

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 22, 2022**

At 6:00pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 8, 2022, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Council Pro Tempore Dewees.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present (in person):** Councilwoman Bucci; Councilman Dewees; Councilman Leeds; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina;

**Absent:** Mayor Chau\*

*Mayor Chau arrived at 6:16pm.*

Solicitor Facenda and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance.

Council President Polistina moved to Committee Reports.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Councilman Dewees noted it was reported by Superintendent Vitale that a slide was broken, it has been blocked off so it couldn't be used; Public Works would repair it. He was still working on quotes for the columns at the front entrance to City Hall.

**Councilman Utts** - Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning, Cultural Committee, Veteran Liaison, Mainland Regional, Technology / MRHS Channel; Planning Board

Councilman Utts reported that he attended the Mainland Regional High School Board of Education meeting. Some residents were concerned about gender-sharing of bathrooms, and the Critical Race Theory curriculum. The Purple Heart Way Dedication would be held May 21<sup>st</sup> at 11am. Regarding Planning Board, there was continuance on the Northfield Avenue property where they were looking to build a medical office in a residential zone.

**Councilman Notaro** - Fire Department/EMS; Sewer Operations; Northfield Sports (FAN)

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Councilman Notaro thanked Councilman Utts for stepping up and handling the Purple Heart Way project with him. He was looking forward to it; it would be a nice day. He thanked Councilwoman Bucci and Councilman Leeds for attending the FAN meeting on his behalf.

**Councilman Leeds** – Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilman Leeds reported regarding the FAN meeting, the girls' and boys' basketball teams won the championships, he asked Mayor Chau to draft a Proclamation. Regarding the Office of Emergency Management, they had recently served as lead agency in a table-top active shooter drill at the school. Many area municipalities and agencies were represented, and many area businesses donated to the drill which was very much appreciated. He received a letter from Captain Nixon about an EMS call that Nixon had responded to on March 11<sup>th</sup>; Captain Nixon offered praise to the Inspira crew, who went above and beyond to assist the gentleman. Councilman Leeds also thanked Captain Nixon for responding to the EMS call.

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

Councilman Smith reported the Northfield Community School Board of Education meeting was pushed back a week; it will be next Monday evening. Northfield Little League and Babe Ruth have their opening day ceremonies scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>; all are invited. Related to Mainland Regional High School, he took his family to the school play, Shrek, it was very well done and Councilman Smith commended the MRHS Drama Department. He congratulated the MRHS Girls' Basketball team for their accomplishments this season.

**Councilwoman Bucci** – Insurance and Safety; Library; Municipal Alliance

Councilwoman Bucci reported regarding the Municipal Alliance, Coffee with a Cop will be held at this Saturday at Good Shepherd Church from 12pm to 2pm. Attendance at the library was increasing; the library has many programs coming up, including the NJ Connect I-pad program. The library will get to keep the I-pads when the program ends. The Library Board adopted their strategic plan, and a cash management plan.

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

Council President Polistina reported he was working to get the Senior Committee up and running again; he had spoken with one of the members. The library has been used in the past to meet and is available again. Council could further discuss the other group that meets at the church hall. For finance, we have the introduction of the budget this evening. Federal pandemic funds would be used for one-time projects, as previously discussed by Council.

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Council President Polistina moved to old business.

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – PRIOR BUSINESS**

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

Engineer Nassar reported he received a call recently from NJDEP Enforcement about a drainage issue, Engineer Nassar explained the issue we've been having with the NJDOT. He then heard from the DOT and they were now asking for plans and a permit for us to do the work. Engineer Nassar's recommendation was to tell them to take their water off of our street; they changed the pipe size, and now they want us to bear responsibility. Engineer Nassar felt the DOT should fix it.

*At 6:16pm Mayor Chau entered the meeting.*

Engineer Nassar advised that there was no evidence that anyone opened the road. We definitely did not add the pipe. He felt the DOT added the pipe and they should address the resulting issues.

- Stormwater Facilities Shared with the County of Atlantic – *Update from Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar was still reviewing the drainage maps from the County.

- Potential Acquisition of Fire Truck – *Bid Specifications Pending from Chief Cummings*

Councilman Notaro did not have an update on the fire truck.

- Potential Public Auction of City Owned Property Block 66 Lot 11 – *Pending*

Clerk Canesi believed there would be a representative from Surenian, Edwards and Nolan at the April 12<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS**

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities
- Identification of Project for 2022 CDBG Application (must be filed by 5/2)

Council President Polistina moved to the CDBG Application.

Engineer Nassar spoke, and suggested handicap paths and parking at the park; this project would qualify as it would be considered access-barrier removal. We may be able to borrow funds from next year to increase amount to about \$70,000.

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Council President Polistina referred to the Office of Emergency Management grant on the evening's agenda as an additional, new grant opportunity the City would be pursuing.

Councilman Utts announced that he would like to discuss a new business item, related to old business. All have heard that we want to make playground improvements; he suggested cannabis revenue as a source of funds for recreation improvements without burdening the taxpayer. He would like to put it on the ballot to ask the taxpayers if they would approve cannabis via a ballot question.

Council President Polistina asked Clerk Canesi to explain the process.

Clerk Canesi explained the process. There was no cost from the County. The cost was largely associated with preparing the question and explanatory statement.

Council President Polistina asked if council would want to see 70% public approval, similar to the 2020 vote, or just a majority, at 51%?

All members present were generally in favor except Councilman Dewees and Councilman Smith. Councilwoman Bucci said she was against it morally but believed it was the taxpayers decision.

Councilman Leeds noted that all locations on Tilton Road were within 1,000 feet of a drug-free zone. He cautioned that Council should cover their bases.

Council President Polistina noted the proposed addition of a tax refund resolution to this evening's agenda. He asked for a motion and second, to add the resolution.

Councilman Leeds motioned with a second by Councilman Dewees. All members present were in favor.

Council President Polistina moved to the Regular agenda.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda, noting the addition of Resolution 90-2022.

Council President Polistina made the assignments.

Councilman Dewees noted he would be abstaining from the minutes.

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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.

Barbara Madden, 403 Park Lane, requested Council adopt a Resolution to stand in solidarity with sovereign nation of Ukraine against Vladimir Putin. She recognized the Ukrainian President as a true leader.

Heather Mellon, 2509 Herbert Drive, referred to the Library reopening, and said Aubrey Hiers has a great lineup of events. Mrs. Mellon was the President of the Friends of the Library, and she listed several of their fundraising events. Up until now they have not been allowed to sell refreshments or baked goods at their sales.

Clerk Canesi suggested they consult the County Board of Health, if they approve, then sales would be within the sole decision of the Library Board of Trustees.

Mrs. Mellon asked Mrs. Madden, who was in the audience and is also a member of the Board of Trustees for the library, to check with Board of Health.

Mrs. Mellon asked about a fishing tournament.

Councilman Dewees advised the Municipal Alliance had a tournament in the works.

Mrs. Mellon reported the snack bar was empty, she would like to see it open.

Councilman Dewees replied it had been discussed; it may or may not be a reality but it is being discussed.

Council President Polistina also noted proposed improvements to the picnic areas.

Councilman Utts would like to see an organization like FAN staff the snack bar, and rent it for a dollar a year.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone on Zoom wants to speak. There were no responses.

Seeing no one wishing to speak, Council President Polistina closed the public comment portion of this meeting.

At 6:44pm, on a motion of Councilman Utts, seconded by Councilman Leeds, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk