

City of Northfield Planning Board
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February 6, 2020

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, 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.

This **REGULAR** meeting of the Northfield Planning Board held on Thursday, February 6, 2020 in Council Chambers, City Hall, Northfield, was opened by Vice Chairman Clem Scharff at 7:05 p.m. with the reading of the Sunshine Law and the following members present or absent as noted:

Peter Brophy

Mayor Erland Chau-present at 7:18 p.m.

Jim Leeds

Dr. Richard Levitt-present at 7:17 p.m.

Chief Paul Newman

Henry Notaro

Ron Roegiers

Derek Rowe

Clem Scharff

Jim Shippen

Councilman Paul Utts-absent

Steve Vain

Matthew Doran, PE, PP-Planning Board Engineer-absent

As a Notary Public, Robin Atlas read the Oath of Office to Henry Notaro who was re-appointed as Planning Board Alternate #1 for a two-year term and Peter Brophy who was appointed as Alternate #3 for a two-year term.

There were two resolutions to memorialize for Maikel M. Henin, Block 130, Lot 13, at 418 Dolphin Avenue for a Minor Subdivision with a "C" Variance and Tilton Square Theater, LLC, Block 17, Lot 9.01 at 331 Tilton Road for "C" Variances for an electronic sign. Mr. Shippen made the motion and Mr. Vain seconded. Abstentions were Henry Notaro and Peter Brophy. The resolutions were approved by voice vote.

Mr. Scharff opened the public session. Mr. Rich Baehrle, a Broker-Salesperson with Berkshire Hathaway Realtors, informally addressed the Board. Mr. Michael Sannuti of Pennsylvania had planned to attend the meeting, but his father was in the hospital and he could not be present. Mr. Baehrle spoke for him. Mr. Baehrle, distributed a packet to the Board members containing a sales packet and a letter from Mr.

Sannuti describing his intentions of renovating 2320 New Road which is the site of the now closed Northfield Transmissions.

Mr. Baehrle explained that since Northfield has no technical review board for applications, he would appreciate feedback from the Board about the possibility of renovating the building and installing landscaping at Block 82 Lot 5 in order to operate an antique car repair and detail shop including automobile sales. There would be no car repairs for the general public; only for his clients. Mr. Sannuti would like to know if the town would be receptive before purchasing the property. Mr. Baehrle noted that he both lives and works in Northfield. Mr. Roegiers stated that used car lots are not permitted in Northfield. Mr. Scharff agreed. Mr. Roegiers said he foresees Mr. Sannuti working continually on cars and the cars would be all over the property. He also had concerns with traffic flow and too many repeat customers. Mr. Baehrle commented that they could seek a variance. Mr. Shippen said the Board cannot render any opinion on a variance that hasn't been properly applied for and cannot comment whether or not the variance should be requested. Mr. Roegiers commented that he understands the costs involved and has two friends who have looked into the site. He would like to see the property rehabbed as it is currently not aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Shippen said the Board can't offer an opinion. Mr. Baehrle said he understands both sides and it is a substantial investment. Mr. Vain asked if he had spoken to Mike Dattalo and if he had been denied a business permit. Mr. Scharff said car sales are not allowed by Ordinance. Mr. Roegiers noted that they can do car repairs as that use is pre-existing. Mr. Scharff said the proposal is a possibility and may be a good use for the site, but the Board can't pass judgment without a formal application. Mr. Leeds commented about the sheds in back of the property which are close to the property line and said it would be nice to see the property cleaned up.

At 7:17, Dr. Levitt was present at the meeting and resumed the chair. Mr. Rowe commented that the Board is not accustomed to technical reviews and the professionals are not present as well. Mr. Baehrle said that he is only referring to the front part of the property and that Dave Neyers owns the property behind. Dr. Levitt said there was a similar presentation concerning the car detail shop on Shore Road in the past. When the Ordinance was written, the city didn't want a row of used car lots within the city limits. He said this will require a lot of thought and the Board can't offer an opinion at this time. He added that the application would be a use variance since this is a prohibited use in Northfield. The potential purchaser would need to consider the use variance first and then go to the expense of hiring an engineer to complete plans for a site plan application. Mr. Brophy said the city has never condoned car sales. Dr. Levitt said as a principle use, no. Mr. Brophy said it would be a precedent setting move if approved. Dr. Levitt agreed that it would be. Mr. Baehrle asked the Board what he should tell Mr. Sannuti. Dr. Levitt said there is some skepticism from the Board. Mr. Baehrle asked how the Board defines this type of operation. Mr. Shippen said it is car sales and would it be allowed as a use or not; the rest are details. Dr. Levitt said he would need to address criteria and furthering of Master Plan and benefits to the city. He will require a land use attorney since the site is commercial. The property needs rehabilitation, but the question involved is would this the best use.

The next order of business was a discussion of the three attorneys who submitted RFPs (Request for Proposals) for the open Planning Board Solicitor position. The submissions were from Joel M. Fleishman of Linwood, NJ, Hance C. Jaquett of Ocean City, NJ, and Willis F. Flower of Linwood, NJ. After discussion, it was decided that Joel M. Fleishman would be appointed after a motion from Mayor Chau and a second from Mr. Scharff. The voice vote was all in favor. Mr. Brophy questioned that the attorneys were not present to interview. The appointment could have been handled either way. The RFPs were e-mailed to the Board with ample time for review.

There was a discussion about the gas station demolition on Tilton Road. Mayor Chau said there have been claims of pollution leaks along Tilton Road and there is an ongoing investigation, but he hasn't heard anything in a few months. Mr. Vain asked if the owners would be building a new gas station at the site. Mayor Chau said there are rumors and some plans have been submitted to the county and state so there is some potential. Dr. Levitt said there is a distance regulation for gas stations in the Ordinance and a number of variance approvals would be necessary.

Dr. Levitt closed the meeting at 7:48 p.m. with a motion from Mr. Vain and a second from Mr. Scharff.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Atlas, Secretary to the Board