

**NORTHFIELD ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
MEETING MINUTES OF May 22, 2023**

Members Present: Manuel Pimentel, Moris Boudreau, Richard Honer, Amy O'Hara, Karen Woodward
Staff: Stephanie Giovannucci, Jeane Samms

Chairman Pimentel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Introductions of the Board members were completed. Ch Pimentel made Ms. Woodward a member so she is able to vote tonight.

- **Minutes**

Boudreau/Pimentel moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 28, 2022 as written. **Motion Passed.**

- **Mark R. Hubbell** – Variance Application for Automotive repair/inspection station. Located at 269 Oak Hill Road, (Map R02 Lot 0059-001) on 6.574 acres in the Conservation Zone.

Mr. Hubbell explained that he currently owns an excavation business in Northfield, and he built a garage to accommodate his semi-trucks to perform necessary maintenance and repairs. His son Zack is a licensed state inspector and he works with Mr. Hubbell. Mr. Hubbell noted that the area has seen a decrease in available inspections stations (from 4 to 2). His business would not run full-time but would be available to nearby residents in his neighborhood. The variance is requested due to the possibility of repairs needing to be completed to have a vehicle pass inspection.

The Board asked how many customers he expects to use his facility? Reply, 2-3. Would there be an increase in traffic? Reply, No. The Board asked if any abutters were present to express their opinion. There were no abutters present.

Discussion was open to the public at 7:10 for comments. As there wasn't any discussion the public discussion was closed.

- **Criteria 1-5 were discussed.**

Criteria 1: It was found to be in line with public interest.

Criteria 2: It was agreed that the spirit of the ordinance was to protect ground water from illegal dumping of motor oil and Mr. Hubbell has clearly shown how he would dispose of used oil. Mr. Honer believes that the intent of the ordinance is to keep business out of the conservation/residential zone. It was agreed this variance was within the public interest.

Criteria 3: The variance would be beneficial to Hubbell's and the public as it provides a service.

Criteria 4: There would not be a business sign visible on the roadway and the garage is 500 feet from the entrance to the property.

Criteria 5: The property is currently used to perform maintenance/repairs to the company's trucks but to work on other vehicles, a variance is required. Mr. Honer pointed out that the zoning laws as they stand today create a hardship for people if they want to start a business.

Ms. Woodward's observations were discussed with concern, focusing on the possibility of the property selling and the new owner having carte blanche due a variance being approved tonight. She suggested limits on the number of tires that could be stored, a limit on the number of cars parked overnight, proper storage of the used oil, and a limit on how many service bays. Her concern was that the variance goes with the property so it would be possible for any type of garage to go on the property and the board would be unable to do anything because they approved a variance. Her recommendation is to set limitations/recommendations. Mrs. Giovannucci stated that Mr. Hubbell must go before the Planning Board with a minor site plan because the property is changing from residential-to-residential business. The limitations can be part of their approval stipulations.

- **Findings of Facts:**
 - **No junk yard**
 - **20 used tires maximum**
 - **No storage of more than 500 gallons of used oil**
 - **Retain size of current garage, no expansions**
 - **No long-term storage of customer vehicles**
 - **500 feet off road is a positive impact.**

Honer/Boudreau moved to approve variance with stipulations as recorded. **Motion passed.**

- **Appointing of Chair and Vice chair**

Boudreau/Honer moved to appoint Manuel Pimentel Chair. **Motion Passed.**

Honer/Pimentel moved to appoint Morris Boudreau Vice Chair. **Motion Passed.**

Mrs. Giovannucci stated that the new zoning ordinances are in their folders and suggested review the changes. Planning Board will be starting to review the Town's Master Plan and she suggested that the members look over the current master plan survey and pass on any suggestions to the Planning Board.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Minutes approved September 25, 2023