

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 19, 2019**

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 5, 2019, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present: Korngut, Madden, O’Neill, Perri, Smith, Lischin
Absent: Dewees

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda, Chief Newman and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance.

Council President Lischin welcomed everyone, and moved to old business.

WORK SESSION TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS

- Potential Sale of Landlocked City Owned Property

Solicitor Facenda advised that a bid was received in connection with block 67 lots 9 and 10, and it was \$500 over the minimum bid. There was a resolution to approve it on the agenda tonight should Council decide to do that. Now that notices had been sent to adjoining owners we will go out for public bid on the remainder of the properties.

- Bike Trails at BGP – *Identification of Trails is Pending*

Councilman Dewees was absent.

- 2018 Road Paving Project – Tree Conflicts on Walnut Avenue

Engineer Nassar, regarding the trees on Walnut, met with Councilman Perri on site. He asked Solicitor Facenda to send a letter to the homeowner advising them that we would take tree down but they were responsible for the sidewalk. Going forward residents should be notified.

Councilman Perri felt it was going to be hard to explain to the homeowner that the sidewalk had to be reconstructed.

Solicitor Facenda would refer to the Ordinance in the letter.

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Council President Lischin felt the letter should be crafted in such a way that the resident understood we were using grant money to help them, it was their tree.

- Invitation from Freeholder Board to Host Freeholder Meeting at Northfield City Hall
 - Select Date July-December

Council President Lischin asked all to pick a date; July or August?

Municipal Clerk Canesi asked Solicitor Facenda how the meeting would be advertised; Council would be in the audience and may discuss City business; she did want to violate Sunshine Laws.

Councilman Perri did not think being in the audience would constitute a quorum.

Solicitor Facenda asked Clerk Canesi to check with him as the date gets closer - if four or more wanted to attend we would address how to advertise.

- Fee Ordinance for Use of Athletic Field Lights

Council President Lischin asked Councilman Smith for an update on the lights.

Councilman Smith reported that Councilman Dewees estimated it at \$20-\$30 for the lights, but he was not sure if that is for lights or per game.

Councilman O'Neill added that Kathi Smith, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, came up with a figure of \$150, Councilman O'Neill felt a little higher, but suggested \$50 per game.

Councilman Smith advised he would continue to gather information.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Lischin asked if there were any new grant opportunities, there were none.

- Sign Ordinance Changes
 - *Referral from February 7, 2019 Planning Board Meeting*

Council President Lischin advised that the Sign Committee met and the Planning Board had come up with a new recommendation. He cited a few areas where the committee disagreed with the Planning Board's recommendations. Now that Atlantic

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City Country Club was no longer a private club, they needed to rely on advertising more than they did when they were a private club. He reviewed the recommendations with regard to colors, changes, animation, etc. and with regard to LED signs. Council President Lischin asked for Council's opinions.

Councilman Perri said he'd stated his position at the Planning Board vote. He felt the Master Plan speaks to the historical continuity of the Shore Road section. For the purpose of full disclosure, Councilman Perri announced that he had a business on Shore Road, and a sign. His business had the ability to possibly benefit from an A frame sign. He was technically in favor of keeping the Master Plan as is, but will be abstaining from the vote and further discussion.

Councilwoman Madden said she had seen overuse of LED lighting, she did not feel LED lighting was appropriate when trying to maintain the hometown feel of a residential area. She did not feel Council was giving consideration to the residents who live in the area; it was not just the Country Club who paid taxes. This could affect the community, it can cause light pollution. She was opposed to LED's; specifically on Shore Road.

Councilman Lischin asked Councilwoman Madden's opinion of the other sign issues, aside from LED.

Councilwoman Madden felt the issues were in the residential areas.

Councilman O'Neill was in favor, whatever the Country Club did was first class. He felt LED would be less intrusive than what was there now.

Councilwoman Korngut was not in favor of it at this time, she felt it's a slippery slope; someone may use it as precedent even though it's in a different zone. There was commentary that the Country Club was our biggest taxpayer, she did not like the implication that money talks. Residents pay taxes too. She did not want to hinder the Country Club's ability to make money; if she heard it was necessary for them to make money... she's not there and can't speak on their finances.

Council President Lischin replied the longer this goes on, the more hindrance we have for the Country Club and others, we can just allow them to put up a regular sign.

Solicitor Facenda advised that if everyone was on board with everything but the LED, then Council could just move on without the LED portion. He reminded all that this issue came up due to issues of constitutionality.

Councilman Smith stated that he had no issues with the bulk of the Planning Board's recommendations. As far as the Country Club goes, it would be in their best interest to have a tasteful sign. He would not be opposed to LED lighting there, he did not

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think it would be garish and felt the Country Club would be responsible; they would have to present it to the Planning Board for approval.

Council President Lischin replied, if it was outside of the zoning ordinance, yes, they would.

Councilman Perri added that in the plan that had previously been turned down, the sign was closer to the set-backs and there were trees that were going to be removed. Technically, they could come in for a new sign, backlight it, light up the whole front of the Country Club and, other aesthetics.

Discussion ensued between Council President Lischin, Councilman Smith, Councilwoman Madden and Councilman Perri.

Councilman Perri clarified that the Planning Board recommends.

Councilwoman Madden asked Council President Lischin if he wanted to go against the Planning Board; wasn't it their job to maintain the character of the town?

Council President Lischin replied yes, but isn't it also their job to maintain the financial viability of the businesses.

Councilman O'Neill responded that business in Northfield is not good. Many can't promote their businesses, they can't have seats outside. If the Country Club goes out of business, it was zoned for low to moderate income housing. We could have hundreds and hundreds of units. The Gurwicz complex was going to change the character of the town. We had to do whatever we could to help all of our businesses.

Council President Lischin added that had spoken with businesses who had told him that no one from City Council had ever come and asked them how the City could help.

Councilman Perri clarified that certain portions of the Country Club were zoned for affordable housing; it could be very lucrative to build at market rate

Solicitor Facenda clarified that the golf course had to stay a golf course.

Council President Lischin asked Solicitor Facenda to prepare the ordinance for introduction.

Councilman Perri asked where LED would be permitted.

Council President Lischin replied just the Country Club Zone, up to 50 square feet.

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Councilman O'Neill asked Mayor Chau's permission to ask Chief Newman a few questions.

Councilman O'Neill said there has been talk of adding one officer, and asked Chief Newman to comment.

Chief Newman said he had given commentary to the Mayor. With the exception of 2017, calls for service had increased every year since 2014, there were over 400 more calls for service year over year, and court filings and traffic filings are up. Criminal and DWI filings were down. Overtime was also down. We've been under budget on overtime since 2016. He believed the decrease in overtime was due to a good year for long term injuries. He had assigned 2 officers to traffic details; these officers can be used to fill in short-shifts in the event of call outs. If we hired another officer, he could shift another officer to an evening shift. Injuries affect overtime. He couldn't predict what the impact of the new development would be. The new shelter is going in, he couldn't predict that but if the past is an indicator, officers would be there a lot. We have twenty officers on the books; at one point we had twenty-four officers. We can't entertain having someone go into the school, to teach DARE or whatever. We had not hired any new officers; we've replaced officers who left or retired. The Department had four officers out injured in 2015; our luck was going to run out.

Councilman O'Neill asked if two officers get hurt, would we be paying overtime to fill the shifts?

Chief Newman replied he would have to reassign shifts.

Councilman O'Neill asked how many officers we have at night.

Chief Newman replied that minimum staffing was two.

Councilman O'Neill asked if there was a domestic (violence incident) would both officers leave the street and for how long? Six hours?

Chief Newman replied there was mutual aid, but if it's a non-priority call it just sits there.

Councilman Perri commented that he wished O'Neill was at the budget workshop the other week.

Councilwoman Korngut said at the last meeting she brought up the Youth of the Month club, she was going to come up with a flyer. To have a little bit more freedom she was not going to do it through the school, she may do it on her own or through the Library. She recently had occasion to travel to Alabama to meet the sole survivor of a 1963 church bombing and listen to her speak. Most know about the four little

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girls, but most don't know she had a sister who survived, and lost an eye. She was trying to bring her to Atlantic County and hoped that the City of Northfield would give her the recognition that the State of Alabama had yet to give.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Lischin reviewed the regular meeting agenda and made assignments.

PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Lischin opened up this portion of the meeting for any member of the public to speak on any subject, announcing a five minute per-speaker time limit.

Bill Garry, 202 St. James Place - was here 2 weeks ago about damage to his property from gas pipe installation. He was angry at the last meeting because he had waited so long. He still had not heard anything. His property was damaged by carelessness. The Engineer worked for the City. He did not know what was going to be done.

Councilwoman Korngut asked Mr. Garry if he heard from the Engineer after the last meeting.

Mr. Garry replied, no.

Engineer Nassar replied that he did not have Mr. Garry's phone number. He got Mr. Garry's cell phone number from the Mayor last Friday. Engineer Nassar notified the gas company again.

Council President Lischin responded to Mr. Garry that we had to wait for the gas company. He offered to personally call Mr. Garry once we find out more information.

Mr. Garry added that considerable damage was done during the course of the project; the whole town was torn up.

Council President Lischin acknowledged Mr. Garry's concerns as valid. There was a video of the property before the work was done; if the video was different, he would be made whole.

Solicitor Facenda asked Mr. Garry if he had contacted the gas company or the Board of Public Utilities.

Mr. Garry replied that he had contacted the gas company but not the BPU.

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Councilwoman Korngut spoke and said she had put out on Facebook about her two resolutions, inviting people who wanted to support them to come. She asked members of the public to raise their hands if they were here to do so. (*Several members of the public raised their hands.*)

Jackie Reynolds, 9 Wilson Drive – said one of the things Councilwoman Korngut was proposing would provide safety for hotel workers. She had worked in the hotel industry and had been in charge of staff. She gave examples of how housekeeping staff could be vulnerable if guests returned to the room. One of the things Councilwoman Korngut was proposing would allow a report to go to a central location.

Councilman O'Neill questioned, we don't have any hotels in Northfield?

Solicitor Facenda clarified that the resolution was in support of a piece of statewide legislation.

Melanie Cahall, 207 Surrey Avenue – stated she was here to support Councilwoman Korngut's initiatives, but also had an issue with Courthouse Towing. She would like Council to consider rescinding their license due to predatory practices. Her bill was \$247.50, which was more than the repair cost. She called several times and had not been able to get her refund. She was not told she'd have an option of free towing. She was able to absorb the cost. The Police Department called for the vehicle to be towed; it was a disabled vehicle blocking traffic.

Councilman O'Neill asked Councilman Perri what tow rates were.

Councilman Perri replied \$105.00, by Ordinance.

Councilman O'Neill asked Councilman Perri if pricing was out of the ordinary.

Councilman Perri replied that due to a conflict of interest, he was not able to comment due to a conflict of interest.

Chief Newman spoke and said that he knew a little bit about this. He'd spoken to the owner of Courthouse Towing: because the vehicle was towed somewhere other than the tow lot, that was outside of the scope of the contract. He asked if Ms Cahall asked that it be towed to Perri's?

Ms Cahall replied yes, she asked to have it taken to Perri's, but did not know she had the option of it going somewhere else.

Councilwoman Korngut felt Ms Cahall was being penalized for being compliant.

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Council President Lischin said it sounded like they followed our Ordinance.

Councilwoman Korngut felt we needed to look at the Ordinance.

Ms Cahall said she was asked not to call AAA, she also feels credit card fees are too high.

Council President Lischin replied that the police had to take charge and get the vehicle out of the way.

Lisa Lehne Gilmore. 4206 Dolphin Avenue - asked about the rail resolution.

Councilwoman Korngut replied it was her understanding that the rail system was giving the run around about why it's not open yet. Councilwoman Korngut was calling for them to resolve the issues, to provide a schedule when it will be back on line.

Ms Gilmore recounted a bad experience with her son who rode a bus that had to be used in lieu of the rail line. She also had friends who needed the rail line to get to hospitals and doctor's appointments.

Terri Benjamin, 315 Jackson Avenue – commended Councilwoman Korngut on the many things that she did to make the community look good and be a great place to live. She commended all of Council. When you make any corner of the world safe, you make it safer for everyone.

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

At 7:20pm, on a motion of Councilman Perri, seconded by Councilwoman Korngut, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk