

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

At 6:04pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 9, 2021, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), and N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.1 - 1.7, this meeting will be held in-person and as a remote public meeting (live-streamed) using Zoom conferencing service. Due to social distancing requirements related to Covid-19, there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public. Visit the event calendar page for February 2, 2021 at www.cityofnorthfield.org to determine current seating availability. Face coverings and social distancing will be required for in-person attendance. To reserve an available seat, contact the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 609-641-2832, ext 125, no later than 2:00pm on February 2, 2021. Once all available seats have been reserved, virtual attendance will be required using a web-browser to Join the Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89556566769> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13017158592,,89556566769# or direct dial +1 301 715 8592 using Meeting ID: 895 5656 6769. For those wishing to comment during the dedicated public comment portion of the meeting, but who may be unable to attend (in person or via Zoom), public comments may also be submitted in advance via email to mcanesi@cityofnorthfield.org or by written letter to the Office of the Municipal Clerk, 1600 Shore Road, Northfield NJ 08225, or by hand delivery to the drop box in the parking lot at the south corner of the municipal building, addressed to the attention of the Municipal Clerk. Comments shall contain the name and address of the author, will be read aloud and addressed during the remote public meeting, and must be received by 2:00pm on February 2, 2021.

Municipal Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“Due to social distancing requirements related to Covid-19, there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public this evening. For this reason, this meeting is also being presented simultaneously as a remote public meeting, live-streamed, using Zoom conferencing service, and in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Orders and the Open Public Meetings Act. Zoom meeting participants can dial in by telephone and listen to the proceedings, or they can access the meeting using a web-browser, and be able to view and listen. Instructions on how members of the public could reserve one of the limited seats, as well as how they can access Zoom have been made available on the municipal website and were published in the Press of Atlantic City. The full text of the public meeting notice has been posted at the entrance to the municipal building and includes Zoom instructions, information on where to find the meeting agenda and relevant documents, as well as instructions on how members of the public could submit comments in advance of tonight’s meeting. For those participating via Zoom, all participants will be ‘muted’ upon entry to the meeting. Web-browser participants will not be able to share their screens or see the camera-view of anyone other than the host, which is the City of Northfield. Zoom participants wishing to exercise their right to participate during the public comment portion of the meeting should wait until the specific announcement is made

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to open the public comment period. At this time, one by one, any telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. For web-browser participants, comments or questions may be submitted via the chat function and will not be acknowledged outside of the designated public-comment portion of the meeting; chat-users must also provide his/her name and address for the record in order to be heard. Any written comments submitted in advance will be read aloud and addressed during the public comment portion of the meeting.”

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Council Pro-Tempore Dewees.

ROLL CALL

Present (in person): Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Madden; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Perri; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina

Present (via zoom): Mayor Chau

Solicitor Facenda and Engineer Nassar was also in attendance. Chief Newman was present via Zoom.

Council President Polistina moved to committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Perri– Public Works: Roads, Engineering, Sewer Operations; Senior Citizens

Councilman Perri reported that he met with Superintendent Vitale of Public Works to discuss issues including flows and other system infrastructure concerns and equipment. He would make recommendations to Council. Councilman Perri did not have a report for the Senior Committee. He received a complaint from 501 Maple regarding widening of street, he had been discussing with Engineer Nassar.

Councilman Utts - Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning, Technology / MRHS Channel; Planning Board

Councilman Utts had no report this evening.

Councilman Notaro - Fire Department/EMS; Northfield Sports (FAN); Cultural Committee / Veteran Liaison; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

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Councilman Notaro met with Captain Nixon and Deputy Chief Goodman, they arranged a meeting for next week along with Councilwoman Madden to go over details of the organization and to get to know each other. He attended a FAN meeting; they are looking for volunteers. They have some projects they'd like to do down the road and we can discuss those later. Roy Clark from the Cultural Committee would like to get together, starting next month, to discuss resumption of events, including the 4th of July Parade. Regarding Veterans, he spoke with Marco Polo Smigliani. Mr. Smigliani had a program called Purple Heart Way. Councilman Notaro would be presenting a resolution to designate a portion of Oak Avenue as Purple Heart Way.

Councilman Dewees - Buildings/Grounds, Athletic Fields; Birch Grove Park, Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park

Councilman Dewees reported that the replacement poles for the Bike Path have been delivered and will be installed soon. The street light at the First Street Playground had been repaired.

Councilman Smith - Court / Violations; Little League and Babe Ruth, Northfield Community School; Shared Services

Councilman Smith reported that Northfield Little League continues their registration for baseball and softball. There were no fees required at this time, they were using credit from fees paid last year. Northfield Community School was back in session; Councilman Smith attended the Board of Education meeting last Monday. Councilman Smith informed them of the CARES funding we received; he told them we were committed to providing the service of Crossing Guards for the balance of this school year, but the next school year would have to be discussed. They were appreciative. The school was remote today because of the weather, we were notified last night.

Councilwoman Madden – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden had nothing to report for Insurance and Safety, the next meeting was February 18th. The next Board of Education meeting for Mainland would be on February 16th. She mentioned to the MRHS BOE about the conflict in meeting dates, and the response was that we were welcome to change our meetings.

Councilwoman Madden read the following fire report for December 2020:
Fire Department calls for December included: 2 total fire incidents, 8 false alarm calls, 3 good intent calls, 1 rescue incidents, 3 hazardous condition calls, 1 service call incidents, 0 EMS 1st responder incidents and 3 mutual aid calls; for a total of 18 dispatched incidents.

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Councilwoman Madden spoke with Captain Nixon about the vaccine status, and they were in progress, and available at several locations. The vaccine was available to any firefighter who wanted it. To Councilman Notaro, she felt his idea for Purple Heart Way was a great idea, her husband, father and most of her uncles were all veterans, most combat veterans and one a Purple Heart recipient.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina had nothing to report for the Municipal Alliance. The final numbers for Finance and Collections would come out, we were having our first budget meeting this Thursday.

Councilman Perri forgot to mention that the bucket truck was in service for the City garage.

Council President Polistina moved to the work session, old business.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS

- Zion Road Pump Station Easement – *Response from County Officials still Pending re ROW*

Engineer Nassar reported that he had a meeting with the County Engineer last week to discuss the procedure to finalize the process. The County Engineer was in agreement but shared that the legal department had concerns because the pump stations were not designated as being part of rights of way. The County Engineer suggested subdividing, to have one single lot, owned by the City, to have all of our equipment on one lot.

Councilman Perri just gave Engineer Nassar a document provided by Public Works, dated 1976, that referenced an easement. He would need to research it further to see if the easement existed; he would report back at the next meeting.

Councilman Notaro asked would this be a minor subdivision?

Solicitor Facenda offered assistance with the records search regarding the recently discovered easement document. He was not able to connect with County legal, but if the easement existed it would make it easier.

- Northfield Avenue at Rt 9 Drainage – *Update, if Any, from Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar reported that he still had not received a response from NJDOT. At this point do we have to send a letter to someone above her? No one was working, everything was remote.

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- Emergency Medical Services – *Update, if Any, from Councilmen Smith and Notaro*

Councilman Smith reported that he and Councilman Notaro met with Linwood on Monday to discuss the RFP; we have on the agenda tonight a rejection of the sole RFP received. There were a number of revisions to the RFP proposed, Councilman Notaro and Councilman Smith were working on revisions through today. The revisions were in Council's packet today, he asked if Council would like to proceed with approving the revised specifications?

Clerk Canesi announced that she believed Solicitor Facenda had the revised specifications.

Solicitor Facenda distributed the packets.

Councilman Smith added that the revisions would allow new proposals to be submitted; the contract was up at the end of February, but there was a month-to-month provision that could be used while we readvertise. Ideally it was hoped that the revisions would attract additional bidders.

Councilman Perri noted insurance changes.

Solicitor Facenda advised that he did reach out to our insurance representative, he had not heard back.

Councilman Perri asked about the fee to the user.

Councilman Smith replied it was not in the RFP, that would be at the option of the vendor in their proposal.

Councilman Perri asked was there no industry standard? They can charge whatever they want? The Federal Government won't pay that. Were they balance billing?

Councilman Smith did not believe we could mandate that.

Councilman Perri felt this was a lot to go over, having just received it. He hoped it would bring something better.

Council President Polistina asked if the fee to user was part of the required proposal?

Councilman Smith replied, yes.

- Lease Agreement, Parking Spaces at Jackson and Fuae Avenues – *Update from Committee*

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Council President Polistina moved to the lease agreement at Jackson and Fuae; he believed since the last meeting, the fee had been paid, we still have to look at the lease. He looked at the space, he did not believe it was 150 feet.

Engineer Nassar advised that the original Planning Board approval stipulated they had to have 15 parking spaces; it did not seem they ever complied. He did not think we could modify the 150 feet without affecting his Planning Board approval.

Councilman Perri noted that the original site plan from March of 1990 spelled out how it was to be used. The 1993 lease was the first agreement, but we did not own it then. The 2nd lease was when Mr. Maguire bought the property; but we are the owner now. We were the landlord now, at the time of the approval, we did not own it. The original site plan said they had to maintain drainage, he suggested doing a cost-of-living adjustment. It also looked like there was a 2nd or 3rd story approved.

Council President Polistina did not know if it was ever 150 feet.

Engineer Nassar believed the 150 feet was there, it was just not being utilized.

Councilman Perri felt we should do a new lease, get a hold harmless, etc.

Solicitor Facenda added, to the extent they are not compliant with the requirements of the Zoning Board, Solicitor Facenda was not sure he could recommend the City sign a lease with them if they were not compliant, or maybe we do sign the lease, and we enforce the compliance.

Clerk Canesi noted the lessee paid for 2019 and 2020, but not 2021.

Solicitor Facenda agreed with Councilman Perri; the time was now and he just needed direction from Council with regard to terms, rent, etc.

Council President Polistina advised that the committee would meet and report at the next meeting.

Council President Polistina moved to new business, grant opportunities.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities
 - Cedar Bridge Road – Sidewalk on North Side from New Road to Oak Avenue – Requested by Council President Polistina

Engineer Nassar advised Council of a set aside grant from NJDOT which would allow sidewalks in areas within 2 miles of a school, they must be ADA compliant etc. He suggested Cedar Bridge Road; we missed the November 2020 deadline. We

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would need to have agreements to acquire the necessary Right of Way. We had the same situation on Mill Road and that took a few years, maybe the residents would be more motivated to grant the Right of Way.

Council President Polistina asked if one side was better?

Engineer Nassar suggested the bank side; he encouraged discussion with the property owners.

Councilman Dewees asked if Engineer Nassar was considering making Cedar Bridge one way?

Engineer Nassar explained it made sense to have sidewalks for safety, we worked hard to get sidewalks on Mill Road and he felt Cedar Bridge should be next. He explained the cartway and property lines.

Councilman Smith asked how many homes?

Engineer Nassar replied he would have to check; he thought three or four.

Council President Polistina asked would making it one way make a difference?

Engineer Nassar replied no; he explained.

Councilwoman Madden asked would it be of any benefit if the Mayor reached out to the property owners?

Engineer Nassar replied that Council or Mayor Chau would send a letter; we did it for Mill Road.

- 2nd Amendment Resolution – Requested by Councilman Notaro

Councilman Notaro announced that he was contacted by Sandy Hickerson, of 2nd Amendment Sanctuary, a lobbying group made up of law-abiding gun owners. They were somewhat of a watch dog for us, for the American people. This came up in the past and we were hit with Covid, and, it wasn't that important then. Ms Hickerson approached Councilman Notaro again; Councilman Notaro felt strongly about it. He felt we all should when it comes to our rights. It was great to see people out here tonight.

Councilman Notaro noted that he did not see the resolution; asked Clerk Canesi to read it.

Clerk Canesi announced it was part of the agenda packet, it was available to those in person and on the website for those on Zoom.

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Councilwoman Madden read an excerpt; she felt legislation was meant to save lives, she referred to recent mass shootings. This resolution should not be what Northfield strived to represent.

Councilman Notaro agreed with a lot of what Councilwoman Madden said, but also agreed with supporting a group of people who were just out there watching. Laws could be passed.

Councilwoman Madden asked what was it that they are watching?

Councilman Notaro replied it was an organization that would watch out, it was nice to have someone watching checks and balances.

Councilwoman Madden found the phrase 2nd amendment sanctuary to be ironic; the Governor had recently declared the State as a sanctuary state, which was about people, and that didn't go over well. Using that phrase about guns was divisive. It was a flash point.

Council President Polistina asked doesn't this just support the 2nd Amendment?

Councilman Utts wanted to know what the current legislation was?

Council President Polistina replied he did not have that.

Councilman Notaro was not here to debate individual laws; we could do the research at another time. When we jump on board it is a bigger microphone. The County did it. Other towns have done it.

Councilman Utts reiterated the desire to hear about certain legislation, he also did not feel that the gun lobby was underrepresented. He asked had responsible gun owners written their representatives about gun show loop holes and background checks? The 2nd Amendment was part of our national DNA, and he supported it, but we have a gun problem. Look at January 6th, clearly a militia, but not a well-regulated militia. He did agree that this was divisive. It did not really pertain to what was happening in Northfield, in light of increased gun violence they should be trying to see how to protect our citizens, children and schools.

Councilman Notaro responded that the legislation affects the law-abiding citizens.

Council President Polistina added that non law-abiding citizens don't care about the law.

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Councilman Utts reiterated that responsible gun owners should be moving for better controls, to minimize unnecessary death. We are looking for ways to provide more guns.

Councilwoman Madden added that most mass shootings were perpetrated by those who bought guns legally. Something had to be done; this was not an infringement on rights. Its not a slippery slope, many good points were brought up that need to be addressed.

Councilman Utts noted we had more gun deaths per capita than any other country in the world. He reiterated the need to have universal background checks, red flag laws, closing the gun show loophole. But he didn't see that. He understood the fear of having rights infringed upon, but what were they doing to keep bad players from getting guns?

- Cross River Fiber, Request for Municipal Consent

Council President Polistina moved to Cross River Fiber, request for municipal consent.

Clerk Canesi explained that this was similar to a few years ago when Verizon wanted to install the small network node boxes. There were some issues in terms of getting a definitive number of devices. This was a similar type of service geared toward commercial only. They were requesting a response from Council within 60 days.

Councilman Perri added that we don't have the right to charge them, he didn't see any as built, if it's underground, so be it. We should have gotten on board with the nodes, technology was going to change. As Clerk Canesi said, this was to benefit commercial. It seemed like they want carte blanche, just like the other company.

Council President Polistina agreed, without giving us any specifics.

Councilman Dewees agreed with Councilman Perri, he would like to see a plan, where, what was the impact, etc.

Councilman Perri suggested concept plan; if this was just another line on a utility pole, or a boring, then it's not as bad. The only things we could charge for were inspection and permit fees.

Council President Polistina suggested asking them to come in at the next meeting.

Councilman Perri felt we should have moved on the last one.

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Clerk Canesi offered to reach out to the representative and ask for a graphic representation of what their plan is and where they are going to be installed, etc., and suggest that he attend a future meeting based on their timeline.

Council President Polistina replied that sounded good and thanked Clerk Canesi.

Seeing no other new business, Council President Polistina asked all to take out their agendas.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda and made the assignments.

Clerk Canesi asked about the EMS RFP Resolution; was Council adding it to the agenda.

Council President Polistina took a straw poll; all were in favor of adding it.

Clerk Canesi assigned Resolution 47-2021; she announced it would be read in public as it was not on the regular agenda.

PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Polistina opened this portion of the meeting for any member of the public to speak on any topic; he noted a five-minute limit per speaker.

John Walsh, 2000 Grove Road - represents Garden State Grass Roots Organization for 2nd Amendment; he would like to address concerns. He referred to a lack of universal checks, he referred to NICS check, National Instant Criminal background check. He explained the process, which involved fingerprinting and a background check done by your local police department; the same thing happens again when you go to purchase a firearm, the process is repeated when you go to the store. This involved you forfeiting your HIPAA rights regarding mental health and other conditions. NJ was about as thorough as it's going to get. There were thousands of people from Virginia that were heavily armed, they have different carry laws, there were no fatalities, it was a peaceful protest. People at the Capital were unarmed and there were still deaths. He disagreed that violence was due to guns. There have been record numbers of NICS checks during Covid.

Mr. Walsh continued noting people were afraid their 2nd amendment rights were going to be eroded. He refers to a new law that increases taxation on guns and ammunition, he was not sure how that affected gun violence. Another required insurance, but Governor Murphy vetoed it. These were eroding and chipping away at the 2nd amendment. He hoped he answered Councils questions.

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Councilman Utts replied wasn't it part of the problem that the gun laws vary; he agreed that NJ was well regulated. As to taxes, that's just NJ.

Mr. Walsh added that media jumps on the source of a gun, not the reason for the violence. When there are mass shootings they ask where they got the guns not what caused these things.

Councilman Notaro understood taxes but felt 50% tax on ammunition was excessive, having a group that will stand up to that was good.

Mr. Walsh added this resolution was non-binding; we mean to keep the 2nd Amendment intact.

Adam Houde, 1 Robert Best Road, Egg Harbor Township - did do work for the City of Northfield. He had traveled a lot. There have always been background checks. We are one of five states that required a firearms ID before you can purchase a firearm. The permits are only good for 90 days, he felt they should be good for a year. The legislation proposed raising from \$5 to \$150 per ID card and from \$2 to \$100 per permit. These fees, on top of the taxes would not address gun violence. 99% of gun violence was by people who can't obtain a gun legally. He had experienced a street shooting when working in Atlantic City. Crime was not perpetrated by law abiding gun owners.

Councilwoman Madden asked how money was related to the 2nd Amendment? Most mass shootings are committed by legal gun owners. Legislation is to help people, not to take their rights away.

Mr. Houde referred to the Officer in the building. No one can afford a cop everywhere you are, but you can have law abiding gun owners protecting their families. He shared personal experience with gun violence. He referred to Sandy Hook. The gun was purchased by the mother for protection; the killer took the gun because it wasn't properly secured. He referred to the Las Vegas shooting. He had a Federal firearms license and had multiple firearms; the crime was not at the time of purchase.

Sandy Hickerson, 210 Upland Avenue, Absecon – advised that she contacted Councilman Notaro. There were a lot of emotions going on, she thanked Council for being heard. Her group was non-partisan, they were a volunteer organization from all walks of life who were law abiding gun owners. They felt their rights have been slowly chipped away over the years. They were asking elected officials to allow their voices to be heard. We could send a message to Trenton that they will not give up their constitutional rights. She listed towns and counties that have supported this legislation; many counties and 54 towns. It was tremendous considering we were in the midst of a pandemic. She supported safe gun ownership. She hoped Council

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would consider passing this resolution. She wanted to address Councilwoman Madden's comment regarding the use of the word sanctuary, her group did change its name to South Jersey Grass Roots Organization. The word sanctuary was not in the sample resolution. She hoped this would not be the end of the discussion. She thanked Council for their time.

Councilwoman Madden asked was their role to lobby against gun legislation?

Ms Hickerson replied, if it infringed upon their rights, yes.

Councilman Notaro thanked Ms Hickerson for coming out. He thanked her for her passion and for looking out for residents.

Dominic Branca, 23 Evergreen Avenue, Egg Harbor Township - Grew up in Northfield, his parents still live here. Gun ownership used to be a democrat or republican thing. Today, 60% of guns are purchased by democrats. He urged Council to ask questions of the residents of Northfield, and urged Council to support what their constituents want, not their own personal beliefs.

Councilwoman Madden replied, you can't yell fire in a crowded theater.

Mr. Branca replied, no you cannot. You also cannot carry a gun in a government building.

Councilman Utts noted that he owned a pesticide company; you can lobby for and against legislation. He asked Mr. Branca, did your organization support legislation that promotes gun safety?

Mr. Branca advised that he was working to promote gun safety in school. As a child, guns were not taboo, but he was educated. He was working to bring firearm education into public schools. He urged non reliance on party lines, support the constitution. The resolution was non- binding. This was not a Trenton matter; it was a grassroots matter.

Councilman Utts asked if they would be in agreement with added language that indicated the groups supports safe gun legislation

Sal Giambrone ,209 Jefferson Avenue, Egg Harbor Township - shared that his wife was pregnant during the Derecho. He lost food, time, etc. and could not provide for his family. That woke him up that he needed to be able to provide for them, to protect them. He initially went to martial arts, then firearm. He learned how to use a tool, how to have discipline with it. He did not know if he'll ever need this knowledge he's learned, but he's gained the discipline to teach his children. He was not here to be a watchdog; he wanted the right to protect his family. You need to have a test to drive a car, he finds it weird that you don't have to take a test to use a

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firearm. He reiterated that he wanted to protect his family. People need to start thinking differently. It was a defensive maneuver, not an offensive one. He thanked Council.

James Casas, 6 Hollow Drive, Egg Harbor Township - He was a part of the Garden State Grass Roots Organization. They were formed in response to uninformed politicians creating laws. Knowledgeable gun groups were not invited to Trenton. In response to Councilwoman Madden's statement about legal gun owners being the majority of mass shooters; that was a failure of the government, who didn't provide enough money, to prohibit these individuals from getting these weapons. Not long ago, we had Carol Brown shot in her driveway, because the state failed the 30-day requirement for a firearm permit. Regarding suicide; if someone hangs themselves, it is not rope violence. It is a mental health issue, not a violence issue. Males have a higher rate of suicide than females, and police officers have a higher rate than other males. You'll have to take their guns away because they are more likely to shoot themselves with their own weapon. He referred to the Red Flag Law; this did not address the mental health issues, and they can be used improperly because of the way they were written.

Eric Leeds, 802 Debora Street – He was not a member of this group but he did support it. He shared a story of being in Orlando on June 12, 2016 and was called to respond to the Pulse Nightclub; the shooter bought his weapon legally. His name was never put in a database which would have prohibited him from buying the weapon. He reviewed the process to purchase a firearm in New Jersey. Mr. Leeds added that extensive law enforcement experience shows that legal gun owners are not committing these crimes. He belonged to the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association which would defend him, but Governor Murphy does not allow the insurance.

Councilwoman Madden asked Mr. Leeds why gun owners have so many guns?

Mr. Leeds replied he participates in comparative shooting; he explained participation in three gun shooting competition.

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

At 7:50pm, on a motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Utts, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk