sq. ft. the applicants will be adding. Dr. Levitt stated 210 to 220 sq. ft. Dr. Levitt said they have curbs and sidewalks and have planted 15 shade trees on the property. They will be removing one cedar and one pine tree for the addition to the garage. They will be retaining all other vegetation. Any foundation plantings removed will be replanted. Dr. Levitt believes there is no negative criteria associated with this project. The positive criteria is that their home will be consistent with other homes in the neighborhood and will also increase the value of their property.

Mayor Perri asked Mr. Doran to read his report. Mr. Doran said Dr. Levitt covered everything in his report and his plans show the various trees on site as required. Mr. Doran described the two variances. Dr. Levitt noted that they have minimal lot coverage and the closest neighbors are 136 ft. on the other side of the dead end street and 110 ft. across the street. He also added that there is no other way to complete this project unless they tear out the kitchen. Mayor Perri added that the storage space over the garage would have to be strictly storage and no living space. Dr. Levitt said they don't need any additional living space since their house has four bedrooms and they are empty nesters.

Mayor Perri asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard. Seeing no one, he closed the public session.

Mr. O'Grady made the motion for the two "C" variances for front yard setbacks on Bay Drive and Rosedale Avenue. Mr. Martinez seconded. The roll call vote of all members present with the exception of Chairman Levitt was all in favor of approval.

Dr. Levitt resumed his position as Chairman. There were three resolutions to memorialize. The first two were from the September 6th meeting for Troiano and Giro Enterprises, Inc. Mr. Milone

and Mr. Schlachter abstained since they were not present for the application and Mayor Perri and Mr. Martinez did not vote for the Giro resolution since it involved a "D" variance and they are required to abstain. The resolutions were memorialized by voice vote. The third resolution was from the September 20th meeting for Chem Poon. Dr. Levitt expressed concerns about the Poon approval which has the condition that revised plans need to be submitted. Mr. Doran said the Building Dept. will need certified plans to issue permits. Mr. Notaro abstained due to not hearing the application. A voice vote memorialized the resolution.

Dr. Levitt discussed the checklist for "C" variance and non-commercial applications that Mr. Doran drafted. A few changes were made and additions were included. Mr. Doran will have a final checklist for review at the next meeting.

Mr. DaPrato asked what the law is on Board members and attendance at meetings. Mr. Subranni will research. Dr. Levitt thanked the members for attending the meetings so that a quorum can be reached.

Dr. Levitt reported that he will be attending the next City Council meeting where the Master Plan will be addressed. Mr. Doran hopes to have a draft for the next meeting. Dr. Levitt said the goal is that the Master Plan will be adopted by the end of the year. Mr. Doran said that the Board will have to approve the Master Plan and then send it to Council.

Dr. Levitt closed the meeting at 8:35 p.m. with a motion for Mayor Perri and a second from Mr. Bruckler.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board