

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 8, 2008**

This meeting was called to order by Carol A. Raph, Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised according to Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

The flag salute was led by Mayor Vincent Mazzeo. Following the flag salute, there was a moment of silence to recognize Northfield residents and their family members serving in the Armed Forces; may they come home safely.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Carew

AGENDA REVIEW

Council President Martinez reviewed the agenda and announced that the Northfield Community School budget presentation slated for 7:15pm has been moved to 7:30pm at the request of school personnel.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Zlotnick advised that the Rescue Squad Report included a total of 81 calls in the month of March. Mutual aid provided by Northfield: 1 to Linwood, and 1 to Egg Harbor Township. Final changes to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Rescue Squad and the City of Northfield were made and copies were placed in Council mailboxes on April 3rd; motion by Zlotnick, 2nd by O'Grady to have Council vote on the Memorandum at this meeting. Councilman Vain noted that he got the updated Memorandum today and would like additional time to review the changes. City Solicitor Scheffler said that the Memorandum is not a lengthy document and the revisions are minor; if Vain is familiar with the original document it should not take long to review the final version. Scheffler continued by delivering an update of the changes. Councilman Notaro suggested that Vain review the changes during the break between this evening's work and regular Council sessions. Motion by Notaro, 2nd by Zlotnick to table Council's vote during the work session, and resume during the public session. All present in favor, motion carries.

As requested at the last Council meeting, Councilman Notaro and City Engineer Doran have done research regarding renewable energy sources for the City of Northfield. Notaro said that there are a few different programs available and that the next step would be to perform an audit process to identify which program would best suit the City's needs. Such an audit would outline current energy usage, possible savings over a period of time, and types of grant funding available for energy savings programs. Doran advised that this type of audit typically costs between \$1,000 and

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\$1,500; Mayor Mazzeo noted that the City's budget is just being introduced this evening, and we will be working within financial constraints. As such, Doran will begin work on the proposal stage only and secure an exact quote for costs of an energy audit.

On March 27th, Councilman Vain and President Martinez met with the Library Board to discuss reopening the Maintenance Agreement. Vain said that after much discussion, the Library Board has decided to wait for the outcome of the Moriarty Bill, a piece of pending legislation which would allow the Board to transfer surplus funds to the City of Northfield for tax relief under certain conditions. The Bill has passed both Houses and is awaiting action from Governor Corzine. The next meeting of the Library Board is Thursday, April 10th. Vain also attended the All Sports meeting on February 13th; issues discussed included parking near the football snack bar, and requests for signage. This information was forwarded to Councilman Notaro as liaison for the Public Works department. Vain also asked Solicitor Scheffler for an update on Burton Avenue Estates. Scheffler said he gave Doran a copy of a proposal from Ira Trocki to make the necessary repairs in this development. A meeting will be scheduled between John Pace, Trocki, and Doran, at Scheffler's office, to resolve the issue; Notaro and Vain will attend as well. Scheffler added that Pace did suggest that he is willing to do whatever the City engineer recommends to fix the problem, however if a resolution is not possible Scheffler said the City may have to pull the performance Bonds and pursue another course of action

Councilwoman Kern offered the Fire Department's report for the month of March: total fire incidents: 19; mutual aid: 2; total EMS incidents: 27; assist with ambulance transport: 0; total non emergency response: 5; number of personnel responding: 207. The City's old Fire Truck has not been sold as of yet; selling it on EBay is being explored. Last weekend was opening day of trout season at Birch Grove Park; Kern attended and commended park Supervisor Vicky Rutter for doing an excellent job opening the park for the season. Congratulations to George and Carolyn Bucci for the outstanding job they did organizing the day's fishing events. Last Saturday also marked opening day for Little League. Thanks were extended to the coaches and all volunteers for their efforts. On Friday, April 18th there will be a dinner commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Atlantic County League of Municipalities. City Clerk Carol Raph has been very involved in League activities for a number of years, and Kern encouraged Council members to attend the dinner to support Carol and the League of Municipalities.

Councilman O'Grady provided an update on the sale of the Fire Truck on EBay. There is certain protocol involved when a municipality desires to sell surplus property in this manner, and local governments must apply for state permission.

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O'Grady contacted DCA and was advised by a Mr. Kaminski that a streamlined procedure should be implemented within the next month or so. O'Grady will follow up and ensure that efforts to sell the truck are continued. Progress is being made on technology improvements, with the installation of the Police Department's newly rebuilt file server and the City Hall file server both complete. Regular file back-ups are being successfully performed, and the fire-walls have been replaced as well. O'Grady thanked Steve Vain, Northfield Community School teacher and City Councilman, for the input provided by his students for the 'about Northfield' section of cityofnorthfield.org. This section of the site is called "A Short History of Northfield", and he extended his appreciation to the students and Historical Society. He encourages everyone to view this section of the site. O'Grady also addressed the concerns expressed by Jim O'Neill at the last Council meeting with regard to minutes of City meetings not being available on the City website. As stated previously this was an oversight, but O'Grady is working with Atlantic County to have the Council Meeting minutes fully restored, as the County maintains a back-up of our site. He added that hard copies are also available in the City Clerk's Office.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Last week Mayor Mazzeo attended a presentation at Linwood City Hall about a proposed aviation research and development park to be built in Egg Harbor Township. When completed the park will have 2000 employees and will provide economic benefit to Northfield and surrounding communities. The major stumbling block appears to be related to state-funded financial support of the project, however they are moving forward and hope to break ground in 18 months. Mazzeo received a letter from County Executive Dennis Levinson noting a reduction in the County General Purpose Tax for Northfield residents; a house assessed at \$100,000 will realize a decrease of \$21.00. The County has also advised that paving will begin shortly from the new intersection of Tilton Road, up to Shore Road. Mazzeo said that Chief James has the drawings outlining specific details. The City has reached a tentative agreement with the White Collar/Blue Collar Supervisor's Union, and City Labor Attorney Larry Pepper will be in attendance at the next Council Meeting to discuss the agreement. Organization of the Memorial Day Parade has begun. Historically, the Mayor of Northfield has Chaired this event and Mazzeo will be doing so this year; he welcomes any input from Council. Mazzeo concluded the Mayor's report by noting that there were vehicle safety checkpoints on March 28th and April 5th, with a total of 166 safety stops.

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NORTHFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOL 2008-2009 BUDGET PRESENTATION

School Superintendent Dr. Richard Stepura and Northfield School Board Administrator Linda Albright presented the proposed 2008-2009 budget for Northfield Community School, and responded to questions from the Mayor and Council. A copy of the proposal is on file in the Northfield Community School Board office.

President Martinez opened this meeting to the public to discuss any items that were covered at this session.

Jim O'Neill of 7 Cara Court addressed Council, emphasizing the need for open government by stating that the minutes of City meetings are a way for average citizens to find out what is going on in their town. He stated that some of the minutes from the Planning Board have been removed from cityofnorthfield.org. Councilman O'Grady responded to O'Neill's concern, stating that all meeting notices and minutes for the Planning Board are on the city website from April 2005 through February 2008. March's minutes have not yet been posted, but will be shortly. O'Neill was asked if there were specific dates prior to April 2005 that he was interested in, and responded that there are dates for which meeting minutes were posted that are no longer there. He will provide a list of these dates to O'Grady. O'Neill suggested that Council carefully review the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Rescue Squad, and said he felt that the public should be invited to attend any meetings where it is discussed.

Thomas Boyd of 117 Northfield Avenue stepped forward, announcing that he was in attendance this evening with Marian Mitchell of 1253 Zion Road. Boyd said he recently spoke with Councilman O'Grady, and then with Mayor Mazzeo about 1257 Zion Road, a property that has fallen into a state of disrepair after the former residents abandoned the home. Boyd also wrote a letter to Mayor Mazzeo summarizing his concerns and recommendations and those of his neighbors. Boyd's letter suggested that the City apply for funds through a Community Development Block Grant; the City could apply for spot blight abatement, permissible under grant guidelines, and because of the proximity of the property to the bike path, perhaps create a small park in its place. Boyd continued by complimenting Zoning Officer Mike Dattalo for his prior efforts at ensuring the property was properly maintained. Boyd said Dattalo did send a letter notifying the owner of deficiencies, but the home is currently slated for sale at a Sheriff's auction. Boyd continued by saying that if no one buys the property, that it will continue to decline, and that is the prime concern of area residents. He added that this is the 2nd time that this particular property has been abandoned and allowed to deteriorate in the past 25 years. Councilman O'Grady responded to Boyd, saying that he saw the property in question and that the

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City understands and appreciates the concerns of the surrounding residents. O'Grady said that Housing and Zoning Official Dattalo told him that a letter was also to Balsley Losco, the custodian/listing agents for the property, advising them of violations that were identified. The current owners are gone, the house is up for auction and the home may be owned by a bank within the next 30 days. The best course of action may be to pursue remedy with the new owners/bank when title transfers in a month or so. Council President Martinez assured Boyd that this issue will receive ongoing attention and that we will continue to communicate with him as developments occur. Mayor Mazzeo noted that we are in Round 9 for open space funds allocation for 2008, but that perhaps we can pursue it next year. He thanked Boyd for bringing the situation to the attention of City Council.

Frank Perri of 7 Haddon Avenue, as President of the Northfield Rescue Squad Incorporated, came forward and announced that the specific changes to the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Northfield and the Rescue Squad were as follows: Item #6 - how the payments are going to be made in this calendar year and possibly a reduction of \$20,000; Item #10 was added – for a period of one year the agreement can be terminated by written notice of either party within 60 days. These are the only changes to the draft created by Solicitor Scheffler last month. Perri stated that negotiations have been ongoing since August 2007; this issue has been discussed at Council, and that he himself has provided testimony. He complimented Councilwoman Zlotnick for her efforts on this project, and congratulated members of the squad who are now state certified. He stressed the importance of this issue to the community, and said he would like to see Council vote on and pass this Memorandum tonight.

Seeing no one else from the public wishing to speak, the work session portion of the meeting was closed.

Council President Martinez called for a brief recess before reconvening for the Regular Session of Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Raph, RMC/CMC