

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 18, 2008**

After a brief recess following the Work Session, this meeting was reconvened and called to order by Carol A. Raph, Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised according to Public Law '75 Chapter 231.

Present: Kern, Notaro, O'Grady, Vain, Zlotnick, Martinez.

Absent: Carew

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Vain, seconded by Councilor Notaro, to dispense with the reading of the minutes of March 4, 2008. They have been posted, distributed to Council and are on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office. All present in favor, motion carries.

Council President Martinez asked if there were any updates to the Committee Reports delivered by Council during the Work Session immediately preceding this meeting. Mayor Mazzeo delivered February's Police Report; there were 60 arrests, 705 motor vehicle stops, 268 traffic summonses, 43 motor vehicle crash reports, and 929 property checks.

ENGINEERS REPORT

The City Engineer's report was provided to Mayor and Council and is on file in the City Clerk's office. Updates to the report are as follows: reconstruction of Yorkshire, Wabash and Birch Grove Park Road began today and should be complete within 4-5 weeks. The bids on the Philmar Circle Storm Water Pump Station that have been tallied came in higher than the funds that are available and Doran recommends a meeting with Council and the CFO to discuss options. Council President Martinez announced that Councilor Carew expressed interest in participating in the review of this project, and invited any others to participate. Councilor Notaro volunteered and Mayor Mazzeo advised that he will attend discussions as well. There were no further updates to the Engineer's report. Councilor Vain inquired as to the differences between the base and alternate bids for the BGP Walkway; Doran advised that the base bid was for treated green lumber, and the alternate bid was for Trex, a composite decking material with a much longer lifespan. Doran's recommendation is to go with the Trex material if the funding is available. Vain also asked whether or not a caved section of Ridgewood and Sutton is on Doran's list for repair; Doran said it could be added.

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RESOLUTIONS/CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion of Councilor Kern, second of Councilor Zlotnick, all present in favor of a Consent Agenda for Resolutions 48-2008 through 56-2008 as follows:

- 48-2008** Release of Performance Bond for Edmunds and Associates
- 49-2008** Cancellation of Sewer Charge
- 50-2008** Resolution to Refund Building Permit Fee
- 51-2008** Resolution to Refund Overpayment of Mercantile License Fee
- 52-2008** Pipe Bursting at Revere Avenue & Bay Drive, Change Order No. 2
- 53-2008** Authorizing Expenditure of Funds for Litigation Relative to the Trump Tax Settlement
- 54-2008** Approve Installation of Street Light at W. Franklin and 1st Street
- 55-2008** Refund Overpayment of Taxes
- 56-2008** Cancellation of 2007 Tax Overpayments Under \$10.00

On a motion made by Kern, second of Zlotnick, all present in favor of adopting Resolutions 48-2008 through 56-2008.

Roll Call: Kern-yes, Notaro-yes, O'Grady-yes, Vain-yes, Zlotnick-yes, Martinez-yes.

ORDINANCE

On a motion of Councilor Kern, second of Councilor Vain, all in favor of reading Ordinance 1-2008 by title only.

- 1- 2008** Calendar Year 2008 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation limits and to Establish a Cap Bank
Introduction/No Public Input/Advertise in the Press 3/22/08

Roll Call: Kern-yes, Notaro-yes, O'Grady-yes, Vain-yes, Zlotnick-yes, Martinez-yes.

Absent: Carew

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PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilor O'Grady motioned, Councilor Kern seconded, for payment of bills in the amount of \$2,117,415.13. Councilor Kern and Councilor Vain announced their abstention from certain line items on the bill list. Copies are on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Roll Call: Kern-yes, Notaro-yes, O'Grady-yes, Vain-yes, Zlotnick-yes, Martinez-yes.

Motion carries for payment of bills.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Martinez opened this meeting to the public and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak.

Robert Webb of 218 West Revere Avenue came forward to inquire about road construction on Wabash Avenue between Cedarbridge and Yorkshire Avenues. City Engineer Doran replied that this is part of the curbing project that started today, as mentioned in the updates to the Engineer's Report. Webb asked if there were other curb areas being repaired, as he feels there are many in need of attention. Mayor Mazzeo advised that the repairs currently underway were part of a capital project. Webb also cautioned about the use of composite decking materials in very cold weather. He also asked Chief James if the bike patrol would be reinstituted on the bike path during summer months; Chief James advised that it will.

Jim O'Neill of 7 Cara Court came forward to inquire of Council President Martinez as to what additional methods are being explored to bring additional revenues into the City. Martinez stated that this is a challenge but is nonetheless a frequent topic of discussion. By way of example, during budget meetings he met with the Library Board about opening up the maintenance agreement as a way to bring money into the City. Mayor Mazzeo added that he is on the Planning/Zoning Board and he had a conversation with Councilor Notaro and then with Planning Board Chairman Levitt about the area between New Road and Tilton Road on Northfield Avenue; half of this stretch is zoned as office professional and by possibly making it a business district may increase ratables for the City. O'Neill explained that he's done research into the commercial tax records of Linwood, Northfield and Somers Point and found that Linwood's top ten ratables are assessed at a much higher value than the top 10 in Northfield. He also found that the average commercial property in Northfield is paying \$99-\$125,000 per acre; in Linwood it costs 300% more. He is asking for a commercial revaluation in order to reduce the tax burden on residential taxpayers,

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seniors in particular as they do not utilize as many City services as families with young children. Councilor Zlotnick advised that, generally speaking, real estate values in Linwood, whether commercial or residential, are higher than the neighboring communities of Somers Point and Northfield. Mayor Mazzeo cautioned O'Neill that it is not legally permissible to target one property type for a revaluation; a revaluation must include all properties city-wide and as stated previously by Council, the process is underway but it is a lengthy one. CFO Marilyn Dolcy confirmed that the Mayor's assertion was correct. O'Neill expressed concern that families will be priced-out of Northfield if the revaluation occurs after the next wave of casino development causes an increase in local real estate values. He stated that information he obtained from the Atlantic County Sheriff's Department indicates that real estate foreclosures in Northfield have increased by 300% in the last 6 months. He added that he is a business owner in Linwood, and does not feel that Northfield's commercial properties are properly assessed. He strongly urges Council to pursue a revaluation immediately, or hold off entirely until real estate prices stabilize in the period following the next wave of casino expansion.

Frank Perri of 7 Haddon Avenue came forward and stated that he while he agrees with O'Neill that the City must do a revaluation, he doesn't want business owners to be forced out of Northfield as a result. He stated that he has been a Northfield business owner for 32 years and that commercial business don't use many City services. They do, however, pay additional fees that are not reflected in the tax rate, such as the mercantile license fee that add to the cost of doing business, and he feels that Northfield businesses are doing their fair share.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak, Council President Martinez closed the public session.

Councilor Kern asked Mayor Mazzeo if he has had any response from the state regarding the intersection at Tilton and New Roads, the location of the former Northfield News. Mayor Mazzeo replied that he has not, but directed Doran Engineering to follow up.

Councilman O'Grady read the meeting notices. The next Council Work Session will be held on April 8, 2008 at 7:00 pm, with the Regular Session immediately following. School Board Election will be held on April 15, 2008, from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Northfield Community School.

On motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Raph, RMC/CMC