

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

At 6:07pm this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. 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: Dewees, Korngut, Madden, O'Neill, Perri, Smith, Lischin

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 a bid was accepted, and the deed has been prepared. The land sale has been advertised and will occur on April 9th.

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

Councilman Dewees reported he was still working on the bike trails; he would give an update during his committee report.

- 2018 Road Paving Project – Tree Conflicts on Walnut Avenue

Solicitor Facenda advised a letter was composed and sent certified to the two affected owners setting forth the City's position. Solicitor Facenda stated he'd heard back from one of the residents, Mr. Care, who was on board. He was still waiting to hear from the owners of 1105 Walnut and would follow up with them.

- Fee Ordinance for Use of Athletic Field Lights

Councilman Smith was still gathering information; he has reached out to a few other communities. He would continue to update council.

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

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Council President Lischin advised that this Ordinance was tentatively slated for introduction on April 2nd. As of now, the ordinance would not include an LED sign for the Country Club. They will make other changes, but not the LED sign. Council President Lischin asked if there were any questions from Council, the ordinance would be sent out before the meeting.

Solicitor Facenda advised he would have it out a week before the meeting.

Councilman O'Neill addressed the public. He stated that over the past few years we've had new housing, including low and moderate income housing behind Ace Hardware. He wanted everyone to know that part of the Country Club was low and moderate income housing. He would want to do everything possible to make sure that the location stays a golf course. The Planning Board couldn't guarantee that there would not be low and moderate income housing. Councilman O'Neill's opinion was that we should do whatever we can to make sure there is no low or moderate income housing. Five years ago, he would not have said there would be low and moderate income housing here. He did not want to scare anyone. But those were the facts.

Councilwoman Korngut stated that since we're giving opinions, she objected to the fear mongering, much of which was not accurate. She was offended on behalf of the citizens. She felt it was important to keep Northfield a welcoming community. As far as she knew the Country Club was doing great. The decision had been made behind closed doors because at the last Council meeting the sign was part of the ordinance, she was glad to hear it had changed. She took the position she did because she was concerned about the precedent it would set. It was not accurate that Atlantic City Country Club was our largest taxpayer. She did not like the inference that you get what you want if you pay a lot of taxes. She asked Clerk Canesi if we have facts on the tax issue.

Clerk Canesi advised that she did not have the information with her. She was asked to research it and the Atlantic City Country Club was closer to 17 or 18 in terms of commercial taxpayers.

Councilwoman Madden agreed with Councilwoman Korngut; there was a lot of fear mongering. The wishes of the residents of this community should be taken into consideration. If she lived on Shore Road, she would not want LED lighting near her home. She found them to be distracting. If the Country Club was in fear of going under due to a sign, they should look at quality assurance; but she has heard they are doing quite well.

Councilman O'Neill asked Solicitor Facenda if the Country Club was zoned for affordable units.

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Solicitor Facenda explained that 21 acres were zoned for 21 units per acre, 360 units total, 20% would have to be set aside for affordable housing.

Councilman Perri replied that it was only a portion of the parcel, and it had to stay a golf course.

Councilwoman Korngut asked had the Country Club ever come in and said they were hurting and that they had studies that a sign would help them from going under?

Councilman Perri replied no, they applied for a sign and were denied.

Councilman O'Neill asked do they have the option of a much larger sign?

Council President Lischin replied that they can put in a 16 square foot sign.

Councilman O'Neill added that as a business owner, you don't request something unless you want to use it to increase business. He felt that if there were homes there, we would be expanding the school. He wanted to do everything possible to have it stay a golf course.

Solicitor Facenda, said that as he understood it, the only change to the Country Club zone would be the size of the sign.

Councilman Perri noted that the history of the Master Plan was well represented by the Planning Board. The character of Shore Road was intended to stay the same. It would be a drastic change to Shore Road.

Councilman O'Neill reiterated that it would be a big change, but didn't want more homes.

Councilman Perri replied that new homes would not affect Shore Road.

Councilman Dewees asked which areas of the golf course were affected.

Council President Lischin replied the driving range area and behind Wilson Drive.

Councilman Perri advised that the lawsuit did not affect the Master Plan.

WORK SESSION TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS, continued

- 15 Minute Parking at the Community School
 - *Draft of ordinance to be available on April 2nd*

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Council President Lischin reported that the draft of Ordinance for 15 minute parking at the school would be on the agenda for April 2nd; he asked for confirmation from Solicitor Facenda.

Solicitor Facenda confirmed. He advised that there were basically 6 parking spaces that limit parking during school hours, we would put it on the books so it could be enforceable.

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.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

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

Councilman Dewees commented that he'd experienced discolored water on his street, it may be related to something done at the fire station but it had since cleared, he wanted to make everyone aware.

Councilwoman Korngut was asked to judge the Stockton Science Fair for students at the high school level. She was pleased to see how many girls participated; she congratulated all who participated.

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.

Fred Klein, 1015 Shore Road, said he was a 35 year resident. He had a business in Atlantic City for 50 years. Through military travels he had witnessed debilitation of areas through lack of application of zoning. Councilwoman Korngut and Councilwoman Madden had expressed a lot of what he would say. When it came to LED lights, they will still infringe on ambient light. He read from a prepared statement that indicated this was an attempt to circumvent the Planning Board process. He suggested a referendum to let voters decide. He felt it would change all of Shore Road, which could become a central business district. The overflowing parking lot of the Atlantic City Country Club shows that they did not have any difficulty attracting customers. A message board will not significantly increase their

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business. He cited the previous desire of the Country Club to remove stately trees. He felt they could attract more businesses via good marketing efforts.

Pat McGowan, 2005 Shore Road, advised the he was the president of a group in town called "Committee for a City of Homes" formed in 1985, which was created to prevent a business from going at the intersection of Zion and Shore Roads, and to keep businesses from encroaching on residential areas. He was glad Council seemed to have changed their mind. It seemed sneaky that the Country Club was turned down by the Planning Board but was now going through the City.

Council President Lischin wanted to make it clear that the City writes the laws, not the Planning Board.

Mr. McGowan felt it seemed a little bit like "mom said no, so ask dad". On Shore Road we have an auto repair shop, a country club, City Hall, a bridge, a restaurant, 2 houses of worship, and a deli on the bike path, the library, American Legion, a florist and a sharpening agent. They'd all love to have such a sign.

Councilwoman Korngut advised that the library did apply for an LED sign and was turned down.

Mayor Chau replied that they did not realize it was City property, they did not come to the City Council for approval.

Solicitor Facenda advised that the LED sign was being contemplated in the country club district only, we all know tonight that was not being contemplated anymore. He wanted to make sure everyone knew it was in the country club district, not any other district on Shore Road.

Councilwoman Korngut noted that Council took the position that no other business would use that as a means to get one.

Solicitor Facenda replied there was a process for that, to go before the Planning Board for approval.

Richard Levitt, 2204 Bay Drive, said he shares Councilman O'Neill's concern about the future of the Country Club, he had shared it for many years, and had been on the Planning Board since 1978. In order to protect Shore Road, the Master Plan included a provision to protect the residential character. There was at one point a proposal for a shopping complex. The Country Club was a residential zone, and the Country Club was a permitted use in that zone. The land was deed restricted, if they should desire to pursue housing, the golf course must remain. It was a misnomer to say that the Country Club had been zoned for affordable housing. The area that was zoned was for exclusive style housing, golf villas. It was not zoned for affordable but we were

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mandated by the courts; that parcel had vacant land so we could show to the court there was opportunity for affordable housing. The likelihood of that was virtually nil, there would be no incentive to a developer to ruin the integrity of an ongoing business. He explained that affordable housing was not low income housing, the residents had to show income, they have to have a credit history. He also felt there was a lot of fear mongering. He felt the residents were going to be older folks who want to downsize and young people with no kids yet. It was a court mandate. Why did we not do it 30 years ago? Because it was a moving target. Back then there were only a handful of cities across the State who were compliant. He appreciated Council's concern about the Country Club. He asked all to take a look at other towns where LED was everywhere, such as Camden, it does not increase profitability.

Joe Sundra, 2115 Shore Road, said some may remember that he and his brothers were owners of the Rugby. Many years ago, 60 feet off of Shore Road, behind a plate glass window, there were 3 neon signs. They received a letter from the City that they could keep the signs but could not illuminate them, because of the residential character of Shore Road. He hoped the existing Council and Planning Board would adhere to past decisions that were made with regard to residential areas. Even though the LED issue was dead, he was concerned about a 50 square foot sign.

Michael Goloff, 2216 Shore Road, was absolutely against an LED sign on Shore Road.

Jodi Macini, 208 Rosedale Avenue, did not support a large sign or light pollution on Shore Road.

Jacqueline Reynolds, 9 Wilson Drive, has lived here since 1963. The Country Club had always done well; it was always packed on any given day. If they did increase their business where are they going to put the cars? What about traffic issues near other streets and private property? She was concerned that the citizens who have lived here and paid taxes were being thought of as by products, and that the businesses were being looked at as the tax bearers of the City. It is a private member club; surely they notify their members of events.

Council President Lischin corrected Ms. Reynolds that it was a public club. The whole reason for the discussion was that it was a for-profit club.

Ms. Reynolds stated that she watched Pleasantville go from a thriving residential City to crumbling infrastructure; adding this type of sign would reduce property values.

Bill Banks, 1730 Tilton Road, thanked Council for taking LED off the table and asked could it be put back on the table?

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Council President Lischin replied absolutely, laws can be changed with 4 votes from Council.

Margaret McGowan, 2005 Shore Road, stated that we do have a Master Plan, which was voted on by City Council. Now you want to change the Master Plan. She asked Council how much more did they want to change the Master Plan; what was next? She asked why they were not following the Master Plan.

Councilman O'Neill replied that things have changed since the Master Plan including a massive rental property behind the movie theater.

Mrs. McGowan replied to Councilman O'Neill that his comments earlier deeply offended her. As a citizen and rational adult, she found Councilman O'Neill's earlier comments offensive. As a Council you have been elected to be our voices, it was developed with these voices in mind. One business who was not a resident, was causing you to be willing to change. What else are you going to do when a business comes to you crying. She asked Council to think about the residents who live near these businesses. The Country Club owners do not live in this City. Council was here to protect us; she asked them to please keep that in mind.

Tom Corona, 2602 Leeds Avenue, asked for clarification of the number of low-moderate income as 73. Low-moderate makes people think of section 8, and things like that.

Councilman O'Neill spoke; he said he didn't want any additional housing. That could mean more children in the school.

Mr. Corona asked if the City could rezone it; a sign would not save a business. He felt the reality of housing going there was very slim, people needed to know that. He noted that the Country Club sign was small, but they didn't need a 50-foot sign.

Fred Klein spoke again, adding that he felt housing complexes fail, and they end up all being affordable because no one wants to live next door to affordable housing.

Clem Scharff, 105 Circle Drive, stated that he wrote the sign ordinance that the Planning Board came up with a year ago. He explained that he saw what it looked like in Pleasantville as he'd drive through, and didn't want Northfield to look like that. He works in lighting for Harrah's in Atlantic City so he knew professionally about the brightness, etc... LED was allowed on the prior draft ordinance, but only in certain areas. He also said he recently worked a convention for the Association of Environmental Administrators and met someone from the Board of Public Utilities, and learned that the City can buy electricity from the State at discount levels; they could also join in a solar coop and buy a subscription for the power. There are several of these types of grants available.

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Mayor Chau thanked Mr. Sharff, noting that he would be mentioning this later during his committee report.

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

At 7:08pm, on a motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Perri, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Registered Municipal Clerk