

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 4, 2023

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 7, 2023, and in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

Municipal Clerk Canesi announced that the internet connection at City Hall was down and therefore this meeting would be in-person only, as there was no ability to stream the meeting use Zoom without internet.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Council Pro Tempore Dewees.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Councilman Smith*; Mayor Chau

**Councilman Smith was absent when attendance was called, but arrived at 6:12pm.*

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

Council President Polistina moved to Committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Leeds – Fire Department/EMS; Planning Board

Councilman Leeds read the EMS report statistics for the month of March; he did not have the full report but would like to discuss an ongoing issue. He explained a call was listed at a 70-minute response time, but later in the report it indicated that our unit was never dispatched. It was a Pleasantville call. He read the Fire Department Report for March. Councilman Leeds thanked Captain Nixon for attending the accelerated Fire Fighter instructor training - this will allow us to train our personnel in house. It was a remarkable amount of effort.

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

Councilman Dewees announced that Public Works had been clearing bike trails and fishing spots at the park in anticipation of the summer season. Repairs to the fireplace had been made, he thanked and congratulated Deputy Clerk Campbell for taking lead and arranging this effort.

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

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Councilwoman Bucci reported that movie night and ribbon cutting were Sunday; she thanked Deputy Clerk Campbell and Clerk Canesi for moving on a dime to get things rescheduled. It was a great turnout, and a very nice day. The bike rodeo for Municipal Alliance is scheduled for May 20th, tentatively scheduled for London Square Mall near Tuckahoe Bike Shop. Hooked on Fishing was coming up on June 3rd. Coffee with a Cop was on March 30th, it was a joint effort between Northfield Police and Linwood Police at the Northfield Wawa. She commended Chief VonColln for the outreach efforts.

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

Councilman Smith was absent during committee reports.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno reported that Mainland Regional Board of Education is scheduled for April 27th, Northfield Mothers League held their annual egg hunt on April 2nd, it was a great turnout. She congratulated the Cultural Committee for their efforts on the Flea Market, it was a great turnout as well, there were 25 vendors. Councilwoman Carfagno also commended NCS custodial staff for keeping the area safe with all the rain. She encouraged nominations for Mr. or Miss Northfield, nominations should be sent to the Cultural Committee. Plans were underway for the Memorial Day Ceremony at Veterans Park.

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

Councilman Notaro had no report.

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

Council President Polistina announced our collection report for 2022, we collected 98.65% of taxes, he commended the tax staff. The tax rate last year was 3.455 and this year will be 3.492.

Council President Polistina referred to the ad hoc committees; noting we've added them to the agenda.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

- Electric Vehicles (Councilmen Polistina, Notaro) – there was no update.

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- Food Trucks (Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Dewees) – Councilwoman Bucci advised there would be a committee meeting tomorrow.
- Sales of Retail Cannabis (Councilwoman Bucci, Councilmen Leeds, Smith) – Councilwoman Bucci advised they were still doing research.

Council President Polistina moved to ongoing business.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

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

There was no update from Engineer Nassar.

- Potential Sale / Development of City Owned Properties: Block 66 Lot 11; Block 69 Lot 1.02; Block 121 Lot 1 – *No Update*

At 6:12pm, Councilman Smith entered the meeting.

- Possible Zoning ordinance to regulate Cooperative Sober Living Residences

Councilman Notaro provided a copy of the Linwood Ordinance and asked Solicitor Facenda to review it.

- Generator Ordinance – Update regarding liquid propane

Council President Polistina reported the Planning Board Engineer advised that liquid propane was not excluded. We could move forward on the ordinance.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Nassar was still waiting for replies on grants.

- Resolution in Support of ‘*Supporting Our First Responders Act*’, Representative Andy Kim (D-NJ-03) - Requested by Mayor Chau

Council President Polistina stated Mayor Chau had requested a resolution supporting the First Responder's Act. He asked if there was any opposition? There was none.

Clerk Canesi confirmed it would be on the next agenda.

Council President Polistina asked Councilman Smith if he had a committee report.

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Councilman Smith replied, no.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda and 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.

Cheryl Phillips, 26 Henry Drive, Northfield, said she moved back to Northfield a year and a half ago, but was born and raised here. She sent an email to all of Council, she was not sure if all received it. She was here regarding 1203 Mill Road. It was recently rehabbed, a new occupant moved in in August. There was a business running out of a residential property. She emailed Patrolman Garofalo but did not hear back.

Council President Polistina asked Chief VonColln to comment.

Chief VonColln was aware of the situation. Patrolman/Code Enforcement Officer Garofalo was on night shift; three summonses were issued last night and the issue was ongoing.

John Clifford, 2308 Raymond Drive, Northfield, distributed a document packet to council, he emailed Clerk Canesi, Solicitor Facenda and the Zoning Officer last Wednesday and no one replied. He explained why he felt zoning approval was granted in error. He asked if anyone was going to answer.

Solicitor Facenda advise he received Mr. Clifford's email, his questions were well thought out, it was unlikely that a response that requires significant research would come within a week. The Council did not have the jurisdiction or control to override a decision of the Zoning Officer. Those appeals go to the Zoning Officer, within 20 days.

Mr. Clifford wanted answers. How do you appeal something within 20 days when you don't know about it for 3 months. He asked Engineer Nassar to explain in his capacity as the Zoning Officer.

Engineer Nassar, as Zoning Officer, responded that the first application came in and it was denied. He then got a letter from a local attorney saying they were grandfathered.

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Mr. Clifford reiterated that all other requirements must be met.

Zoning Officer Nassar continued; research was done to ensure the grandfather status was valid. Zoning does not check plans that are submitted by a professional - that professional was responsible for the plans they submit. The plot plan showed building area – it doesn't show if it's one or two story.

Mr. Clifford asked what was the mechanism to check once the building permit was issued.

Zoning Officer Nassar could reach out to owner to have them add 112 square feet needed to comply. He explained the details of this particular property.

Mr. Clifford appreciated Mr. Nassar, but once this was done, we all have to live with it.

Solicitor Facenda urged Mr. Clifford to make note of the statute for appeal.

Susan Sutton, 2306 Raymond Drive, Northfield, said her whole back yard faces the empty lot, for years they had issues with this lot, poison ivy, and animals. She was always told the lot was not buildable. At the corner of Oak and Zion there have been many accidents, based on the parking for this home, will there be more accidents on this corner?

Joe Sweeney, 1206 First Street, Northfield, asked who had been to his home. (Council President Polistina, Councilman Notaro, and Chief VonColln raised their hands). Mr. Sweeney asked was there any movement changing the ordinance?

Council President Polistina replied, at this time there was no movement. He would continue to confer with other Council members, Code Enforcement, the Police department, he noted other issues.

Mr. Sweeney asked what issues?

Council President Polistina referred to the rats.

Mr. Sweeney stated the rats have been in Northfield for 80 years. So, you are going to tell neighbors they can't have gardens? That was a food source for rats. He argued that pigs were not farm animals; he would bring research. He asserted that people came when he was not home and trespassed. His neighbor has political clout and was trying to assert influence.

Councilman Notaro stated he would not have come to visit if anyone had political clout.

Mr. Sweeney advised that the FDA listed potbellied pigs as domesticated pets.

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Solicitor Facenda, to Mr. Sweeney, asked had a ticket been issued?

Mr. Sweeney replied, no.

Solicitor Facenda announced that this Council had to decide if they were going to change the ordinance or not.

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

At 6:58pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk