

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MARCH 21, 2023**

At 6:01pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 7, 2023, and in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilwoman Bucci; Councilwoman Carfagno; Councilman Dewees; Councilman Leeds; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Smith; Council President Polistina; Mayor Chau

Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Nassar, CFO Stollenwerk and Chief VonColln were also present.

Council President Polistina deferred to Mayor Chau for the Oaths of Office for the Police Department.

6PM POLICE DEPARTMENT OATHS OF OFFICE

- Patrolman Malachi Valentine

Clerk Canesi announced Patrolman Valentine, who was accompanied by his father Dana, mother Raquel, and girlfriend Juliana.

Mayor Chau called forward Patrolman Valentine and asked him to introduce his family.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Patrolman Valentine.

- Patrolman Brenden O'Brien

Clerk Canesi announced Patrolman O'Brien, who was accompanied by his father James, mother Sharon, sister Jenna, and girlfriend Carly. She invited all to come forward.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Patrolman O'Brien.

Mayor Chau recognized members of the Police Department who were present and said the two new officers were joining a group of dedicated and faithful servants. It was not an easy job, and Mayor Chau knows both would do well.

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Patrolman O'Brien thanked Chief VonColln and the Police Department, Mayor Chau, Business Administrator Canesi and Council. He also thanked his mom, dad, sister, family, and girlfriend for their support.

Patrolman Valentine thanked Council, Business Administrator Canesi, Chief VonColln and the rest of the Police Department. His goal was to grow here and serve. It is a great opportunity; he would do the best of his ability.

Council President Polistina announced there would be a brief recess, noting it was a great opportunity to be able to have ceremonies such as this.

At 6:16pm all mingled for photos – there was no formal recess.

At 6:21pm Council President Polistina resumed the meeting.

Council President Polistina moved to Committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Leeds – Fire Department/EMS; Planning Board

Councilman Leeds had no report.

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

Councilman Dewees had no report.

Councilwoman Bucci – Insurance and Safety; Municipal Alliance; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilwoman Bucci reported for the Municipal Alliance: April 1st will be the grand opening of the playground at 6pm followed by a movie in the park. The Economic Development Commission had their first meeting with the Planning Board; it went very well; the discussion involved the master plan.

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

Councilman Smith announced the opening day for Northfield Little League was scheduled for April 15th. The third meeting was coming up at the school for strategic planning.

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

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Councilwoman Carfagno announced planning for Memorial Day event for veterans had begun, she was working on a list of all veterans. The next Mainland Board of Education meeting was scheduled for April 27th. She arranged for Planet Networks to contact the school. The Cultural Committee Flea Market was scheduled for April 1st; there were 25 vendors; she urged all to support them.

Councilman Notaro - Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning; Sewer Operations; Northfield Sports (FAN)

Councilman Notaro reached out to Linwood to get the sober living home ordinance, he sent it to Clerk Canesi and Council President Polistina, he hoped to discuss it soon.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Library; Senior Citizens

Council President Polistina announced the budget was being introduced this evening, and no amendments would be made. The Library Board has a vacancy as their treasurer resigned. Interested parties should contact Mayor Chau if they'd like to serve on the board.

Council President Polistina moved to the work session, ongoing topics.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

- Stormwater Facilities Shared with Atlantic County–*Update if available, Engineer Nassar*

There was no update.

- Potential Public Auction of City Owned Property Block 66 Lot 11 – Receipt of Proposals Pending Block 66 Lot 11; Block 69 Lot 1.02; Block 121 Lot 1-

There was no update.

- Food Truck Ordinance – *Update from Committee*

Councilwoman Bucci reported that the committee had its first meeting for food trucks. Clerk Canesi and Deputy Clerk Campbell put together information, there would be a follow up meeting soon.

- Electric Vehicle Ordinance – *Update from Committee*

Council President Polistina hoped to meet regarding the electric vehicle ordinance before the next Council meeting.

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Solicitor Facenda spoke: as an item of ongoing business, our current ordinance allows certain noises as of 7am, and landscaping between 8am and 9pm. He asked was Council interested in allowing a golf course exemption to allow a 7am start for lawn cutting, with an earlier start between Memorial Day and Labor Day of 6:00am?

Councilman Notaro would not be opposed but would want a certain distance from residential homes.

Solicitor Facenda advised they would need to start in certain areas that are near residential homes. He asked if Council was interested in proceeding.

Council President Polistina explained that holes needed to be done in a certain order.

Councilman Smith has had residents contact him that live in this area, in particular, a resident with a special needs child. We have to think of the residents too. On holiday weekends, people tend to sleep in, and these machines would be outside their windows.

Councilman Notaro asked what have they been doing?

Solicitor Facenda believed they have been starting earlier than allowed.

Mayor Chau believed there have been complaints and notices of violation.

Solicitor Facenda reminded all that this was a Council decision.

Council President Polistina suggested we talk the residents in the area that we are aware of, and have input for the next work session.

Councilman Smith asked was there any type of a baffle that could be erected that might help mitigate it?

Council President Polistina asked the same question when this first came up, there are trees but no kind of structure.

Councilman Notaro felt they needed to come up with a better plan to keep the noise away from the houses.

Councilman Leeds agreed with Councilman Smith, adding that we need to think of the residents.

Councilwoman Bucci also agreed.

Solicitor Facenda asked how would Council like to proceed.

Council President Polistina responded that Council would discuss it and if it moved

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to an ordinance we would proceed.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

There were no new opportunities discussed.

- 2023 Budget

There were no further amendments to the budget; there was no additional State aid.

Council President Polistina asked if there were any questions on the budget, there were none.

- Generator Ordinance

Council President Polistina moved to the generator ordinance, which included the Planning Board recommendations. There was one change recommended by the Zoning Officer. He asked if anyone else had input.

Councilman Notaro asked if the recommended change to the kw was sufficient.

Engineer Nassar replied, yes.

Council President Polistina advised we had nothing on the books, so we need to have something.

Councilman Leeds felt it should be the homeowner's decision to have liquid propane, versus natural gas.

Clerk Canesi would check with the Planning Board Engineer to see if liquid propane tanks would be acceptable and advise at the next meeting.

- Retail Sales of Cannabis

Council President Polistina moved to retail cannabis sales. We did ask the voters of the municipality; it was a 57% approval. We needed to form committee to evaluate that.

Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Leeds and Councilman Smith volunteered.

Council President Polistina stated the committee would meet and report back to the Council. We already know the locations, the committee would need to suggest what

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regulations would be recommended, proximity to schools, churches, and such. We only discussed retail, and need to determine the number of licenses as well.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone wanted anything voted on separately from the consent agenda.

Councilman Leeds would be abstaining from Resolution 84-2023.

Councilman Smith would be abstaining from Resolution 82-2023.

Solicitor Facenda, with Council's permission, would like to add Resolution 86-2023 which is an Executive Session; he suggested that Council President Polistina call for a vote to add the resolution in the consent agenda.

Solicitor Facenda announced that the Executive Session was to discuss potential shared court with Hammonton.

Clerk Canesi called a voice vote; all members present were in favor of adding Resolution 86 for the purpose of discussing a possible shared court with Hammonton.

For the record, Solicitor Facenda advised that this was an issue that came up after the agenda was published, it was too late to be added to the agenda.

Council President Polistina made the assignments.

PUBLIC SESSION / FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Polistina opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject, he asked that they state their name and address for the record and observe the five-minute limit per speaker.

Dave Ferrier, identified himself as a Marine Corp Combat Veteran residing at 6326 Mill Road, Egg Harbor Township. He has been harassed by the Zoning officers in Egg Harbor Township. Similar to him, residents of Northfield are being bullied and intimidated into getting rid of their potbellied pigs. To Mayor Chau: you would fight like hell, if a uniformed officer showed up at night, unannounced, with no paperwork, and told you to get rid of your dogs. To Councilwoman Carfagno: as an educator, to Councilman Leeds: as a former intelligence officer, he knows they would do their research in determining the difference between swine and potbellied pigs. The Zoning Officer and other officials have failed to maintain records. He

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referred to the Land Use Code. Mr. Ferrier, on behalf of the Sweeney family, requested via certified mail within 10 days a list of demands.

Briana Ferrier, 6326 Mill Road, said she was here to educate you about potbellied pigs. She asked if anyone had pets. She explained that her pigs were rescued from inhumane conditions; they could be emotional support animals. She explained types of pigs.

Mayor Chau asked Mrs. Ferrier if she had any idea why municipalities included swine and pigs as prohibited.

Mrs. Ferrier replied, lack of education. She explained how pigs were smarter than dogs.

Councilman Notaro felt they could be associated with farms.

Joe Sweeney, 1206 First Street, stated his pigs don't live outside, they live inside. He asked a few police officers if there were any laws against owning pigs, the police said they weren't sure but they didn't think so. He was asking the Council to change the law to allow ownership of domesticated pigs. The pigs go to the bathroom outside just like dogs, the yard is cleaned daily. He just wants to keep his pets.

Councilwoman Bucci asked how big are they?

Mr. Sweeney answered; smaller than many dogs.

Councilwoman Carfagno asked were they registered; do they go to the vet?

Mr. Sweeney replied the vet comes to their home.

Councilman Notaro asked could we consider this?

Council President Polistina stated that he has heard concerns from neighbors.

Christine Sweeney, 1206 First Street, added that they were their babies.

Council President Polistina noted he would take this all into account, including the neighbor's concerns. We would do our homework and follow up with you.

Mrs. Sweeney stated that City Hall told her they didn't know what she was talking about; she got the runaround.

Council President Polistina said, to everyone's defense, a potbellied pig is a swine, until we can evaluate that, we can't say there will be a change tonight.

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Via Zoom, Chuck Valdez, 7724 Bent Hill Court, Red Forest, North Carolina, said he was a friend of the Sweeneys and Ferriers. He was a former government official, and said Northfield's Ordinance dates to the 1970's. If the argument has to do with farm animals, dogs are farm dogs. Cats and dogs are food sources in other countries. He provided an explanation of why certain pigs should be allowed to be kept as pets. He asked for answers.

Council President Polistina replied, as was stated previously, we would look in to this to determine if our Code was appropriate.

Councilman Notaro added, we have to take all of this in, we can't make a decision on this tonight. Some things are antiquated.

Council President Polistina ensured we would be fair.

Mayor Chau asked if we should change this do we have to go to the Planning Board?

Solicitor Facenda did not believe it was in the Land Use ordinance.

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

At 7:25pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk