

**SUMMARY NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2008
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD**

On Tuesday, October 14, 2008, at the Northfield Village Board Room, 361 Happ Road, the Architectural Commission met at 7:00 P.M. to consider one issue:

Members in Attendance:
Steve Page, Acting Chair
Juergen Fuss
Tom Jennings
Patricia Leonard
Jason Felicione

Members Absent:
Pat Karr
Steve Hirsch

OTHERS PRESENT: Anne Kane and Linnea O'Neill (see attached sign-in sheet).

Acting Chair Page requested approval of the Summary Notes of the September 8, 2008 Architectural Commission meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jennings, Seconded by Commissioner Leonard to approve the Architectural Commission Summary Notes of September 8, 2008.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 5
Steve Page, Acting Chair
Juergen Fuss
Tom Jennings
Patricia Leonard
Jason Felicione

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 2
Pat Karr
Steve Hirsch

Motion Carried

ISSUE #1: Consideration and discuss preliminary design guidelines and signage criteria for the Village Center District. The petitioner is the Village of Northfield in collaboration with Myefski Cook Architects.

Linnea O'Neill and Anne Kane were present for the Village to discuss for review and approval of the preliminary design guidelines. Ms. O'Neill indicated that many hours were spent over the summer on these guidelines and that this is the third time before the Architectural Commission in which changes had been made from the previous meetings. They are presenting the guidelines again for comments and approval.

Acting Chair Page's comments were that he liked the additional photos and examples which made it more user friendly. He suggested, however, making it smaller and it was agreed that printing it on both side of the paper would help.

Ms. Kane said she appreciated all the time Ms. O'Neill has spent on the guidelines. She said the objective of the guidelines is that Northfield is open to other suggestions which may not be in the guidelines, as long as it's a good design with durable materials. She said this was difficult without pointing out a specific proposal. Northfield has more of its own style and creation. They then discussed Kohl's Museum in Glenview and its use of different materials. Ms. Kane then went on to say the staff report will indicate whether or not the guidelines have been met.

Commissioner Fuss then indicated that he likes the guidelines because it is easy to follow, not too long and gives ideas. He confirmed that these are not rules, only guidelines. He believed it was long overdue. As an architect, he felt you always want to sketch an idea, but the guidelines show good examples.

Commissioner Jennings asked if a developer would be given all three documents along with the application. Ms. O'Neill indicated they would be directed to the website and that Code sections would be given. Commissioner Jennings felt that these documents may discourage builders. Ms. O'Neill felt that the option to sit down and discuss plans is always available. Ms. Kane also felt it would not discourage builders as these guidelines are very common in this area.

Commissioner Leonard felt the guidelines were very clear and that what's in the guidelines is very clear. She also stated it was a good reference guide.

Commissioner Jennings questioned if a tenant comes in to the space which was supposed to be for Art Posts and they didn't want to do anything to the space, what would the Village require. Ms. O'Neill said they would not have to do anything to the space. Ms. Kane stressed that the Village cannot hold one tenant to a higher standard than the next. She indicated they could show the new tenant what was proposed by Art Post to give them some ideas as to what was approved. Commissioner Jennings also pointed out that some tenants have more cost restraints than others. He felt the Commission should consider the funds the tenant has available as to what they can feasibly do. Commissioner Fuss agreed that decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Jennings then felt that a tenant should be able to have a website on their sign. Ms. Kane indicated that the sign regulations for small tenants are difficult, however, she is not a proponent of websites on signs. She felt that the Village's website could have more information as to what businesses are in the Village and give the websites.

Acting Chair Page discussed that signage items cover about 70% of what the Commission hears. He felt there should be more examples of signage in the Guidelines. He also suggested more incentives, i.e. signage could be less restrictive if a developer is willing to use better materials. Ms. Kane said that the

Code prescribes more sign regulations. She indicated they would like to redo the sign code in the near future. Acting Chair Page went on to say that he would like to see more of what is acceptable in the Guidelines so as not to discourage anyone for what isn't allowed. It was also discussed that if a person comes to the Village for new signage, they could be give only the pertinent sections in the Guidelines, instead of the entire booklet. These guidelines will also be on the website.

A discussion then continued with respect to enforcement of decisions of the Architectural Commission. Commissioner Fuss was concerned that there is no enforcement tool. Ms. O'Neill stated that a couple of years ago, there was more enforcement. In the winter as time permits, she will go out and check various applicants for compliance. Commission members then discussed various applicants who have not fulfilled their permit approvals. It was suggested that maybe Ron Johnson could check on these in the future. Commissioner Fuss then questioned if a fine was imposed. Ms. Kane explained that fines were imposed only after letters had been sent and a certain time period elapsed for compliance. She said the judicial system is not very sympathetic of Villages. A new adjudication process is underway for motorists fighting tickets and perhaps more of this type of complaint could be included.

Further discussion was held regarding any developer interest in Northfield and the vacant lots and buildings.

Commissioner Felicione indicated that he liked the guidelines. He also indicated that an owner could be taxed at a higher rate if a lot is empty which would encourage building. Commissioner Jennings suggested tax incentives. A discussion then continued regarding tax increment financing, which it was concluded that Northfield did not have. It was studied, but determined not to be in the Village's best interests.

Acting Chair Page then stated when working for a shopping center developer, he would oversee design aspects and encouraging more tenants by certain anchor stores or other desirable tenants. He felt that new development should be encouraged and that the vision statement in the guidelines should encourage developers. Incentives should be used to encourage landlords to bring in upscale tenants – more done to enhance business.

Commissioner Fuss then asked if an economic development study had been done on Northfield. Ms. Kane stated that Gruen & Gruen had done an analysis in 2004. No formal study has been done since. It was also discussed that more signs need to direct people to the Village Center.

Commissioner Fuss also asked if Northfield is green and is there any mention of a green aspect. Ms. Kane indicated it is mentioned in the general statement, but that more language could be added. New materials were discussed such as flaxseed floors, wheat board ceilings and other sustainable materials.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Leonard, Seconded by Commissioner Jennings to approve the proposed preliminary design guidelines and signage criteria for the Village Center District, subject returning next month with additional signage photos and examples, an expanded vision statement and language to encourage sustainable development.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 5

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 2

Steve Page, Acting Chair

Pat Karr

Juergen Fuss

Steve Hirsch

Tom Jennings

Patricia Leonard

Jason Felicione

Motion Carried

There being no further issues to discuss upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Fuss and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

HGM 10/15/08

Approved 11/10/08