

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2005**

This meeting was called to order by Joan P. Forcella, Deputy Municipal Clerk. It was properly advertised under Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

ROLL CALL: Carew, Kauffman, Kern, Martinez, Mazzeo, Turon, Gerber

Solicitor Keith Bonchi, Engineer Edward Stinson of Doran Engineering, and City Administrator Jeffrey Bruckler were present.

Council President Gerber reviewed the agenda.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Turon had no report for the Work Session.

Councilman Martinez, referring to a letter received from Richard Stevens regarding the City Garage, gave an overview of content and Mr. Stevens' findings that the building was structurally sound and in need of normal maintenance. In view of differences of opinion related to the condition of the building, Martinez is requesting an additional opinion due to the range of opinions being from sound to condemnable, and expressed concerns for safety. There was a brief discussion following additional questions and comments from Councilman Kauffman. Martinez said he had been to the site, agreed that work is required, but could not attest to the \$2,000,000 cost.

Councilman Martinez gave the Northfield Rescue Squad report for the month of January. Total call – 97; total mutual aid provided by Northfield: EHT – 1; total mutual aid provided for Northfield: Linwood – 1, Pleasantville – 1; total Fire Department assists – 3; top five run takers: Ray Norman – 17, Dan Blaine – 12, Heather Newbert – 10, Ray E. Adams – 9, Barry Kraus – 9.

Councilman Martinez recognized the EMT's who volunteered from Egg Harbor Twp. to cover the City during the Annual Rescue Squad Dinner on January 29th, and he thanked Chief Bill Jenkins and partners Melissa Newsome and Chris Heacock. Martinez reported that EHT took two calls back to back. He added, Chief Perri and the Rescue Squad would like to invite the volunteers to a future Council Meeting and recognize them for their efforts.

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Councilman Mazzeo reported on the Budget Meetings and thanked the attendees. Mazzeo mentioned the decrease in revenues and increase in appropriations, with major expenditure increases in Workers' Compensation Insurance (26%), insurance (12%) and contractual expense. He added that reductions were made in legal fee appropriations and the Police Department budget. A 6.5 cent increase is projected.

Councilman Mazzeo reported a Five Year Plan had been put in place. 2005 Capital Projects include street improvements, AllSports fields and various storm improvements. Future Capital Meetings will be scheduled for August and September to plan for the coming year. Mazzeo expressed concerns regarding the City debt.

Councilman Carew addressed the Capital Project for AllSports, which includes the football and practice fields. Carew sees 2005 as a year of closure for AllSports projects. Carew brought attention to the list of 2005 Birch Grove Park Advisory Board Appointments, which will be adopted by Proclamation in the Regular Session. He added that the Advisory Board met with Engineer Stinson who presented prints of the Park drainage project. The Board meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the trailer at Birch Grove Park and Carew invited all to attend.

Councilman Kauffman referred to an evaluation of the Public Works Building he had prepared a couple months ago and presented an overview of the County Share Program Grant, Resolution 29-2005. The Grant, in the amount of \$20,000, for a feasibility study of the public works facilities would require local matching funds of \$10,000 as the City's contribution to the project.

Councilwoman Kern reported on the 100th Birthday Celebration. The Centennial Committee meets the last Monday of each month at City Hall, 7:30 p.m. Kern extended an invitation for all to join them. The Committee expressed their thanks to everyone purchasing the Centennial Book. Over 1000 copies have been sold and sales are continuing.

In response to a request by Councilman Kauffman, Kern took the City Flag to the Cultural Committee Meeting to research. The Committee enthusiastically began working on the project which also includes researching the Seal. Kern will report any findings as soon as they are received from the Committee. The Cultural Committee is planning a garage sale to be held on March 19th, and any donations would be greatly appreciated.

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Councilwoman Kern, together with Council Members Carew and Turon, attended a facilities meeting at the Northfield Community School. Redoing some of the school fields was discussed and the possibility of AllSports using the fields was presented by the attending Council Members. The School will keep Council Members informed on the project.

Council President Gerber thanked CFO Dolcy and Administrator Bruckler for their hard work on the City budget. He recognized the City has an image to uphold, and that the Budget Committee would do the best that could be done with the dollars they have. Gerber stated the hard work, good government and common goal of the Governing Body created pride in the Northfield community. He said discussions would continue for ways to reduce costs while providing a good level of service which the residents deserve and expect to have, and, at the same time, maintaining a stable tax base.

The Council Members recognized and congratulated the Rescue Squad, expressing thanks for being included at their Annual Dinner.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Perri thanked Administrator Bruckler and CFO Dolcy for a fine job during the budget process. Perri mentioned the reduction of help from the State at a time when City expenditures continue to increase, and saw elimination of services or employees as the only option to lower the budget. He said he was not opposed to a reduction or freeze in capital expenditures.

Mayor Perri questioned Administrator Bruckler on the EHT Service Agreement. Bruckler responded that the original amount of \$68,000 had been increased by \$4,000 to a total of \$72,000 due to additional assessment because the bids came in higher.

Mayor Perri reported that EHT impact fees, originally set at \$1,500, were increased to \$5,000 and are supported by the builders group. Perri referred to correspondence dated February 7, 2005 from attorney Jeffrey D. Light, pertaining to a Special Tax Levy for Preservation of Open Space. Solicitor Bonchi responded to the question of introducing the question to Northfield Voters. Bonchi noted differences between the Township and City of Northfield, and President Gerber added the general consensus of the Governing Body was to move forward with it on the Planning Board Master Plan issue. Mayor Perri is in the process of contacting Mr. Light to schedule a meeting regarding the Master Plan.

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Mayor Perri reported that the Atlantic County Health Department Human Services has put together a public health reserve corps and are looking for volunteers to help in times of a public health emergency. Brochures are available.

Mayor Perri addressed putting a public question on the ballots for the open space issue. Perri requested meeting with Administrator Bruckler and Council President Gerber. The February 7, 2005 correspondence from Jeffrey Light will be copied to the Governing Body.

Mayor Perri requested a meeting with Solicitor Bonchi regarding issues discussed during the budget work sessions and getting a binding contract with the Library, reflecting City obligations. Solicitor Bonchi will meet with Administrator Bruckler to discuss the issue and prepare the agreement, which would then need to be approved by Council.

Bruckler responded to Mayor Perri that no County tax rate had been received to date.

Mayor Perri reported a copy of the PBA contract, endorsed by the members and President, was received, and looks forward to finalizing it by the end of the month.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Ed Stinson of Doran Engineering reported the City had received \$145,000 through the Municipal Aid Program for the Roosevelt Avenue project. Stinson asked Council for direction on which end of Roosevelt Avenue should be started first. He recommended beginning with New Road and head toward Shore Road, completing as much as possible with the funds received. Discussion followed, with a final consensus to accept the recommendation of Engineer Stinson. Stinson also indicated that the application for 2006 municipal aid is due the beginning of April 2005 and he suggested this year's application be the continuation of the Roosevelt Avenue project. Council President Gerber called for a voice vote: Turon-yes, Martinez-yes, Mazzeo-yes, Carew-yes, Kauffman-yes, Kern-yes, Gerber-yes, Mayor Perri-yes.

Engineer Stinson reported receiving a road opening request from New Jersey American Water for water service to #7 Dani Drive. Doran Engineering denied the original request and suggested service be connected to the main on Nugent Terrace. The water company advised Nugent Terrace is a private drive and the easement does not permit the work required for #7 Dani Drive. The water company has re-applied for a permit to open Dani Drive, agreeing to provide infrared restoration on the asphalt patch. Council President Gerber yielded to Solicitor Bonchi regarding the matter. Bonchi will gather the facts and provide a legal response to Council. Mayor

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Perri referred to the infrared agreement by NJAW for Burton Avenue and the fact that the contractor has not complied. Council President Gerber recommended not issuing approval for #7 Dani Drive until Burton Avenue has been completed. Solicitor Bonchi will contact NJAW regarding this issue accordingly.

Mayor Perri referred to a letter dated February 8, 2005, addressed to Solicitor Bonchi, regarding the development on Mill Road tying into the City of Northfield sewer system, for which he recalled there being a moratorium. Solicitor Bonchi responded that he had met with Administrator Bruckler and discussed the issues. Additionally, the EHT engineer had faxed a letter that included a plan that would maintain the infrastructure. Solicitor Bonchi determined the issue to be more complicated than what was presented in the EHT letter. His recommendation to the Administrator was to look at the plans in EHT and report back in order to have a comprehensive understanding of construction plans, traffic volume and the design to accommodate it and any additional concerns. Discussion of the project, general concerns, cost and impact on the City of Northfield followed.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Jeffrey Bruckler mentioned the budget sessions, thanked CFO Dolcy and assured Council he will continue to look for new funding sources, grants, ways to reduce spending and new revenue wherever possible. He reported meeting with the ACIA and the City of Northfield is eligible for \$32,000 in Community Development Block Grants, funding for ADA curb cuts or other projects. Bruckler will be meeting with the Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development concerning the State's municipal storm water issues. He reviewed the topics to be discussed at that meeting.

With regard to the PBA contract, Bruckler stated the City Labor Attorney is currently reviewing it, and he anticipates having the contract back the week of February 14th.

PUBLIC SESSION/3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER

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Council President Gerber opened this meeting to the public and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. Seeing no one, the Public Session was closed.

Motion to adjourn by Carew, seconded by Kauffman, all in favor, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan P. Forcella
Deputy Municipal Clerk