

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021

At 6:03pm 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 April 6, 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 April 6, 2021. Once all available seats have been reserved, virtual attendance will be required using a web-browser to Join the Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83690097198> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13017158592,,83690097198# or direct dial +1 301 715 8592 using Meeting ID: 836 9009 7198. 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 April 6, 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

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021**

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 Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present (in person): Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Madden; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Perri; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina; 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 that Pubic Works completed the work on Roosevelt Avenue. Bunting Pharmacy had notified us that vaccines were available by appointment; also, Atlantic County Intergenerational Services can assist those that were homebound.

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

Councilman Utts reported revenue in the building department for the 1st quarter of this year was significantly more than the same quarter last year. There were considerably more permits going out. He noted progress on Cresson Hill. He announced household renovation debris collection information and dates.

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

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021

Councilman Notaro reported he met with Councilman Dewees regarding repairs needed for the museum; with the help of Public Works and outside contractors they would address the issues. EMS was meeting tomorrow, anyone who had questions could submit them to Councilman Notaro. Regarding veterans, Public Works would put the Purple Heart Way signs in on the next sign order. He suggested an event in the future. Regarding FAN, he thanked Councilman Dewees for help with the sod that was being laid tomorrow. He would also like to acknowledge the passing of coach Rob Rodriguez who passed suddenly, he made great contributions. Chief Cummings was still looking for direction on the fire truck; he felt if it was something the Chief had recommended, we should consider it.

Council President Polistina noted that it would be considered next year. He commented on the nice letter received from County Executive Levinson in support of Purple Heart Way.

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

Councilman Dewees reported regarding the museum, the phone line issue was being addressed. There were some electrical issues such as outside lighting that would be done in house. The football field would be sodded tomorrow, the Babe Ruth infield had been sodded and was closed until the end of April.

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

Councilman Smith reported he knew Mayor Chau would speak regarding court; they were in a holding pattern now while we discern the County's movements. Northfield Little League opening season would start Monday, April 12th, he encouraged all to attend. On the same day, Northfield Community School would will be returning to normal schedule.

Municipal Clerk Canesi confirmed with Chief Newman that the school had delayed that date by one week, they would start April 19th. Students would be all-virtual the week of the 12th.

Councilman Smith commended our Crossing Guards.

Councilwoman Madden – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden had nothing to report for insurance and safety – the library issue was still a work in progress. Mainland Regional High School had their first in-person Board of Education meeting, in the auditorium. They were planning their Spring musical, ‘Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat’.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021**

Special recognition was given to: Sarah Ramos & James C. Wurzer: 2021 Finalist for National Merit Scholarship Program.

Seal of Biliteracy: Dennis Moreno--Spanish, Pengqi Nong--Mandarin Chinese, Emily Shenkus--Spanish, Ivanna Taveras--Spanish, Gilsayris Vasquez--Spanish

Students of the Month--Feb./March: 9th--Sara Rogers, 10th--Hailey Loewenstern & Jon Wallace, 11th--Conner Murphy, 12th--Julia Goodman

The school was working towards a full-day schedule starting April 19th.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina announced our annual audit was in progress, he hoped to be completed soon. The next meeting Council would be presenting the budget for adoption.

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

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS

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

Solicitor Facenda spoke with Brian Heun, attorney for the owner; their client was on board. Solicitor Facenda conferred with Engineer Nassar regarding the need for a subdivision plan. He would allow Engineer Nassar to speak regarding that. The next step would be an ordinance.

Engineer Nassar advised Council he would prepare a subdivision plan, we needed local and county planning board approval. He would bring additional information to Council at the next meeting.

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

Council President Polistina asked Engineer Nassar to speak regarding Route 9 and Northfield Avenue drainage.

Engineer Nassar received a call from NJDOT, there were several calls back and forth regarding ownership of the system along Northfield Avenue. NJDOT provided an as-built that showed differently; he would follow up with them.

Councilman Dewees, regarding the Route 9 project, he had noticed loose manholes. He asked Engineer Nassar to address them because it could be hazardous. It was the State drainage system.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021

- Lease Agreement, Parking Spaces at Jackson and Fuae Avenues – *Update from Committee*

Council President Polistina advised that he did speak with Planning Board Chairman Levitt and Engineer Nassar, he had additional information to bring back to the committee.

- Shared County Court – *Update, if available, from Mayor Chau*

Mayor Chau announced that at the first meeting in May he would like County Counsel James Ferguson to come answer questions regarding the court. The committee meeting was coming up as well, he offered to present any questions Council may have, to them as well. They met with court 'czars' from North Jersey, from six different towns that have some form of shared court. The grant for the feasibility study was approved. Mayor Chau had questioned the distance that our personnel would have to travel, to a new court. The court 'czars' advised they had not received any complaints in that regard. It was also discussed that virtual and kiosks were here to stay, the only exceptions would be mandatory court appearance matters, such as DUI. Mayor Chau asked what kind of commitment we'd have regarding the financial aspects; the County hoped to provide the information but the County needed commitment by June 1st. They needed ten municipalities to proceed.

Councilman Smith recommended we invite them during the work session.

Council President Polistina agreed, we would add an appearance by Counsel Ferguson to the work session at the first meeting in May.

Councilman Smith asked would the legislature have this enabled? Would we have a commitment by January 1st? We share with Linwood, and they have a proposal from Hamilton. That was all up in the air now because of the regional court.

Mayor Chau replied that plan A was that Mr. Sweeney could get this passed. Plan B is to do a shared court, similar to what we were doing right now, with one lead municipality. He gave the example of Northfield being the lead, for the hiring of the personnel, judge etc., the physical location would still be at the county building in Mays Landing.

Councilman Notaro asked did each municipality have to have State approval?

Mayor Chau replied, yes. If we don't get it by July 1, then we would go to plan B.

Councilman Smith expressed his concern about the county wanting our commitment by June 1st. He offered plan C as potential agreement with Hamilton Township as well.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021**

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Recreational Marijuana – *Requested by Council President Polistina*

Council President Polistina moved to recreational marijuana; it had been approved by the State. We had until August 11th to act, if we do not, it is automatically approved in Northfield for five years. If we fail to act, any businesses that opens during that time would be permitted to remain open, even if we act at the end of the five-year period. If we choose to prohibit everything now, we can always make changes within the five-year period. This would involve our Planning Board, he noted that Dr. Levitt was here. It passed in New Jersey by 66% and in Northfield by 70%.

Dr. Richard Levitt, addressed Council as a resident, not as the Planning Board Chair. He asked if Councilmembers were familiar with the different classes of license?

All generally agreed.

Dr. Levitt asked Solicitor Facenda to confirm that we have the right to prohibit in public spaces.

Solicitor Facenda believed that to be true.

Dr. Levitt suggested that Council may want to consider that.

Dr. Levitt noted that what people do in their own homes would be their own businesses. He believed there would be little harm in permitting it in the RC or commercial zone. It's going to happen; he didn't see the harm. As far as manufacture and wholesale, he was not sure we'd have the infrastructure; but that would be up to Council. If it's going to happen, let's be a part of it and get some money for it and not send our citizens out of town.

Solicitor Facenda clarified that Dr. Levitt was referring to a 'class 5' retailer license in the RC and C zones.

Dr. Levitt confirmed.

Solicitor Facenda, and the 'class 6' delivery license?

Dr. Levitt felt it didn't make sense to permit the retailer, but prohibit the retailer from delivering.

Council President clarified that we can't prohibit deliveries coming in from another town.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021**

Dr. Levitt agreed, it may not make sense to limit 'class 6' as it is compatible with 'class 5'. He did not see the demand or capacity for other types of licenses, but we could always prohibit now and add it back later.

Mayor Chau stated when Mayor Chau was in Denver, he did not see any shops downtown but along the major highway on the way to airport that is where the facilities were. He did not see anyone in the public using the drug. As Dr. Levitt said what you do in your own home is your own business. He noted Ocean City was a dry town; it's alcohol, but it is possible to outlaw something that is legal somewhere else. He noted that he was approached last year about a grow license by someone who did have the capability.

Councilman Perri thanked Dr. Levitt for his years of service on the Planning Board. He asked Dr. Levitt to delineate the zones he was referring to.

Dr. Levitt replied it's basically all of Tilton Road.

Councilman Utts was not sure but it's beyond Cresson Avenue.

Dr. Levitt felt it would include Gurwicz.

Councilman Perri recalled that zone had changed since the affordable housing plan.

Dr. Levitt replied the ordinance can state it excludes the residential portion.

Councilman Perri stated it was one parcel on the zoning map.

Engineer Nassar confirmed that from Debora to Egg Harbor Township was Regional Commercial; Gurwicz and that parcel was Commercial Multi Family.

Dr. Levitt felt Council may want to include some of the Commercial Business zone, he suggested they have to take a look.

Councilman Perri noted it's not near churches, houses, etc. he felt the Regional Commercial was the fit for Northfield.

Councilwoman Madden agreed with Dr. Levitt; in this day and age it's like a liquor store. There are environmental issues with growing, she is concerned about these and does not see this as benefitting the City.

Councilman Utts noted that wholesalers were not growers.

Councilwoman Madden asked could you limit the number of stores?

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021**

Dr. Levitt didn't think so, but we may be able to limit the distance, possibly via the mercantile license.

Clerk Canesi clarified that unless they sell something else, no mercantile would be required. She gave the example of a liquor store. If a marijuana retailer sold paraphernalia, we would be able to license that.

Council President Polistina asked Clerk Canesi for a timeline for an ordinance.

Clerk Canesi explained that Council would introduce, then refer to the Planning Board, it would come back to Council, it could possibly require an amendment. In theory it could be done in a month.

Council President Polistina conducted a straw poll, all were in general agreement with what had been discussed with classes of license, and permitted zones.

Councilman Perri, as far as distribution, he'd like to take a look at that, it might be more money to the City in the long run without having any growth.

Councilman Dewees and Councilwoman Madden agreed.

Councilman Utts noted Hollywood Smokin' would be excluded.

Engineer Nassar and Solicitor Facenda clarified the zones.

Mayor Chau noted there were three in Northfield that currently sell rolling papers etc. that would be excluded.

Councilman Perri felt they were too close to houses.

Councilman Smith said he represented the 30% who did not support it, he was not in favor of anything.

Councilman Notaro was on the fence.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone was interested in forming a committee to put something together for a presentation at the next council meeting.

Councilmen Utts, Dewees and Perri volunteered.

Council President Polistina asked the committee to keep Dr. Levitt and Chief Newman in the loop.

Councilman Perri, for new business, noted everyone was copied on Mr. Goldstein's letter, he was requesting widening of Maple Avenue in front of his house, by an

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021

additional six feet. Mr. Goldstein would give all of the needed approvals. This was the third time Mr. Goldstein had come to Councilman Perri with this. It would increase the cost of the road, but it is washing out in areas.

Mayor Chau asked were other residents affected?

Councilman Perri believed it was only on Mr. Goldstein's side.

Engineer Nassar responded, yes, the street narrows, if you widen his section, then it would be narrow after that. Where do you stop?

Councilman Notaro asked if we widen the street would it be more like the other streets in the area?

Engineer Nassar replied it was narrow, our streets are 30 feet. It's basically an alley. Bear in mind this is was a major undertaking, there were trees, you have to cut the road.

Councilman Notaro asked was this something we need to do?

Engineer Nassar noted his house was very close to the street, if you widen the road his house becomes closer to the street.

Mayor Chau recalled many many years ago, we had this request; a resident didn't want the road widened because they didn't want their tree removed.

Engineer Nassar noted there were other streets, but this street was on the project list. It had been mentioned to Mr. Goldstein that we would straighten the road and try to widen it a bit, but to do six feet, too much had to be done.

Councilman Perri added, when you come in off of Lake Avenue on to Maple Avenue, the road was wide. If we gave him two or three feet, we wouldn't have to take the tree down.

Engineer Nassar replied that three feet would involve taking the tree down.

Councilwoman Madden was not in favor of widening the road.

Councilman Dewees thought we could figure something out; Councilman Dewees and Councilman Perri would meet with Engineer Nassar to try to come up with a solution within the constraints of the paving project.

Council President Polistina moved to the regular agenda.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021**

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Council President Polistina made the agenda assignments.

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Nassar announced a potential grant for recreational improvements, he met with Councilman Dewees and they would come up with a plan. Also, regarding the parking lot on Fuae, he noted that Dr. Levitt had comments he would like to make.

Dr. Levitt returned to the podium; he had always thought it was de-facto parking that the deli had, but found out it was a lease from back when there were two boards, Planning and Zoning. He suggested to check with the Police Chief to see if there have been parking issues. He suggested putting in the lease that if there was a change in the character of the business that would require a change in parking, it would require approval by the City engineer. He did not think it was an issue.

Councilman Perri added that there was an approval for expansion on the property, it was conditioned on those spaces being available, we are the landlord and we have to honor that to a certain extent.

Dr. Levitt felt we could impose reasonable conditions in a lease.

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.

Heather Mellon, 2509 Herbert Drive, thanked Mayor and City Council for all of their help with the Crossing Guards. She advised Council that she was the Guard Supervisor; she appreciated all the City did for them; thermometers, masks, handwash, etc. She realized it was at an extra cost but the safety of our children come first. She thanked Mary Canesi, and Shannon Campbell; whenever Mrs. Mellon needed anything, they were there. Chief Newman and Captain Steinecke were very accommodating, on more than one occasion there weren't enough guards and children were always taken care of.

Mrs. Mellon, regarding library, announced that she was a member of the Friends of the Library and she felt things would really change if the library becomes a County branch. Mrs. Mellon would wait and see as more information comes out. She noted the project recently done by an eagle scout.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021

Mayor Chau responded that he would be proposing to the Council, to have a representative from the county come to answer questions. Regarding outreach, programs there would be no issue, but the approval process would be through the County as opposed to the Library Director. As far as the Friends of the Library, they would not be able to hold fund raisers at the library, but they could be held at another facility, and they could possibly join as representatives of the County Library Board. The building would still be City property.

Mrs. Mellon, referring to marijuana, said there was a major problem in the US with drugs, and it was a stepping stone to more potent drugs, it was not always the case with everyone who smokes a joint for sure, but she was concerned about children, because it would be more easily accessible. She didn't think the City making money justified it.

Mayor Chau agreed with Mrs. Mellon, adding that if we don't sell it and other municipalities do, they will still get it. We will have to decide if we want it in our City.

Councilman Perri, to clarify, asked how does the referendum come about?

Mayor Chau replied Council would have to make the decision. If Council didn't move it forward, it wouldn't go on the ballot.

Robert Zlotnick, PhD, 8 Ridgewood Court (speaking via Zoom), announced he was the Executive Director of Atlantic Prevention Resources, he specialized in treatment, recovery and support, he explained the location of their facilities. He wanted to weigh in on the cannabis issue. He was also in the 30%, he was also in recovery for 35 years. He used cannabis in college. The product in 2021 was very different, much higher now in THC, from 3% in the 80's to upward of 20% and more today, some products up to 99% THC. He spoke with Susan Korngut when she was on Council, and understood that this would probably go through. Dr. Zlotnick suggested restricting advertising, especially if neighboring towns don't sell it, it could cause undue traffic, hanging out in parking lots, maybe panhandling. We can't stop it but there were ways to prevent it from becoming a mecca. Upper Township and Ocean City have already said they were not going to allow sales, which would make Somers Point a mecca. He noted that Dr. Levitt mentioned that Birch Grove Park and the bike path were already smoke free. He also was an advocate of pickle ball, he suggested courts possibly at Birch Grove Park.

Councilman Dewees advised that we were in the process of plans for pickle ball courts at Birch Grove Park.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone else from public wished to speak.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2021

Mayor Chau added that any funds from the Friends of the Library would go to the County, for designation for use at the Northfield branch.

Councilman Notaro asked where would the library surplus go; would it go to the County?

Mayor Chau believed that would be the case.

Councilman Perri stated we do receive money back from the library from the MOA.

Councilman Perri believed surplus would go to the County.

Joan Brennan, 116 Dolphin Avenue (speaking via Zoom), wanted to review issues from last month. She came in late, had anyone discussed parades or concerts?

Mayor Chau had discussed with the City Clerk.

Mrs. Brennan asked was the 4th of July Parade approved? And the concerts?

Clerk Canesi explained typically the city was not involved in the coordination of the bands that played. There is an insurance requirement that needs to be met for the bands. She suggested having the Solicitor help with an agreement for the bands to sign. You would have to plan within your budget.

Mrs. Brennan would go back and check on the budget, she would get something formulated so there are no issues with the contracts.

Clerk Canesi announced there was no one else in Zoom wishing to speak.

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

At 7:38pm, on a motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Smith, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk