

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MARCH 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 March 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 4:00pm on March 2, 2021. Once all available seats have been reserved, virtual attendance will be required using a web-browser to Join the Zoom Meeting using the link here <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87532958795> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13126266799,,87532958795# or direct dial +1 312 626 6799 US using Meeting ID: 875 3295 8795. 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 March 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

Absent: Mayor Chau

Solicitor Facenda and Engineer Nassar were 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 no major issues with Public Works, Roads and Sewer. Senior meetings were still on hold at this time.

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

Councilman Utts reported we were collecting developer's fee that was not previously being collected. The next Planning Board meeting is this week.

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

Councilman Notaro reported that he spoke with FAN President Joe Goukler who has projects he'd like to see through. The volunteers were working very hard.

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

Councilman Dewees spoke with Mainland Lacrosse they will request use of practice field; we are anticipating football field improvements so that field would be shut down very soon.

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

Councilman Smith reported that he was continuing to work on a shared court agreement, hopefully he would have it for the next meeting; they were waiting on Hamilton Township's response to our adjustments to the resolution. The Northfield Community School was having meetings scheduled for Thursday afternoon, via Zoom to discuss reopening of the school. The regular Board of Education meeting was scheduled for the following Monday.

Councilwoman Madden – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden reported that she did not attend the Insurance and Safety meeting but Safety Coordinator Campbell did bring her up to speed. She attended the last library meeting, there were very preliminary discussions regarding moving to the County system. She was not able to attend the Mainland Regional High School Board of Education meeting; she could not get on Zoom. Increased in person instruction time begins March 8th.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina reported that we had had our third budget workshop last week, we were coming in with a flat budget unless something unforeseen happens.

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

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS

- Zion Road Pump Station Easement – *Update from Solicitor Facenda*

Solicitor Facenda advised that the title work did not go back far enough, he would like Council's permission to go back the full time period. The cost would be approximately \$500.00 to the title company.

Council President Polistina asked for a vote to approve the Solicitor's request, at a cost of \$500.00

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Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. Notaro – yes, Mr. Perri - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Polistina – yes; Motion carried.

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

Engineer Nassar did not have an update.

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

Councilman Notaro reported that the RFP's were due March 5th.

Councilman Smith added that we had to do an extension of 90 days with TriCare for \$10,000.00 per month, the cost was \$5,000.00 for each town per month; we have to let Linwood know we are okay with that; we would that need to be in writing.

Councilman Notaro asked if we needed a Resolution.

Solicitor Facenda replied, yes.

Clerk Canesi and Solicitor Facenda would work on a draft together between the two meetings tonight. Clerk Canesi assigned Resolution No. 66-2021.

- Lease Agreement, Parking Spaces at Jackson / Fuae Aves – *Update, if any, from Committee*

Council President Polistina did not have an update for the parking lot.

Council President Polistina moved to new business, grant opportunities.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Seeing no new grant opportunities, Council President Polistina moved to the regular agenda.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Councilwoman Madden and Councilman Notaro asked that Resolution 64-2021 be voted separately.

Council President Polistina made the agenda assignments.

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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.

Deidre Kreuz, 19 Zion Road, said she lives on Zion, she drives it every day and walks the bike path every day. There was a real issue with cars not being able to see pedestrians, some of the properties have trees, she requested a pedestrian blinking light like the one at Tilton.

Councilman Dewees replied he would have to petition the County for that.

Engineer Nassar stated that we have proposed an improvement at that intersection, a flashing beacon was included and intersection realignment, as part of a grant and he had already discussed with the proposal with the County.

Mrs. Kreuz thanked Council and Engineer Nassar. She added that even if you are not a parent of a child in the school, you can sign the petition to get the children back in our schools.

Alicia Garry, 202 St. James Place, Northfield (speaking via Zoom) - would like to know why there was \$258,000.00 being proposed for the budget for OEM, she felt it was too much all at once. It should be spread out over time; this was on call positions and believed it should be scaled back. She didn't know why nothing had ever been requested before. Since no one was responding...she would will move on.

Clerk Canesi offered that this was the Mayor's department, and he was not in attendance this evening.

Council President Polistina clarified that the OEM money was an authorization, and nothing had been spent.

Mrs. Garry said she understood the Fire Department had asked for a commitment for a new ladder truck, in order to do the research, and this would benefit the entire City, she would think it would be in the best interest to make the commitment.

Council President Polistina replied that Council did discuss it with the Fire Department; we will work with them through the year, to find the best deal for the City.

Mrs. Garry asked, so Council did commit?

Council Polistina replied, no. Council did not commit to the number they presented. There were other options, and the safety of the City is of utmost importance to the Council.

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Mrs. Garry hoped we would be looking in to this for next year's budget. Lastly, regarding the curbing on Fuae Avenue, she stated that it was not complete to then end of Dolphin or to Zion Road, she asked would this be budgeted for completion? And the additional cutout on Davis Avenue, was this part of the grant, who paid for it, and what was the purpose?

Councilman Dewees believed she was referring to the handicap access on Davis Avenue; we had concerns from residents regarding wheelchair accessibility. As a change order we approved those handicap accessibility ramps.

Mrs. Garry asked was this the only handicap ramp on the Bike Path.

Engineer Nassar responded; we have upgraded other ramps along Fuae, in this area there was no accessibility from Davis. We had enough in the budget to cover the cost of the handicap ramp.

Mrs. Garry felt it didn't make sense.

Councilman Dewees replied a handicap user had to go too far in the other direction toward Zion to access the path.

Dominic Branca, 23 Evergreen Avenue, Egg Harbor Township, was part of the grass roots organization. The last time he was here Councilman Utts asked a great question. Mr. Branca was working with Egg Harbor Township Councilman Andrew Parker, the Egg Harbor Township Police Department and others on a gun safety program for children; with various age groups. All they were asking for was a Resolution that says Northfield does not support unjust, unconstitutional gun laws that come up.

Rose Hickerson, Absecon, said people who use guns are harmful, guns are not the problem. She hoped this was resolved.

Amanda Minarik, 916 Second Street, Northfield (speaking via Zoom)- would like to build on the last person who spoke, she asked if council had looked at other areas where this Resolution had passed, she gave examples of towns in other states where law enforcement is no longer enforcing gun laws as a result. She would like to know why Northfield would associate with towns who no longer want to enforce Federal laws? All on Council took an oath. She read a statement she sent to the Sentinel: "Responsible gun ownership is and should be protected by the second amendment. The right to defend one's person or home are not in question; however, this does not prevent the members of City Council from opposing a meaningless resolution. The proposed resolution states that Northfield will oppose any legislation that is inconsistent and contrary to those rights protected by the second amendment. There are more first-time gun owners in NJ than ever, it is obvious that gun ownership is not at risk. New Jersey has some of the lowest gun violence in the Country, largely

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due to strict gun laws. None of NJ gun laws are unconstitutional, but if they were, the Council had no authority to override state laws.”

Council President Polistina and Councilwoman Madden thanked Mrs. Minarik.

Joe Bunting, 1337 New Road, Bunting Family Pharmacy, provided the background on a new baseball league. The South Jersey Baseball League, will be starting in May. The Northfield Cardinals would be moving from the Atlantic County Baseball League. He received notice last week that the ACBL had folded and six of the teams have joined. A new non-profit had been created and they were very proud of it. The South Jersey Baseball League will be sponsor of the Coaches vs Cancer game at Mainland; their goal was to give communities an opportunity to play baseball. He had devoted \$22,000.00 of his own money to keep costs down; each participant was required to do outreach programs. He hoped this was something the City could be proud of. He thanked Council.

Council President Polistina thanked Mr. Bunting for his volunteer efforts.

John Walsh, 2000 Grove Road, said he was struck by comments made via Zoom. He would like it explained how a 50% taxation is going to help safety in America; there was legislation proposed that if someone breaks in to your house that you leave, rather than defend it. Eighty-some new gun laws were being proposed. Chicago has more shootings than any major city in America but has the strongest gun laws. We need gun laws to make sense. Taxation was not the answer; maybe need to look at prison sentences. Mr. Walsh thanked Council.

Sandy Hickerson, 210 Upland Avenue, Absecon, thanked Councilman Notaro for bringing the Resolution forward, they presented the Resolution a year ago, but Covid prevented them from following through. She thanked Councilmen Notaro and Utts for working together on a Resolution that worked for everyone. This was a bipartisan, human rights issue. One year ago, today, the County Commissioners passed a resolution, it was moved by a democrat and she applauded him for that. The County became a 2nd Amendment friendly County a year ago. They were concerned with the Resolution in the agenda packet, and they have talked with Councilman Notaro to work with them to strike that line. She appreciated Councilman Notaro for taking care of that and listening to them. We all want the same thing. It’s the person that causes the damage, not the tool.

Councilman Notaro thanked Ms. Hickerson. He proudly sponsors it.

Elliott Almanza, 305 Barr Avenue, Linwood, said he worked at 660 New Road, and that Council may have heard that a Resolution like this was performative, and that was true, but there was something else. And that was that Northfield may choose not to enforce certain laws; Northfield was a law-and-order town. He referred to Federal and State laws and the relationship between municipalities. He quoted the Northfield

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Resolution, he referred to the verb 'opposes' as used in the Resolution, the dictionary definition implied active opposition. He asked Council if they would attempt to resist compliance with the law? If the answer was no, then what was the point? If the answer was yes, then Northfield was not a law-and-order town. The Resolution did not confer any rights, but it did show a disdain for the rule of law. There was nothing to be gained but absolutely something to be lost.

Sal Giambrone, 209 Jefferson Avenue, Egg Harbor Township, stated he was a father and husband, he took discipline very seriously. He met Sandy about a year ago and she was offering a different way of thinking; when you have something you want, stand up for it. He hoped he never had stand up against an oppressor, but the bad guy doesn't care, so Mr. Giambrone had to be educated and prepared. Resolutions like this made it easier for him to protect his family. Some of you have chosen to put this in someone else's hands, we have chosen not to do that. The lowest form of training would take over when things go wrong, and he would be able to provide for his family.

Shelly Kennedy, Atlantic Highlands, NJ (speaking via Zoom), said she was speaking on behalf of the 2A resolution on the agenda. She felt actions in other states were irrelevant, what other people do in other states does not matter. Crime was up, response times from police were down. She referred to a woman killed by her ex because she was denied the right to defend herself. Taxes, fees, etc disenfranchise women and minorities. This applied to all amendments. She objected to any restriction on her rights or those of any others. Ms. Kennedy cited various reasons she supported the 2a resolutions.

Melanie Brozosky, 207 E. Surrey Avenue, announced that she was presenting a petition against the gun resolution. She read from the petition citing various other issues of greater concern. Local leaders were elected to serve, not to waste resources on sham resolutions, often with origins from hate groups. Northfield didn't need gun Resolutions, we need resolutions. This was a charade; this was literally not your job. She asked Council stop wasting taxpayer money, each one of you is paid thousands of dollars. She thanked Council for their time.

Clerk Canesi read the following letter into record from Gabriele Lehne:

“Thank you for the opportunity to have you read my statement at the March 2, 2021 meeting of the Common Council of Northfield, NJ.

My name is Gabrielle Lehne, 210 W Glencove Ave. Northfield, NJ

The council is proposing a resolution opposing unconstitutional limits on gun ownership.

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The Supreme Court has ruled on the Second Amendment in two recent major decisions. In the 2008 Heller decision the Court ruled the second amendment protects an individual's right to keep and bear arms for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home. In the 2010 McDonald case, the court ruled that State and local governments cannot enact a ban prohibiting citizens from legally possessing handguns in their homes.

However, regarding the 2008 ruling, the Court made it clear that, "Nothing in our opinion should be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms". Writing for the majority, Justice Scalia noted: "Like most rights, the right secured by the Second Amendment is not unlimited. [It is] not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose." The 2010 ruling did not alter the Court's opinion.

All Council members have sworn an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey. It therefore stands to reason that you would oppose legislation that is inconsistent, contrary, inhibiting or infringing on any rights provided by the United States Constitution whether it be the 2nd, 14th, 15th amendments or any included right. It seems unnecessary and perhaps misleading for the Council to adopt a resolution concerning only one amendment to the Constitution when it is sworn to uphold all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.”

Councilman Dewees, regarding an earlier Zoom comment, referred to the handicapped ramps. To Engineer Nassar he said: the intersection was a T intersection, that is why we moved the ramps where they were, was that correct?

Engineer Nassar replied, yes that was correct.

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

At 7:17pm, on a motion of Councilman Perri, seconded by Councilman Dewees, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk