

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
AUGUST 12, 2025

At 6:02pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2025, and in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Chau led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilwoman Carfagno Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Kern; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Polistina; Councilman Smith; Council President Bucci.

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Mauro and Chief VonColln were also present.

6PM – MIKE BONGIORNO – VETERAN ADVOCATE

Mayor Chau introduced Mike Bongiorno, Veterans Advocate.

Mr. Bongiorno announced that he was Chairman of the Atlantic County Advisory Board and several other Veterans boards as well. In remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, a replica of the Vietnam War Memorial Wall will be on display at Atlantic Cape Community College on September 16th, it will be escorted by the American Legion Riders and others, there will be a ceremony following. He offered to distribute flyers. The main ceremony will be on September 17th, and it will be the last Department of Defense event in remembrance of this occasion. The Veterans who did not go to Vietnam, but served, will be honored as well, as will survivors of those we lost in the era from 1955-1975. The County has agreed to print certificates for them. They will be giving out close to 2,000 pins to veterans, he asked all to attend and support. There will also be a wreath laying ceremony at the replica of the Wall. He offered to answer any questions.

Mayor Chau read the following proclamation and presented to Mr. Bongiorno.

WHEREAS, throughout the history of our Great City, State and Nation, countless courageous men and women have bravely answered the call to patriotic duty; and

WHEREAS, it is our duty to honor the thousands of men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces who risked their lives and sacrificed years away from their families; and

WHEREAS, we must also remember and pay tribute to the 58,000 American service members who lost their lives while protecting our great nation, and the 1,600 service members who are still missing in action; and

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WHEREAS, throughout the period of the Vietnam War, the Vietnam Veterans of America estimated a total of 1,487 Americans from New Jersey died in the Vietnam War, 50 of them from Atlantic County, 8 of those were Northfield residents; and

WHEREAS, the year 2025 marks the 50th Anniversary of the end of American military combat involvement in Vietnam, the City of Northfield wishes to express sincere gratitude toward the devotion, courage, and loyalty to those who served and honor their families sacrifices on behalf of our City and Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the City of Northfield wishes to acknowledge and Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that I, Erland V. L. Chau, Mayor of the City of Northfield, County of Atlantic, State of New Jersey, do hereby acknowledge and Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, on this 12th day of August 2025.

Mr. Bongiorno thanked Mayor and Council. He advised that Northfield and Egg Harbor Township (EHT) are the only towns that have responded to him and invited him to speak, he added that EHT did but said he is from EHT. He added that he would display the proclamation at the event but will return it to Northfield so it can be displayed at City Hall. He distributed a flyer with the schedule of events.

Seeing no further questions or comments, Council President Bucci moved to committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Polistina – Finance and Collections; Library; Municipal Alliance; Senior Citizens; Affordable Housing

Councilman Polistina announced there was library meeting this week, he would be discussing the library agreement with them. He announced upcoming Alliance events: bike safety course on September 20th and Trunk or Treat on October 4th. Sign-up sheets were forthcoming on the City website. He was working to set up a senior meeting for end of August or beginning of September, with the County Clerk, Sheriff, and Surrogate, who will all speak regarding senior issues. Regarding affordable housing, meetings continue and the Engineer would be reporting on the Dolphin Avenue project.

Councilman Dewees – Buildings/Grounds, Athletic Fields; Birch Grove Park, Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park; Public Works: Roads, Engineering; Sanitary Sewer Operations

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Councilman Dewees did not have a report.

Councilwoman Kern – Northfield Sports (FAN)

Councilwoman Kern reported that cheer and football practices have begun and scrimmages were coming up soon; August 20th in Linwood and August 27th in Northfield, the first regular season game is September 21st in Northfield. She asked all to please come out and support the Cardinals. Regarding National Night Out, it was a great night, she thanked the Police Department and the Clerk's Office for everything they did.

Councilwoman Bucci – Insurance and Safety; Planning Board; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilwoman Bucci announced it was the biggest National Night Out ever, thank you to everyone involved. For the Economic Development Commission, the Chairman, Michael Grossman, and she had a meeting with Triad regarding redevelopment for Tilton Road. They've decided best way is to partner with Egg Harbor Township. The redevelopment plan would run from Fire Road to the bridge.

Councilman Smith - Central Municipal Court; Little League and Babe Ruth; Northfield Community School; Shared Services

Councilman Smith reported that volunteers were still working on the frisbee golf course. The designer was looking for a Spring reveal, which may work well with plans for the 250th anniversary; Councilwoman Carfagno would comment further. Councilman Smith did reach out to Linwood's Mayor Matik about possibly partnering with them.

Councilwoman Carfagno - Fire Department / EMS; Technology / MRHS Channel; Cultural Committee / Veteran Liaison; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Carfagno stated the next Mainland Board of Education meeting was scheduled for August 18th. She had a follow-up meeting with the Cultural Committee regarding the Connolly Mile, 4th of July Parade, and 250th anniversary celebration. Members were needed for the Cultural Committee, contact Councilwoman Carfagno if interested. She announced the search for 1st baby for January 2026. Hometown Hero banners are up and look amazing, she thanked Public Works. She had a few photos taken with family members that she'll share. She hoped we could fill up the entire bike path. She read the Fire and EMS reports for July. Members continue to train on the ladder truck, with 192 hours in July alone. She thanked all for National Night Out, it was amazing. She loved living in Northfield and seeing everyone out there including first responders.

Solicitor Facenda suggested reaching out to Mr. Bongiorno regarding the banners.

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Councilwoman Carfagno replied that she would and said she had also spoken with Mark Doherty. She noted there were banner applications on the table tonight.

Councilman Notaro – Sanitary Sewer Operations; Inspections, Housing/Zoning.

Councilman Notaro echoed prior sentiments about National Night Out, he thanked the Municipal Alliance. He recognized the passing of former Mayor William Felton and offered condolences to his family. Briefly, regarding e-bikes, he shared that BA/Clerk Canesi had sent us information about proposed legislation. He believed we should look locally at use on our Bike Path and in Birch Grove Park; he himself had a near miss with a rider recently. It's only a matter of time.

Mayor Chau noted we've already had an accident where a rider collided with a Mercedes.

Councilman Notaro appreciated the efforts of the Police Department, with the coupons, it helps but we need something more stringent.

Council President Bucci moved to ad hoc committee reports.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Special Events Ordinance – *Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Dewees.*

Councilwoman Bucci reported the special event ordinance had been distributed to Council for review, it was slated for introduction on September 2nd. It would be reviewed by Clerk Canesi and labor counsel.

Road Opening Ordinance / Remaining Proposed Amendments – *Councilmen Dewees and Notaro.*

Councilwoman Bucci noted the special event ordinance took precedence over the road opening ordinance, but we should have that for the next meeting.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

There were none.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

No new grant opportunities were mentioned.

- Draft of Amendment to Property Maintenance Ordinances – *Councilman Notaro*

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Councilman Notaro announced that last week Clerk Canesi had emailed the governing body draft versions of two proposed ordinances. These ordinances propose changes to the City's property maintenance standards, were requested by the Code Enforcement Officer, to the permit process for driveways and fences, as requested by the Zoning Officer. These changes were requested by the involved departments and he believes they will be of a benefit to our community and better enable these individuals to do their jobs.

Hopefully everyone has had an opportunity to review these proposed changes, he would like to request that both ordinances be placed on the September 2nd meeting agenda for introduction.

Council President Bucci asked if there were any objections. She and Mayor Chau met with Code Enforcement Officer Chris Prychka last month.

Seeing no objections, Councilwoman Bucci advised the ordinance would be on the September 2nd Council meeting agenda.

- Future Amendment to Bulk Waste Collection Rules – *Councilman Notaro*

Councilman Notaro advised that our contract with the Atlantic County Utilities Authority for solid waste collection will expire in April of 2026; in preparation for that renewal, we have been meeting with the ACUA to explore all options for reducing the associated costs to our taxpayers. Accordingly, we will be reviewing our solid waste collection rules as set forth in the City's ordinances for any potential savings opportunities. He would keep the Council updated as meetings continue.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Bucci reviewed the agenda and made the assignments.

Solicitor Facenda noted an amendment to Resolution 183-2025, there was a typo, it should say South State in the 4th 'whereas' not AE Stone.

Council President Bucci also advised all that the consent agenda will end with Resolution 193-2025. Resolutions 194-2025 and 195-2025 would not be moved tonight.

PUBLIC SESSION / FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Bucci opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject, she asked that all persons state their name and city of residence for the record and observe the five-minute limit per speaker.

Jessica Saxton, said she is a civil rights advocate from Washington DC, and was

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providing a public notice regarding the Constitution. The state's laws cannot supersede the Constitution. New Jersey has enacted a law that is illegal that violates the 5th amendment, stating "No person should be held to answer for a capital or otherwise infamous crime unless on presentment or indictment by a Grand Jury". Regarding family court, she drew attention to Supreme Court ruling *Roberts v United States Jaycees* from 1984, she believed laws incentivize removing children from their families and homes. The 14th amendment protects children and families. We are paying our law enforcement officers to violate the law when we pay them to remove them from their families based on a CPS allegation. She was here to make public officials aware that Northfield cannot continue to pay officers and officials to violate the law.

Mayor Chau asked, did you say it has happened in Northfield?

Ms Saxon replied yes, she has 1,200 parents nationwide and several here in this city and in this county.

Tanawah Downing, civil rights attorney, said he has 2,800 affidavits on behalf of victims in New Jersey who have been charged improperly. Where people can be charged criminally, New Jersey allows charges to be filed based on information, as opposed to indictment, which is illegal. Information is not an indictment. We must recognize the power of the Constitution. The affidavits identify two crimes: deprivation of rights and conspiracy to deprive someone of their rights. He was here to notify the Council, on the record, that they are paying for constitutional violations to occur. He knew Council would ask their attorney if this were true, and he will say not really. He urged that Council does not rely on this and not to rely on judge-made rulings. He was not trying to change law but was pointing out what the law states and was asking that it be upheld. He thanked Council.

Mr. Downing provided Clerk Canesi with a notice that he advised he'd like to put on record; the notice has been attached to these minutes as 'Exhibit A'.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Council President Bucci closed the public session.

At 6:45pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk