

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

May 4, 2023

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 April 22, 2023 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, April 6, 2023. ***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.

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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

Councilman Eric Leeds

Dr. Richard Levitt

Henry Notaro-absent

Dan Reardon

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

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Brophy.

There was one application on the agenda which was continued from the March and April hearings due to noticing issues. Ronald Scott & Melissa Hutchison of Block 153, Lot 21 of 26 E. Oakcrest Avenue were present to request a "C" variance for a side yard setback and any other variances necessary. The Zone is R-2. Dr. Levitt swore them in. Dr. Hutchison said the house is over 100 years old and was originally owned by Chief John Wilson who was one of the first Police Chiefs in Northfield. Mr. Hutchison said they are adding a deck area 6 ft. deep and 12 ft. wide to the rear of the structure. They want to keep the house historically accurate. In addition to the deck, they are renovating and upgrading the kitchen and adding a first-floor bathroom.

Mr. Doran reviewed the variances. The side yard setback is for 9.6 ft. (proposed deck) where 10 ft. is required. The side yard setback for the house is 7.2 ft. He said his opinion is different from the Zoning Official who felt that a coverage variance was necessary. Mr. Doran said the Board should interpret coverage and what is included with that calculation. The area under the deck has concrete and Mr. Hutchison said that is for plants and storage. The deck has permeable slats. If the deck is counted in the calculations, they would be over the 50 ft. allowed. Mr. Doran read the Ordinance. Lot coverage includes buildings, accessory structures, parking areas, and access driveways *except for* unroofed porches, decks, patios, and pedestrian walkways. Mr. Doran didn't think they need the coverage variance. Dr. Levitt commented that the Ordinance is silent about what is underneath the deck. Mr. Hutchison said they also want to store canoes and kayaks underneath the deck. Dr. Levitt asked about the noticing. Mr. Fleishman said they noticed for any and all required variances. Dr. Hutchison gave testimony to both C1 and C2 variances. She said they want to beautify the house and keep the historical look. There are no trees in front and they plan to take one tree from the back and move it to the front yard. Mr. Scharff asked if Mr. Doran's calculations include lot coverage numbers for what is required and what is allowed. Mr. Doran said he didn't include the deck and the sidewalk in his calculations. Mr. Fleishman said he will not include Lot coverage in the resolution and will only include the "c" variance for a side yard setback for a small amount of deck less than one foot.

Mr. Scharff made the motion and Mr. Shippen seconded the motion.

Dr. Levitt opened the public session and there was no one present or on Zoom who wished to speak. He closed the public session.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Brophy-yes  
Mr. Carney-yes  
Councilman Leeds-yes

Mr. Reardon-yes  
Mr. Roegiers-yes  
Mr. Rowe-yes  
Mr. Scharff-yes  
Mr. Shippen-yes  
Chairman Levitt-yes  
The motion carries.

Mr. Brophy asked about the April minutes. They will be available at the June meeting along with the May minutes.

Eric Goldstein, an attorney with Nehmad, Davis & Goldstein of Somers Point, presented a conceptual review of a possible future project for his clients. Mr. Fleishman explained that the Planning Board will hear this presentation at this time as it has not been ascertained that the application will require a "D" variance. This combined Board can hear applications of a use nature, height variances, and conditional uses that would require the Board to act as the Zoning Board. Elected officials do not vote on those applications since the applicant can file an appeal to the governing body. Since this project is a potential site plan, the Planning Board, which hears site plans, subdivisions, and permitted uses, will hear the presentation and it is non-binding.

Mr. Goldstein introduced himself and said the school located at the site of the Kresge School in the past is not making a go of it over time. He introduced Harry Platt who is with the Southern New Jersey Jewish Federation. They own that property on Oak Avenue and they would like the site to serve the entire community. He has been in the housing business since 1977. Mr. Platt said they have a similar project in Cherry Hill which has one apartment building and four quads for the disabled. Noah Freiberg, who is the Senior Developer for Pennrose Management Co. in Philadelphia, was also present. Dr. Levitt asked what happens to the residents when they can't live independently any longer. Mr. Platt said they usually pass away or they would move on to another facility. This project would serve seniors and those with special needs. Dr. Levitt asked if they will be affordable housing units. Mr. Platt said they will be and they would all be leased rental units and there would be a waiting list. Mr. Goldstein added that they would be strictly rentals for seniors and the disabled.

Mr. Platt explained that most of the units will be one bedroom, but there will be some two bedrooms available. The quads will all be one-bedroom units. The minimum age restriction will be 55 years old. There will be no medical facility on site, but there will be supportive services available. The Jewish Federation and Pennrose will provide these services. Mr. Leeds inquired about the number of units. Mr. Platt said that is yet to be determined, but he added that the Cherry Hill facility has 120 units. Mr. Platt said they would be asking for a PILOT. Mr. Leeds said Council would have to approve that.

Mr. Freiberg said Pennrose Development, a 50-year company in Philadelphia, has developed over 27,000 units for 350 projects, that involve over five billion dollars of development on the east coast, mid-west and in the mountain region and their projects are in 20 states. The Jewish Federation is

looking to replicate the Cherry Hill facility. They have a preliminary plan which will include 100% affordable housing. They are looking for tax credits through state and federal agencies and these financing programs are very competitive. They are seeking the funding now and are looking to move quickly because of the competition. Mr. Freiberg said they will need site plan approval for the financing process. Mr. Leeds added that they will need a resolution as well.

Mr. Freiberg said Pennrose Management would manage the project and there will be a full-time property manager and attendant living at the property. There will also be security. There will be tiered rent control based on income levels and the figures will be very set and will comply with the state. The state will monitor the project. Mr. Platt discussed the developmentally challenged residents and said they will be independent and many of them will work which allows them to live alone independently. The seniors and the disabled mix very well and the seniors do many things to help them and they appreciate each other. Mr. Leeds commented that this will not turn into a nursing home type of facility and will be properly managed and monitored.

Mr. Freiberg discussed the income to rent ratios. For rentals at 30% of income at an income of \$18,000, the rent would be \$474.00 per month. The 50% percentage group would have an income of \$31,000 and the rent would be \$790.00. The highest level is 60% with an income of \$36,000 and the rent would be \$948.00. He said the majority are 50% or below. Steve Shockt, an architect who has worked with Pennrose on over 100 projects, said they are at the conceptual stage. He described the site. Most of the land is to the rear of the school. They are proposing a three-story senior apartment building. Currently the use is a recreational field. The buildings will be L-shaped with parking behind and there is a little parking available in front. There will be amenities such as a wellness area and a fitness area, but it is not a medical building. It is also not assisted living. He commented that affordable housing is not cheap housing and there will be very fine construction due to the funding sources. The buildings will be built to last and will be very energy efficient. Pennrose has high standards as well and are in this for the long haul and for the entire compliance period. The one-bedroom units will be 650 sf and the two-bedroom units will be 850 sf. There will be 71 units in the senior building. All the units are handicapped adaptable to the needs of the person living there. The project supports aging in place and all the units are single level. All the elevators are run by generators and will never be inoperable.

Dr. Levitt asked about the conceptual plan for the school building. Mr. Shockt said the school will be removed and a 2<sup>nd</sup> smaller building will be built on Oak Avenue consisting of 50 units. The entire site will have 120 units and all will be COAH age restricted. Dr. Levitt asked about parking. Mr. Shockt said there will be no parking underneath the units. Mr. Freiberg said that in his experience, the ratio of cars per unit is .05% or less. For 120 seniors, only half would have a car. Most of the disabled don't drive as well as the lowest income level people. Dr. Levitt said electric charging stations would also be required. Mr. Shockt said the state has mandated 15% electric charging parking spaces. Each building would also have its own amenities and parking spaces and there would be interaction between buildings. He shared enlarged photos of other project sites including Woodbridge, Weinberg Commons Project, Orange City which has more of an urban feel, and Bergen County, which is under construction and the facades are not yet completed, but it will be aesthetically pleasing.

Dr. Levitt asked about ownership. Mr. Freiberg said the Jewish Federation is the landowner and will lease to Pennrose who will own and operate the rentals. The land will continue to be owned by the Jewish Federation. Pennrose will operate for profit, and the Jewish Federation will provide services and will be paid. There will also be a payment made through the state and the lease is for 100 years.

Mr. Shippen asked what their time frame is for returning to the Board with their application. Mr. Goldstein said they would like to come before both City Council and the Planning Board as soon as possible. The PILOT and affordable aspects need to be addressed. There are time constraints on their end. The application will be dependent on whether a "C" variance or a "D" variance is required and that needs to be resolved. Mr. Rowe said he would like to see a traffic study and the impact on the neighborhood. Mr. Goldstein said that would be part of the application. Dr. Levitt said the Master Plan and COAH requirements need to be addressed. Mr. Goldstein said the goal is to not have a builder's remedy case. They want to work with the city. Dr. Levitt asked if there had been any outreach to the neighborhood. Mr. Goldstein said no and that this is step one. Mr. Goldstein said the Planning Board was suggested by Mayor Chau as a good place to start. Mr. Platt said when they were constructing the Cherry Hill project, they met with the neighbors many times. Dr. Levitt said he likes that the project abuts the church, the green areas, and the drainage section. Mr. Fleishman asked if CAFRA was involved due to the parking spaces and commented that CAFRA would slow down the project. Mr. Goldstein was aware of that and said they haven't gotten that deep yet. Dr. Levitt said they would need to provide evidence of satisfactory parking and parking cannot overflow into the neighborhood. Mr. Leeds commented that Captain Nixon is present and he would like him to look at the plans for emergency response purposes. Mr. Goldstein said the city will receive a great benefit from the project and he agreed the current building has outlived its useful life. The zone is R-1 and a discussion about the number of houses that could be built took place. Mr. Goldstein said the property is 5.4 acres and about 20 single family homes with schoolchildren would fit on the site. This project will not have any burden on the school system and there will be no burden on the taxpayers. Mr. Shippen asked about trash collection. Mr. Shockt said they will get into that eventually. Mr. Goldstein thanked Mr. Fleishman for his correspondence and added this will be a long collaboration with the city; first with City Council and then the Planning Board.

Dr. Levitt opened a public session. He said he was informed by Councilwoman Bucci that the Economic Development Council will contribute to the economic element of the Master Plan by helping to obtain funding for a Planner and Dr. Levitt said the Board would welcome any expertise available. Dr. Levitt asked for an update on the Generator Ordinance. He also asked the Board to give Mr. Doran some guidance concerning the Tree Ordinance and asked Mr. Doran to check with other towns to see what would be appropriate. Mr. Doran said Egg Harbor Township has a Tree Ordinance. Dr. Levitt said two major trees were cut down on Mill Road that were four feet or greater in diameter and they did not obtain permits and the Code Enforcer was sent out. Regulations should be reasonable and understood on the city website and Facebook as well. Permits need to be required and enforced and the Tree Fund needs to be set up. Mr. Shippen said there needs to be a provision for diseased and damaged tree. Arborists were discussed. Trees between 12 and 24 inches need to be addressed and the objective is to

preserve trees and what can and can't be cut when a lot is being cleared for development needs to be identified.

Mr. Carney commented on the Dolphin Avenue issue on Facebook. Mr. Leeds said that the advice of the City Solicitor is to not discuss this until there is something official to report. Mr. Brophy asked about the status with the Arthur Henry site and he noted that it is listed on Realtors.com. Dr. Levitt said the sale is pending conditions with CAFRA. It will stay listed until they can proceed with construction. Mr. Leeds asked the Board members to let Mary Canesi know of any complaints so that she can alert Code Enforcement right away to address any problems.

Mr. Shippen made the motion to close the meeting and Mr. Brophy seconded the motion. Dr. Levitt closed the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Robin Atlas*

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board