

**SUMMARY NOTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2008  
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD**

On Monday, June 9, 2008 at the Northfield Village Board Room, 361 Happ Road, the Architectural Commission met at 7:00 P.M. to consider four issues:

Members in Attendance:

Pat Karr, Chairperson  
Todd Berlinghof  
Tom Jennings  
Steve Page  
Patricia Leonard

Members Absent:

Steve Hirsch  
Juergen Fuss  
Todd Berlinghof

OTHERS PRESENT: Linnea O'Neill, Village Planner and Anne Kane, Director of Community Development (see attached sign-in sheet).

Chairperson Karr requested approval of the Summary Notes of the May 12, 2008, Architectural Commission meeting.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Page, Seconded by Commissioner Leonard to approve the Architectural Commission Summary Notes of May 12, 2008.**

The vote was as follows:

**AYES: 4**

Chairperson Pat Karr  
Tom Jennings  
Steve Page  
Patricia Leonard

**NAYS: 0**

**ABSTAIN: 0**

**ABSENT: 3**

Steve Hirsch  
Juergen Fuss  
Todd Berlinghof

**Motion Carried**

**ISSUE #1: Consideration and discussion of proposed sign change at Rex's Gas Station located at 469 Sunset Ridge Road.**

Chuck Sheehan of Ahern Sign Company was present. Mr. Sheehan indicated that they are replacing the existing ground sign and re-decating the four pumps only from Citgo to Shell. Commissioner Page asked if there would be new signage on the building. He was informed no signage on the building or any additional signage would be added at this time.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

**A motion was made by Commissioner Jennings, Seconded by Commissioner Page to approve the proposed signage for Rex's Shell, 469 Sunset Ridge Road, in conformance with the plans submitted May 6, 2008.**

The vote was as follows:

**AYES: 4**

**Chairperson Pat Karr**

**Tom Jennings**

**Steve Page**

**Patricia Leonard**

**NAYS: 0**

**ABSTAIN: 0**

**ABSENT: 3**

**Steve Hirsch**

**Juergen Fuss**

**Todd Berlinghof**

**Motion Carried**

**ISSUE #2 Consideration and discussion of elevations, exterior façade, signage and lighting submitted by Dominick's Finer Foods, Inc. located at 1822 Willow Road.**

John Heidt, architect for the Dominick's project was present. He informed the Commission of the proposed changes in the signage, facade and lighting. The total signage square footage will be reduced. They plan to enhance both the front entries with an application of slate overlay tiles. The façade colors are proposed to be new earth tone colors per Safeway corporate standards and there will be new upper windows and new doors. The east door will be repositioned to mimic the west door.

Chairperson Karr asked if the devoted shoppers will be able to locate things in the same places, but Mr. Heidt indicated a better layout will be used with new departments.

Commissioner Jennings asked about landscaping plans to which Mr. Heidt responded that no landscaping plans are being presented at this time, but they would like to upright the trees in the parking islands and/or fix any damaged landscaping done because of construction. In July, the petitioner is scheduled to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission for outdoor seating in front of the building. He passed around beige colored samples of the tables and umbrella fabric which are planned for three tables with four seats at each table. Self-watering planters will be used as barriers.

Commissioner Page asked if the entryways would be changed. Mr. Heidt said both entryways are proposed to look the same with back lit frosted glass and slate tiles. The positioning of the east door will change per the plans. There will be new accent lighting adjacent to the doors and thirty new projector lights for accent lighting.

David Hupp, 496 Edens Lane, said that he lives near Dominick's and asked if the back lighting will reduce the natural light in the building. Mr. Heidt indicated no and that the back lighting is for the façade windows and will not be seen inside the store.

Peggy DePaulo asked if the same type doors would be used. She was informed that the same sliding glass doors would be used.

Jack Chapin, 2441 Fox Meadow Court asked what self-watering planters are. It was explained by Mr. Heidt that a reservoir at the bottom of the planter would occasionally have to be refilled by employees, but otherwise the plant draws water from the bottom as needed.

Ms. DePaulo stated that it was a miracle that no one was killed after what happened to the store and wondered if it could happen again. Mr. Heidt explained that the roof slope has changed so that a maximum of 5" of water only could pond or freeze instead of the previous slope which caused 3' of water to pond and freeze. They are also using heavier steel.

Commissioner Jennings questioned whether the parking lot would be the same to which Mr. Heidt replied that it would be the same except for possibly uplighting trees in the islands.

Tom Fitzgerald asked what the time frame is for completion. Dennis Rausch of Dominick's responded that construction is scheduled to be completed on August 28<sup>th</sup> and that the Grand Opening would be 2 to 3 weeks after that due to restocking.

Gavin Blunt, 2190 Drury Lane, suggested that the Architectural Commission consider having an entrance to the post office moved and to reconfigure the current construction fence when the trailer for prescriptions is installed. He said business is down 20% in the Village.

Todd Berlinghof arrived at the meeting.

Chairperson Karr noted she understood Mr. Blunt's concern and the inconvenience of the construction fence, but, the fencing is there for the safety of the public and Dominick's workers. Mr. Blunt felt that there wasn't any consideration given in laying out the fence. Chairperson Karr felt this was the safest method for the layout, but that this was not appropriate for discussion at this time.

Mr. Heidt responded to the location of the trailer by saying that it would be located on the east side toward the roadway. Community Development Director Anne Kane indicated that staff suggested the western entrance so people would not be traveling across the parking lot in an east-west motion, but, the Village Board approved the trailer on the eastern property line for electrical hook-up purposes. Dennis Rausch indicated the trailer should be in place within two weeks. Chairperson Karr then informed Mr. Blunt that the Architectural Commission was not involved in this process.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

**A motion was made by Commissioner Page, Seconded by Commissioner Leonard to approve the proposed building façade and signage change in conformance with the plans submitted May 5, 2008.**

**The vote was as follows:**

**AYES: 5**

**Chairperson Pat Karr  
Todd Berlinghof  
Tom Jennings  
Steve Page  
Patricia Leonard**

**NAYS: 0**

**ABSTAIN: 0**

**ABSENT: 2**

**Steve Hirsch  
Juergen Fuss**

**Motion Carried**

Chairperson Karr requested a change in order for the agenda to hear Northfield Community Church before the discussion of the Village Center District.

**OTHER BUSINESS: Northfield Community Church – 400 Wagner Road – proposed changes to addition previously approved by Architectural Commission.**

Bruce Johnston of Johnston Architects, Inc. was present for Northfield Community Church. Mr. Johnston explained that because of funding problems, they have scaled back their façade changes. Only three offices will be added with no roof structure changes for a future second floor. The entrances will be the same now as to spacing and beams – 2 arches instead of one. The brickwork will be simplified on the west façade and the windows will match the existing windows; a change from the proposed casement to fixed and hopper. There will not be an expansion to the parking lot – only repairs.

Commissioner Page asked how the entry was redesigned. Mr. Johnston indicated that the entry will now have two arches to match the other side along with brick and stone and tongue and groove planking. Mr. Johnston presented a larger rendering of the church. It was also discussed that the HVAC will sit behind the roof parapet. Commissioner Berlinghof questioned whether or not it would be seen. It was determined that it may not be visible, but if so, it should be screened. Mr. Johnson indicated it is about a 3 ton unit and that if it shows, they will screen it. Commissioner Page suggested placing the condensing unit further back on the roof if possible.

Ms. O'Neill relayed that the arborist for the church has determined that the maples on Willow are coming back.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

**A motion was made by Commissioner Berlinghof, Seconded by Commissioner Page to approve the changes as proposed except that if the HVAC unit can be seen on the roof from the parking lot, it must be properly screened.**

**The vote was as follows:**

**AYES: 5**

**Chairperson Pat Karr  
Todd Berlinghof  
Tom Jennings  
Steve Page  
Patricia Leonard**

**NAYS: 0**

**ABSTAIN: 0**

**ABSENT: 2**

**Steve Hirsch  
Juergen Fuss**

**Motion Carried**

**ISSUE #3: Continue discussion on design guidelines and signage criteria for the Village Center District. The petitioner is the Village of Northfield in collaboration with Myefski Cook Architects.**

Ms. O'Neill began the discussion by informing the Commission that the Design Guidelines were received from Myefski Cook a couple of days before the meeting. They are still in draft form and staff is working on further changes. Myefski Cook has added pictures to the text, as was suggested, and staff is still changing text and looking for more suggestions. This version is more user- friendly. Ms. Kane went on to say that they met with Myefski Cook to discuss modifications and to add more illustrations which were discussed after the last Architectural meeting. Chairperson Karr agreed that the illustrations helped.

Commissioner Berlinghof felt the tone of the Guidelines is requirements and not suggestions. Ms. Kane agreed that some of the language should be more suggestive on what might be discouraged and to project an image of what area a building might fit into. Commissioner Berlinghof agreed that variations are important. Ms. Kane pointed out words like “rich” material and “enhanced” to suggest different building materials and variations which would be encouraged.

Commissioner Berlinghof also pointed out that certain language in the Guidelines refers to restrictions and that ordinance sections should be provided with that language. Ms. Kane agreed that there are areas given which are backed by the Code and should be indicated in the text along with examples.

Commissioner Jennings had a scenario where Dominick's came to Northfield to develop and he wondered whether staff would prohibit parking in front. Ms. Kane explained that most anchor stores, especially grocery stores, do not have parking behind. These Design Guidelines are intended for the smaller retailer.

Commissioner Page again expressed his concern regarding tenants and felt that two manuals might address issues better – one for the landowner/developer and an abbreviated manual for the tenant. He also felt more specific guidelines should be used as to what the Architectural Commission is looking for. Chairperson Karr said if the existing property owner wants to upgrade, there should be a differentiation between an existing property owner who wants to upgrade and giving his existing conditions what he could do to match what the task force recommends. Ms. Kane indicated when the two vacant gas stations in town are developed, they can begin to set the tone and incrementally, changes should be seen. Commissioner Page asked what type of massing the Village is looking for. Ms. Kane indicated three stores in the Village Center is a guideline to which they are already speaking to the landowners about.

Chairperson Karr opened the discussion to the audience, but indicated that this draft is not set in stone.

Gavin Blunt, Northfield business owner, spoke to the Commission indicating that they should take a proactive look at the development of Northfield. He felt there is nothing that attracts people to shop. The Commission should take the lead and push Plan and Zoning and the Village Board to redevelop instead of the continuing deterioration of the downtown. There needs to be an attractive, safe place to shop and it should start with recommendations from the Architectural Commission. He appreciates what the Commission does, but said that the last thing Northfield needs is another bank. He feels the Village Center is a shambles. The Commission needs to address the look and feel of the Village for the benefit of everyone. Chairperson Karr informed Mr. Blunt of the task force's wide range of membership and that the Architectural Commission is usually the last to see the plans. She agrees that the Village needs improvements, but it will depend on the developers who come in and the fact that they are dealing with small parcels. Mr. Blunt went on to say that he spent 20 years on Wall Street and that TIF funding is needed regardless of what the economic conditions are. He felt there should be an incentive plan. Ms. Kane said that they engaged a TIF consultant and felt vulnerable with how the money was being invested which makes it difficult. Internal meetings are being held now to discuss the beautification of the Village, i.e. banners, flags, Village entry signs and that baby steps are being taken to beautify the Village as funding permits. Street improvements are planned also.

Mr. Blunt continued by stressing there is no uniformity within the Village. Nothing matches. He said he knows of four businesses, beyond the gas stations, which might leave the Village. Also, Dominick's should not have a Grand Opening for their store, but a Grand Opening that the Village is open again. He said 8 businesses may close within the next year and the Architectural Commission should do something about it. He suggested bonds. He again said he appreciates what the Commission does and felt that the staff and Commissions are all made up of competent people.

Ms. O'Neill asked for input from anyone in the room if they ever notice any area for beautification. An example was when Commissioner Jennings questioned the railroad ties. She indicated this is being addressed. Mr. Blunt felt that that's part of the Village infrastructure and that the railroad should take it away and that Buzz could do something about it. Chairperson Karr informed him that under law, they can take the property back if they want to as without the consent of other property owners. Mr. Blunt suggested passing ordinances to eliminate tall weeds, etc.

Mr. John Huck spoke about the village civic events sign and questioned how this came about. Ms. Kane explained the groups involved. He also said he is reviewing the Village Center plan and asked about options for Orchard Road. Chairperson Karr explained that parking by the Post Office is owned by ComEd and the parking behind the Marlin building is ComEd. There are difficult traffic situations and some alternatives are being considered. It also depends on the library expanding or not. She explained that the entire area is being looked at, but different entities own the area. He felt it was an interesting idea to straighten out Orchard and reconnect it, but understood it is a complicated process. He is happy to hear the Village is attending to the no crossing signals for pedestrians. Chairperson Karr indicated things will be done little by little.

Ms. Kane felt that the Design Guidelines might be in final form by the July meeting. Commissioner Berlinghof asked that the next draft be e-mailed to the Commission members for prior review.

There being no further issues to discuss upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Page, seconded by Commissioner Jennings and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

HGM 6/10/08

*Approved 7/14/08*