

PLAN AND ZONING

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING
BEFORE THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

COMMISSION

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had before the Village of
Northfield Plan and Zoning Commission taken at the Northfield
Village Hall, Board Room, Northfield, Illinois on the 5th day
of June, 2023 at the hour of 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

BILL VASELOPULOS, Chairman
JACK BRANNIGAN
DAN deLOYS
JENNIFER SUCHER
KATHY ESTABROOKE
PATRICK BADER
STEVEN HIRSCH
CONNIE BERMAN

MEMBERS ABSENT:

TODD BERLINGHOF

ALSO PRESENT:

STEVEN GUTIERREZ, Community Development Director

1 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: I'd like to call to
2 order the meeting of the Plan and Zoning Commission. My
3 name is Bill Vaselopulos, I'm the Chair of the
4 Commission.

5 At this time, I'd like the Commissioners
6 to introduce themselves, starting with Connie.

7 COMMISSIONER BERMAN: Connie Berman.

8 COMMISSIONER HIRSCH: Steven Hirsch.

9 COMMISSIONER BADER: Patrick Bader.

10 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: Kathy Estabrooke.

11 COMMISSIONER SUCHER: Jennifer Sucher.

12 COMMISSIONER DELOYS: Dan deLoys.

13 COMMISSIONER BRANNIGAN: Jack Brannigan.

14 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Thank you very much.

15 The purpose of tonight's meeting is to
16 conduct a hearing and to discuss and consider a request
17 for approval for a Special Use permit located at 1622
18 Willow Road. Petitioner's name is MJR/Northfield Real
19 Estate Holding Company, LLC, they are the owners of the
20 building, and Forward Focus MSO, LLC, they are the
21 tenants.

22 The public hearing format will provide an
23 overview of this proposal and a forum for public comment
24 and input. This Commission is a recommending body only
25 and we will forward our recommendation to the Village
26 President and Board of Trustees for final determination
27 on whether or not to grant this item before us today.
28 The Board will then consider this item that is being
29 discussed this evening at the next Board meeting, which
30 is scheduled for Tuesday, June 30th, 2023, 7:00 p.m.,
31 right here in this boardroom.

32 Commission meetings require that all
33 persons wishing to be heard and to enter testimony must
34 be sworn in. This includes all petitioners, individuals
35 with the petitioners, and any interested parties or
36 other property owners. Following the petitioner's
37 presentation and after the Commission has had an
38 opportunity to ask questions and discuss amongst
39 ourselves, then all other interested parties will be
40 given an opportunity to speak.

41 Prior to speaking, we request that all
42 parties step forward to the microphone, be sworn in, and
43 provide their name, address and interest in this matter
44 for the record. These proceedings are being recorded,
45 and that is why we request you to speak only at the
46 podium where the microphone is located.

47 The first order of business is to pass
48 the minutes from our last meeting of May 1st, 2023.

1 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: So moved.
2 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Is there a second?
3 COMMISSIONER BADER: I'll second.
4 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Thank you.
5 All those in favor?
6 (Chorus of ayes.)
7 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: All opposed?
8 (No response.)
9 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: The motion passes.
10 Before the Petitioner steps to the
11 microphone, Steve, do you have any comments you'd like
12 to make?

13 MR. GUTIERREZ: Thank you, Chairman.
14 Yes, the Petitioners are seeking a
15 special use in order to operate a medical office
16 practice at the first level of the office building at
17 1622 Willow Road. This building is located in the
18 Village Center Zoning District, and in that district,
19 any medical office use on the first floor is subject to
20 a special use.

21 This particular practice is going to
22 consist of five staff members including the doctors, and
23 they will have six exam rooms. Their office hours will
24 be from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through
25 Friday, and then will be closed on Saturdays and
26 Sundays.

27 As noted in the materials that we've
28 forwarded to the Commission, the Petitioners are also
29 seeking a relief from our off-street parking
30 requirements. The property has 106 parking spaces
31 available to it, and our Village Code requires 107
32 spaces based on the existing tenancies and the proposed
33 medical office tenancy for Forward Focus.

34 I want to, for the record, just break
35 down the parking. It's a little odd for this particular
36 property in that a good deal of the parking is actually
37 on public property. The property owners have a license
38 or a lease agreement with the Forest Preserve District
39 for I believe up to 30 spaces in the parking lot on the
40 north side of Willow Road that serves the Forest
41 Preserve District there.

42 They also have an agreement with the
43 Illinois Department of Transportation for use of the 22
44 parking spaces within IDOT's right-of-way. Those 22
45 spaces are actually within the parking lot. As you
46 drive by, it looks like one parking lot, it is one
47 parking lot, but the north half of that parking lot is
48 actually in the IDOT right-of-way. Again, the

1 Petitioner, the property owner leases those from IDOT.

2 On the south half of that surface parking
3 lot, there are 23 parking spaces. Then the building
4 also has 30 parking spaces underground that are only
5 accessible to, I assume tenants who occupy the building.

6 Staff monitored the parking lot to
7 understand how much capacity that they have currently.
8 What we observed was that the main surface parking lot
9 in the front of the building, at its peak usage, only
10 used 31 percent of the parking spaces. Staff is very
11 confident that there is enough parking to serve the
12 needs of the existing tenancies and the proposed tenant.

13 Another issue that we outlined in our
14 Staff report and that is noted in the draft motion in
15 the memo that we sent you is that the landscaping around
16 the property, and this is not unusual, some of those
17 plantings have died off over the years. A few years ago
18 the property owner actually brought those back up to
19 speed. We went through this exercise of restoring
20 landscaping with a previous special use. It's been a
21 few years and it appears that there has again been some
22 die-off. I've talked to the owner's representative a
23 few times over the last few weeks that maintains the
24 property, and they are willing to work closely with
25 Staff in identifying what the gaps are in the existing
26 plantings. They have been very cooperative in terms of
27 the intent to restore those plantings.

28 We needed to wait until mid May before we
29 could start evaluating the landscaping and we're still
30 doing that and we're working closely with the property
31 owner. You'll note that in the draft motion we've
32 included the condition that the property owner will work
33 with Staff to fill in the plantings to Staff's
34 satisfaction. We did not put in a specific timeframe.
35 There's I believe at least one tree involved, so it's
36 probably going to need to be planted in the fall. Then
37 again, as we assess the plantings, some may be
38 appropriate to plant now before it gets too hot, but
39 some, again some plantings may need to be done later in
40 the year.

41 That's what I have for you. The
42 Petitioners are here to provide a presentation if you'd
43 like, and certainly to answer any questions that you
44 have. I will now turn it over to them.

45 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Thank you.

46 Before they step forward, the Fire
47 Department had some findings last year.

48 MR. GUTIERREZ: Yes.

1 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: You said that the
2 Petitioners have taken care of everything to the Fire
3 Department's satisfaction?

4 MR. GUTIERREZ: Right.

5 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Did they do another
6 inspection?

7 MR. GUTIERREZ: Yes. So, the Fire Department
8 had a sprinkler inspection, an inspection specifically
9 of the fire suppression system. There were certain
10 system tests that the property owner is responsible for
11 having done. At the time of the Fire Department
12 inspection the owner did not have these system tests
13 completed and or documented. They subsequently have
14 completed those tests and documented those to the
15 satisfaction of the Fire Department.

16 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Okay.

17 MR. GUTIERREZ: So, everything in the Fire
18 Department's report to you folks has been accomplished
19 by the owner and the Fire Department is satisfied.

20 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Great, thank you.

21 Now, before the Petitioners make their
22 presentation, Steve, would you like to swear them in
23 please?

24 MR. GUTIERREZ: Raise your right hand please.
25 (Witness sworn.)

26 MR. GUTIERREZ: Thank you.

27 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: If you could both state
28 your name for the record?

29 MR. SILVERMAN: Richard Silverman.

30 DR. SCHAFFEL: Gary Schaffel.

31 MR. SILVERMAN: I'm Richard Silverman on
32 behalf of 1622 Willow Road. We've been the building
33 owner for over three-and-a-half years now. We've had
34 three special use permits in the past; this will be our
35 fourth one. This makes the building fully occupied, so
36 we have no intentions of requesting any in the near
37 future. We have other uses in the building.

38 The items I would like to comment on and
39 further elaborate what Steve has touched on already is
40 parking. The 30 spaces in the Forest Preserve, in my
41 three-and-a-half years of owning the building, a couple
42 of individuals parked there. We're never going to ask
43 anyone to cross Willow Road. In the future, with the
44 doctor opening we intend zero people park there. We
45 don't even advertise that as our parking, so no one will
46 be crossing Willow Road. These 76 spaces we have on our
47 site, 22 on the IDOT, we have a five-year lease with
48 IDOT and auto renews every year. So, we're not

1 concerned about losing those spaces on our side at any
2 point.

3 The doctor's will be open Monday through
4 Friday. The nice thing of the doctor is the heavy
5 traffic user on our site, AFG, the behavioral therapist
6 on the second floor, you guys approved their special use
7 permit about eight months ago, they see children. Once
8 they get out of school at 3:30 and after is when their
9 steady flow of traffic begins. The doctor closes at
10 4:30, seeing patients during the day. So, we think
11 they're complementary uses and we don't expect heavy
12 parking users going forward.

13 I will let the doctor just give a little
14 background on his business, and we can answer any
15 questions you guys have.

16 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Thank you.

17 DR. SCHAFFEL: Hi, so I'm a General Internist.
18 I've been in the Lake Forest area for 25 years, in this
19 concierge model for the past 15. We are a bulk volume
20 general internal medicine practice. We see adults age
21 18 and up.

22 Most of what we do is consultation,
23 diagnosis, preventative medicine. We don't do any
24 surgeries. We don't have any toxic materials or
25 anything like that. Occasionally, somebody could come,
26 excuse me, come to the office and need emergency
27 transfer but that is a very rare thing.

28 We currently are in a space in a bank
29 building in West Lake Forest. We've been there for five
30 years. We have a very good relationship with the bank.
31 We have, part of what we do is, you know, recruit and
32 train, not train but recruit and kind of mentor doctors
33 in this model. We've got lots of doctors who are
34 wanting to start this type of practice and we are hoping
35 to expand to the area.

36 It's a great location for us, for the
37 type of clientele that we recruit, and we look forward
38 to being here.

39 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Great, thank you. Are
40 you, as your business grows, your clientele grows,
41 obviously you're going to be having some people. But
42 initially, are you going to be going to both locations
43 with the same staff or are you hiring people from the
44 get go?

45 DR. SCHAFFEL: Well, we'll have staff
46 exclusive for the Northfield office, doctors and support
47 staff.

48 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER HIRSCH: And I understand five in
2 the staff; is that right?

3 DR. SCHAFFEL: Well, to start with, two
4 doctors and probably two staff, maybe three staff. That
5 might grow, but not --

6 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: I just have one
7 comment about the parking. The spots that are in the
8 IDOT right-of-way, if there are big vehicles parked in
9 those spots, it's extremely hard to come, I live right
10 there, so it's extremely hard to come off on Linder or
11 on Lockwood with those cars there. I just want that in.
12 There's nothing we can do about it; I just want it in
13 the record.

14 MR. SILVERMAN: We've asked our, obviously,
15 there's nothing we can do about moving the parking lot,
16 but we can do on a preventative basis is ask anyone,
17 employees or guests in the building, when possible,
18 always park on the south side of the lot abutting the
19 property on the building. So, if we have 35 spaces on
20 that side, using those first before you get in the IDOT.
21 Obviously, it's not always possible, but that is the
22 intent we tell them.

23 COMMISSIONER BRANNIGAN: You could also
24 designate a certain number of those with signs that say
25 Compact Cars Only to avoid that.

26 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: That's true, Jack.

27 DR. SCHAFFEL: But we also say that we see
28 patients every half hour. So, the most, you know, four
29 people at one time, four people per hour will be our
30 maximum, maybe a couple more, but we're very low volume.

31 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: But the building is
32 at capacity now.

33 DR. SCHAFFEL: But it's not, we're not
34 dermatologists seeing 50 people over, you know, an hour.

35 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: That's true. I do
36 like the compact idea though.

37 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Any other questions or
38 comments from the Commission?

39 (No response.)

40 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Is there anyone from
41 the audience who have any questions or comments that
42 they'd like to make at this time?

43 (No response.)

44 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: If not, would someone
45 like to make a motion?

46 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: Sure, I'll make a
47 motion.

48 **Motion to recommend to the Village Board: Approval of a**

1 Special Use and associated parking variation for the
2 operation of a medical office at 1622 Willow Road in
3 accordance with the Petitioner's Application and
4 Supporting Materials, date stamped May 1st, 2023,
5 subject to the following conditions:

- 6 1. The Special Use shall be personal and limited to
7 the Petitioner, Forward Focus MSO, LLC, pursuant to
8 Article XVI, Section 4(9) of the Zoning Ordinance
9 of the Village of Northfield. Forward Focus MSO,
10 LLC is owned as follows: Gary Schaffel, 95
11 percent, and Steven Lasin, five percent. Upon
12 charge in or transfer of ownership of Forward Focus
13 MSO, LLC, the Special Use shall lapse. Change in
14 ownership shall occur when any corporation,
15 partnership or other entity which currently owns
16 100 percent of the total stock and/or assets of
17 Forward Focus MSO, LLC, shall in the aggregate own
18 less than 51 percent of Forward Focus MSO, LLC.
19 The 51 percent minimum ownership requirements shall
20 apply regardless of whether Forward Focus MSO, LLC
21 is owned by a corporation, partnership or other
22 entity. Furthermore, the Special Use shall only be
23 applicable to the subject property.
- 24 2. The Petitioner shall restore the site landscaping
25 to the satisfaction of Village Staff.
- 26 3. The hours of operation shall be limited to 8:00
27 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- 28 4. The property owner shall maintain permission to use
29 the 22 parking spaces in the IDOT right-of-way and
30 the 30 parking spaces in the Forest Preserve
31 District of Cook County parking lot across Willow
32 Road or find alternative parking arrangements
33 acceptable to the Village.
- 34 5. The representations made in the application and
35 supporting documents are binding upon the
36 Petitioners. There shall be no additional uses
37 permitted beyond those specifically enumerated
38 herein or permitted by the Village of Northfield's
39 Zoning Ordinance.
- 40 6. The Village of Northfield Health, Fire, and
41 Building Officials shall be granted access to the
42 subject property of any reasonable time for
43 purposes of conducting inspections for compliance
44 with Village Codes and Ordinances.
- 45 7. An approval pursuant to any requested review by a
46 Village consultant, Village Staff member, Village
47 Commission or Village Board Committee shall be an
48 approval of only those items specified in any

- 1 motion, resolution, ordinance, or written report.
2 Such approval shall not be deemed to be an approval
3 of any matter which is within the jurisdiction of
4 any other Village consultant, Village Staff member,
5 Village Board Committee or Village Commission that
6 has not issued a report or given its approval.
7 Neither shall such approval be deemed the approval
8 of any County, State or Federal Agency. Under no
9 circumstances shall the approval be deemed to be an
10 approval of any matter not included in this
11 ordinance by virtue of the fact that such a matter
12 appeared on a supporting document which is not
13 attached as an exhibit to this ordinance or
14 incorporated as an exhibit as part of this
15 ordinance.
- 16 8. The Petitioner shall comply in all other respects
17 with the ordinances of the Village of Northfield
18 and nothing in this special use shall be construed
19 as a waiver of any of those requirements.
- 20 9. Violation of any condition of this Special Use
21 Ordinance shall be cause to revoke said permit by
22 the Corporate Authorities upon 10 days proper
23 notice to the Petitioner. Alternatively, the
24 Village Manager shall have the right to assess
25 fines, not to exceed \$750 per violation, for
26 violation of this Special Use Ordinance. Such
27 assessment of fines may be appealed to the
28 Corporate Authorities by filing written notice of
29 appeal within three days of the assessment.
- 30 10. Changes in the project may only be made as follows:
- 31 A. Minor Field Changes. Minor changes in
32 locations or sizes shown on exhibits may
33 be approved, in writing, by the Director
34 of Community Development. Typically, a
35 minor field change will not involve a
36 percentage change greater than three
37 percent. However, not all changes of
38 less than three percent shall necessarily
39 be deemed to be minor. The determination
40 of the Director of Community Development
41 as to whether a change is a minor field
42 change shall be final.
- 43 B. Village Board Approved Changes. The
44 Village Board may approve, without
45 referral to the Plan & Zoning Commission,
46 such other changes as it believes are in
47 the best interest of the Village and
48 which do not involve changes in numbers

1 found in the text of the Ordinance and
 2 which do not have a substantial, direct
 3 impact on adjacent properties. The
 4 determination of the Village Board as to
 5 whether a requested change should be
 6 referred to the Plan & Zoning Commission
 7 shall be final.

8 **C. Changes Requiring a Public Hearing.** Any
 9 change involving a size, quantity or
 10 other numerical value found in the text
 11 of the Ordinance or any change having
 12 substantial, direct impact on adjacent
 13 properties shall not be made except after
 14 a public hearing before the Plan & Zoning
 15 Commission. Additionally, the Village
 16 Board or the Director of Community
 17 Development may refer requested change to
 18 the Plan & Zoning Commission for public
 19 hearing when either believes it would be
 20 in the best interest of the Village to do
 21 so.

22 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Is there a second?

23 COMMISSIONER BRANNIGAN: I'll second.

24 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: All those in favor?

25 (Chorus of ayes.)

26 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: All opposed?

27 (No response.)

28 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: The motion carries.

29 Congratulations, good luck! Glad to hear
 30 your building is fully occupied now, that's good news.

31 MR. SILVERMAN: Thank you for everyone's help
 32 over the past couple of years. It's a team effort.

33 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Would someone like to
 34 make a motion to adjourn?

35 COMMISSIONER ESTABROOKE: Motion to adjourn.

36 COMMISSIONER SUCHER: Second.

37 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Second.

38 All those in favor?

39 (Chorus of ayes.)

40 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: All opposed?

41 (No response.)

42 CHAIRMAN VASELOPULOS: Motion carries. Thank
 43 you and good night.

44 (Whereupon, at 7:17 p.m., the above
 45 meeting was concluded.)

46
 47
 48 APPROVED 9/5/23