

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

April 3, 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 March 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, April 3, 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 MEETING

Time: Apr 3, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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The meeting was opened by Chairman Richard Levitt at 7:01 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

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

Mr. Brophy led the flag salute.

Mr. Scharff made the motion to approve the March 6, 2025 minutes and Mr. Shippen seconded. The voice vote was all in favor with Councilwoman Bucci abstaining.

The first application was from Jackpot Properties, Block 16.01 Lot 60, 250 Tilton Road, in the R-C Zone for a Site Plan waiver, and elimination of a prior condition of approval, to construct a pergola that requires no variances. The attorney for the applicant was Elias T. Manos, Esq. from Northfield. Mr. Manos stated that Jackpot Properties acquired the property in 2014 and they are seeking to construct a 2,320-sf outdoor pergola as an accessory structure to the furniture store. This will be a lounge area for customers. The lot size is over 150,000 sf and only 7% is covered.

Mr. Manos continued and said they are seeking a site plan waiver with no variances. They learned subsequently that Jackpot came before the Board in 2014 for a sign variance. They were approved and the resolution contained a condition of approval that they were to come back before the Board within six months with a formal site plan. They do not have a formal site plan and they want relief from that condition to be granted at this hearing. They did submit a plan showing the pergola, but it is not a formal site plan.

Dr. Levitt swore in the professionals. John Barnhart, a licensed engineer and planner and Peter C. Weiss, a licensed architect were sworn in. Mr. Barnhart displayed an enlarged copy of the plans. He said the property is 169,000 sf on Tilton Road which extends to the back of Birch Grove Park in the rear and that area is mostly wetlands. There is really no future development of the property and it has been this way for many years. Mr. Barnhart said they have done a nice job of upgrading the building. They are proposing a 20 ft. x 80 ft. long open-air structure. There is currently a small grass area and the pergola will take the place of this. The property is only 7.2% covered and this is a minor expansion. There will be no negative effect on stormwater which runs to the side and back. They are here before the Board because the Land Use Ordinance requires a plan. They are requesting a waiver of a formal site plan so they can obtain a building permit. They did commit to a site plan in 2014 and they would like to address any concerns from the past application that triggered the site plan condition. The entire front of the property is paved and they have 15 striped parking spaces. The business is a high-end furniture store and it is not a busy store. The site and parking are more than adequate and no issues exist. The business is an asset to Tilton Road development.

Mr. Brophy asked for an explanation of why they did not return to the Board with a site plan within 6 months of their previous approval. Mr. Manos said they did not proceed right away with the sign

improvement. That occurred well after the 6-month time period. There is no explanation; it just didn't happen. The owner did obtain sign permits and has demonstrated that the site functions properly. Dr. Levitt noted if furniture for sale will be displayed in this area. Mr. Weiss said that is a possibility. Dr. Levitt asked if the structure will be suitable for enclosing. Mr. Barnhart deferred to Mr. Weiss. Mr. Weiss said the idea for the pergola is a pre-fabricated aluminum structure and there will not be spread footing. There will be piers for columns. Mr. Weiss did not think it would be a structure that will be enclosed. It will be an open structure and will have louvers for shading. Mr. Manos noted that the owner could not be present at this hearing this evening.

Dr. Levitt said Mr. Barnhart has said that nothing has changed at the site and that is part of the issue. The property has a 1950's look with just a building and concrete. There is no landscaping or islands, and there is no ingress or egress which presents safety concerns. It is a site that needs some dressing up. The city has an Economic Development Committee and the plan is to promote Tilton Road to make it more attractive to entice more business. This property is one of the least inviting toward that goal. He would like to see landscaping, stripping for ingress and egress and he asked what they could do to improve this since this is a safety issue. Mr. Barnhart understands that this is a safety issue, but noted that the asphalt has a walking surface along the front. They could designate by striping the area for walking and biking. They would need to check with the client who is not present. Councilwoman Bucci said it is a goal for economic development in the Master Plan that there are grass areas in the front and the goal is to have that all along Tilton Road. The committee would want the site to look more like the surrounding properties. She said Tilton Road needs beautification. Tilton Road is old and the committee's goal to the attract people to come to Northfield businesses to spend money and we need attractive properties.

Mr. Doran asked for clarification for the distance between the pergola and the property line. Mr. Fleishman noted that the setback is 42.55 ft. from the proposed structure. He labeled the enlarged plan Exhibit A-1. Dr. Levitt asked Mr. Doran if he would be comfortable administratively approving plans. Mr. Doran said there are too many concerns from the Board and more discussion is needed concerning islands, shrubbery and other concerns. Dr. Levitt suggested attaching conditions. Mr. Brophy said if the Board attaches conditions, given this applicant's track record (not adhering to the submission of a site plan), what makes us think there will be a follow-through on these conditions? Mr. Barnhart said the Building Department can hold back on issuing the pergola permit. Mr. Manos agreed and said they want approval to build something and that would require a building permit and a CO. Mr. Manos suggested tabling the application so they can come back with a plan and the owner and to see what he would be willing to commit too. Mr. Doran suggested the Board should decide if they want a site plan and Mr. Fleishman said or a landscape plan. Mr. Roegiers and Mr. Notaro agreed that the site needs dressing up. Mr. Fleishman added that if there is to be a continuance, the discussion should stop here. Mr. Brophy asked if there were any penalties. Dr. Levitt asked the Board to move forward and reminded that the Planning Board does not enforce.

Dr. Levitt opened a public session since there were members of the public present. Mr. Fleishman reminded that there would be no conclusions and Mr. Manos is allowed to speak again after the public session.

Tom Reynolds and Matt Reynolds of Capaldi, Reynolds & Pelosi, Block 16.01 Lot 59, 332 Tilton Road addressed the Board. They are next door neighbors to Surroundings and have been waiting for this opportunity to address this situation since 2014. They were surprised the owner of Jackpot was not present at this hearing. Tom Reynolds said Jackpot complained of a hardship in 2014. When they built their business, they did everything the Board asked for including sidewalks, curbing, and landscaping. Pedestrians walking from the Jackpot property cut through their landscaping and there is littering. Jackpot's owner has not been a good neighbor. He complained about the billboard trucks and said they are parked in a way that blocks the financial building's signage and property. Mr. Reynolds said it is a safety issue because the trucks block their clients when they are pulling out onto Tilton Road. The billboard trucks are parked in the sight triangle. He noted that Jackpot has gotten away with this for ten years. He also noted for the record that Brian Callaghan was the attorney that time. Mr. Reynolds passed out photos of the trucks and the site and Mr. Fleishman labeled them opposition photos OP-1 and noted that they were taken today.

Matt Reynolds clarified that when they came before the Board in 2012, they were asked to move their sign back 10 ft. since it was in the sight triangle and the county was going to widen the road. This was pre-emptive and Capaldi, Reynolds & Pelosi complied with the request. The goal was to install sidewalks all along Tilton Road. He said that hasn't happened and it's dangerous. Tom Reynolds said they only use the parking near the building and their employees park in the Capaldi lot. He added that their rainwater runs onto his property. Mr. Reynolds said he wants his property to look nice and he expects the same from his neighbors as part of a community effort. Tom Reynolds suggested a sidewalk. Dr. Levitt noted that no one is faulting the current professionals and he hoped the concerns expressed tonight will get back to the owner.

Michael Grossman, who is an owner of Kensington Furniture along with Leo Schoeffer, is part of the Development Committee with Councilwoman Bucci. He said the key element is that Tilton Road is the most trafficked road in Atlantic County and is a business and shopping district. The mission is to beautify Tilton Road and the benefits of other businesses making improvements can only enhance properties like Kensington, Morgan Stanely, Capaldi, Reynolds and Pelosi, and Jersey Cow who have made beautiful improvements to their properties. Curb appeal needs to improve as well as good neighbor concepts. Large trucks are blocking the businesses and this is dangerous. He agreed that Surroundings should have to submit a site plan like the other businesses did.

Mr. Manos said they will adjourn this hearing and he will provide new notice for the continuation. Mr. Doran said they will need to adhere to the Site Plan Checklist and if they eliminate anything on the list, they will need a waiver for anything not on the plan. Mr. Fleishman added that this is not a new application and the Board will waive time constraints for a continuation without a set date.

Mr. Scharff made the motion and Mr. Shippen seconded the motion. The voice vote was all in favor of the continuance.

The second application was from Vincent M. & Gerri L. Mazzeo, Block 84 Lot 18, 2001 Shepherd Drive for a Minor Subdivision with variances in the R-1 Zone. The subdivision will create two lots from one and

the variance relief is for a side yard setback and lot coverage for Lot A (the lot with the existing house) and lot area and width for proposed Lot B which will be a vacant lot for the future home.

Nicholas F. Talvacchia, Esq. of Atlantic City represented the Mazzeo's who were not present this evening. Dr. Levitt recused himself from the application. Vice Chairman Clem Scharff chaired the rest of the meeting.

Mr. Talvacchia said the Mazzeo's are away, but their son is present. Jon Barnhart was the Planner and Engineer for this project as well. The total lot size is over 25,000 sf which would allow over 10,000 per lot, but there are some variances needed since the lots are oddly shaped. The new lot is proposed to be 9,741.70 sf where 10,000 sf is required. Lot A would be 16,263 sf which is over the required square footage. Mr. Talvacchia said it is better to have two lots than one oversized lot and this is a substantial benefit. He noted that the current lot used to be two lots in the past.

Jon Barnhart was sworn in again. He said the tax map still shows Lot 18 as containing Lot 19. The Mazzeo home sits on the corner lot and the lots were previously consolidated. The site is 2 and ½ times the lot size for a single-family home. The proposal is for a minor subdivision for a second parcel to be created. This would allow for the Mazzeo's son to construct a new home next door to them. The new lot doesn't quite comply with lot area at 9,741.7 sf and would need a variance for lot width. Lot A would create a side yard setback variance. This lot would need 10 ft. on one side and 15 feet on the other side. There will be at least 20 ft. in between. The Mazzeo existing home will have a 5 ft. setback and they will put the new home 15 ft. from the setback on that side. It is a uniquely shaped lot and there are 10,000 sf lots surrounding this lot. The new lots will fit in with the character of the neighborhood by this subdivision. The c(2) variance benefits will outweigh any negatives. There really are none since the lot is so large. There is not a density problem and there is no negative impact to the public good. The driveway will be coming off Shepherd Drive. There are no traffic issues or parking variances needed. There are no height variances. They will meet all standards within the zone and it is a positive thing to keep another family in Northfield. This is a nice added bonus from the application. This is a very appropriate proposal which makes a lot of sense rather than demolishing a unique home and building two new homes. Mr. Barnhart noted that there is no public present.

Mr. Fleishman labeled the minor subdivision Exhibit A-1. Mr. Fleishman commented that the deviations are small and not noticeable. Mr. Brophy asked for clarification of the setbacks between the houses. Mr. Doran said the existing house will have coverage of 41.4%. He said corner lots require both street frontages to meet the 100 ft. minimum lot width. Mr. Doran noted that 78.38 ft. is proposed along Wabash Avenue and 110.46 ft. is proposed along Shepherd Drive. They will be only 12 ft. short of the required 200 ft. frontage for both lots.

Mr. Scharff opened the public session, and seeing no one, he closed the public session.

Mr. Shippen made a motion for minor subdivision approval and "c" variances for the following: Minimum required lot area for area for Lot B of 9,741.7 sf where 10,000 sf is required; minimum required lot width for both lots (minimum lot width of 100 ft. required; 78.38 ft. is proposed along Wabash Avenue, and 110.46 ft. is proposed along Shepherd Drive); minimum side yard setback Lot "A"

(10 ft. is required; 5 ft. is proposed); maximum lot coverage for Lot A of 41.4% where 40% is permitted; and minimum required street frontage of less than 100 ft.; and waivers of curbing, sidewalks and street trees. Mr. Brophy seconded the motion and had concerns about the many trees on the lot and Mr. Scharff added that they should maintain as many specimen trees as possible.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Brophy-yes

Councilwoman Bucci-yes

Mr. Carney-yes

Mr. Notaro-yes

Mr. Roegiers-yes

Mr. Rowe-yes

Mr. Scharff-yes

Mr. Shippen-yes

Mr. Utts-yes

The motion carries.

There was no other business on the agenda. Vice Chairman Scharff closed the meeting at 8:19 p.m. with a motion from Mr. Carney and a second from Mr. Brophy.

Respectfully submitted,

***Robin Atlas***

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board