

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
APRIL 16, 2019**

At 6:08pm 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 Council President Lischin.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Dewees, Korngut, Madden, Perri, Smith, Lischin  
Absent: O'Neill

Solicitor Facenda, Chief Newman and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance.

*\* Mayor Chau arrived at 6:41pm.*

**WORK SESSION TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – OLD BUSINESS**

- Potential Sale of Landlocked City Owned Property

Solicitor Facenda advised that no one showed up to the auction; it is an option at Council's discretion to do it again. He explained that the legwork for the auction had been done, and that perhaps by reducing the minimum bids, a few were saleable at the right price. He also suggested Council could do some targeted marketing. Previously we only had to notice the adjacent owners for the undersized parcels. He gave the parcels near the church as examples.

*At 6:11pm, Clerk Canesi noted that the recording equipment did not seem to be functioning. She turned it off, and then on again, and it then seemed to be working. It was determined after the conclusion of the meeting that the recording equipment had failed and no audio record of these proceedings exists.*

Councilman Dewees asked if we could vacate our interest in them or give them to the Country Club.

Solicitor Facenda advised that some were in the marshes.

Municipal Clerk Canesi explained that if you look at the history, these parcels used to be owned by the Country Club, but were deeded over to us at some point in the process.

Solicitor Facenda would work with Clerk Canesi to re-advertise.

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

Councilman Dewees advised he would be meeting with Superintendent Vitale on Thursday.

Council President Lischin noted that he had spoken with the owners of Beacon; they had brought this to Council numerous times.

- 2018 Road Paving Project – Tree Conflicts on Walnut Avenue

Solicitor Facenda advised that he had not heard back from the second owner on Walnut.

Engineer Nassar stated that project was proceeding.

- Fee Ordinance for Use of Athletic Field Lights

Council President Lischin asked to put the fee ordinance for lights at fields to be put on the agenda for August or September, he would like it removed until then.

Councilman Perri referred to Atlantic County's field use package, it includes lights etc.; all can be found online on the County website.

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

Solicitor Facenda stated that as a follow up to the last meeting, he'd sent out the most recent version of the sign ordinance. The issues and changes remaining pertain to any additional signs permitted in CC zone. We know LED is off the table but what about other signs. He stated that Planning Board Chair Dr. Levitt and Vice Chair Mr. Scharff were in attendance this evening. He also referred to the need to determine how to enforce the LED regulations.

Clem Scharff, 105 Circle Drive, Vice Chair for the Planning Board, explained that a nit is a unit of light coming from a screen. An electrical meter with a sensor is used to read the output, with an accuracy of within a ½ of a nit. Units can be found on Amazon for around \$300.00. He explained 50 nits, in layman's terms, as similar to the clock on the bike path; that's around 50 nits, maybe a little dimmer. Many scientific studies show that drivers should not be subjected to lights brighter than 50 nits.

Council President Lischin said he hoped the meter will be more enforceable than the sound meter was, referring to the sound ordinance.

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Solicitor Facenda asked if 50 nits were visible during the day.

Mr. Scharff replied no; it would be like looking at a cell phone in the daylight.

At Council President Lischin's request, Mr. Scharff explained the diffuser referenced in the ordinance.

Solicitor Facenda asked for clarification on the use of the white background when measuring the nits; what if the owner says no.

Mr. Scharff replied you can still measure it. He asked if it could be made part of the ordinance that they have to agree to testing if requested.

Councilwoman Korngut asked what was the number the Planning Board was recommending.

Mr. Scharff replied 50 nits at 100% whiteness, at whatever hours are determined to be night.

Engineer Nassar asked if the nits can be measured with anything other than a white background.

Mr. Scharff advised that they were most accurate at white; he offered to provide Solicitor Facenda with the ordinance from another town for reference.

Council President Lischin stated that at his request, Clerk Canesi had forwarded an email to Council with the sign research. The remaining item is the size of a permitted sign at the Country Club.

Councilman Dewees asked how many signs they will have.

Council President Lischin replied a free-standing sign, 50 square feet a side, not more than one sign every 300 feet.

Councilman Perri and Councilman Dewees both stated their belief that it was one sign per property.

Councilwoman Madden said she felt we should go with recommendation of the Planning Board.

Council President Lischin advised Councilwoman Madden she must ask permission of the Chair to speak; it was his meeting, as per Robert's Rules.

Councilwoman Madden asked to speak.

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Council President Lischin replied no. He asked Councilman Perri to continue.

Councilman Perri questioned if the 50 square feet was combined, or not.

Council President Lischin replied that he did not want to have issues rehashed, if someone is bringing something new to the table that's fine. He advised Councilwoman Madden she may speak.

Councilwoman Madden said she did not think it was rehashing to have a Planning Board and respect their opinion.

Council President Lischin reiterated that he decided who can speak and when, as the Council President.

Solicitor Facenda asked Councilman Perri for the specific section of the Code where he sees the square foot issue.

Councilman Perri responded; he explained that it was always a one-sided sign, it needed to be clarified.

Council President Lischin, Councilman Perri and Councilman Dewees discussed setbacks, distance from center line on Shore Road, and rights of ways.

*At 6:41pm Mayor Chau entered the meeting.*

Solicitor Facenda stated that he needed direction; he did not know where Council wanted to go with this.

Council President Lischin commented it was not determined how many signs they can have; they have many signs now.

Councilman Perri replied the other smaller signs were preexisting nonconforming signs.

Mr. Scharff advised the Country Club was limited in where a sign can go, if they put it down further towards Ventura's, a driver is going to miss the entrance.

Councilwoman Korngut asked how the Country Club arrived at the original size of 36 square feet.

Mr. Scharff added that the original sign when they were privately owned was 1 square foot.

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Council President Lischin asked why, when the Country Club came before the Planning Board and wanted to move the sign to the open space further down, why the Planning Board said no.

Dr. Levitt, 2200 Bay Drive, Planning Board Chair, explained that they did not want to move the sign, they wanted to add another. He referred to the sign section of Chapter 215 of the Code. He was not opposed, personally, to two signs at the entrance, and felt it would be more attractive and easier to read than a perpendicular sign. He explained the difference between facade signs and the signs the Council wanted.

Council President Lischin said he had talked to the Country Club about what signs the Country Club wanted, he felt Dr. Levitt was trying to dictate to the Country Club what they can do.

Dr. Levitt replied; he was trying to come up with something everyone can agree to.

Councilman Dewees asked what the requirements for a building sign were.

Dr. Levitt read directly from the ordinance: not more than one for each 300 feet of street frontage. He commented that his referred to Tilton Road. Would the Country Club be happy with two 40-square-foot signs?

Council President Lischin replied they may. He felt we should let the Country Club Zone do what the other zones do.

Councilman Smith suggested up to three free standing signs with a maximum of 80 square feet, or something similar.

Dr. Levitt did not disagree, but reiterated the need to have the ordinance spell out exactly what was permitted.

Engineer Nassar suggested language that included directional signs.

Dr. Levitt replied yes, adding that directional signs can't have other information on them.

Solicitor Facenda suggested taking the Country Club sign references out of the proposed ordinance; send the draft out, introduce it, send it to the Planning Board and then continue to work on the Country Club signs.

Council President Lischin agreed.

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Councilman Perri asked why the number ten was chosen for political signs; it was only one sign forever.

Solicitor Facenda explained that one was unconstitutional; case law suggested that a numerical limitation is problematic unless that limitation is reasonable. He listed the number of potential seats in a given election, and stopped counting at nine.

Councilman Perri noted that this would be a lot of signs; if that is what we have to do, he suggested changing the square footage. He further suggested a four-sign limitation: one each for candidates at the local, county, state, and federal levels.

Council President Lischin asked for a straw poll on five versus ten.

Solicitor Facenda replied there was no assurance that five was constitutional, he was more comfortable with ten.

All members present were fine with five.

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

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Nassar announced that he applied for the ACIA grant for a senior center at Birch Grove.

- Helicopter Landings on Municipal Property – What are requirements?
  - *Req by Chief Newman and Clerk/Administrator Canesi*

Council President Lischin moved to helicopter landings on municipal property.

Chief Newman explained we've had issues with this before, as Council is aware. It came up again in the past few weeks; the YALE school wants to have a helicopter landing. Given what happened after the last episode at the ball fields, he brought it up this request to the Clerk. He wanted to know what the policy was, adding that we do not have one that he was aware of. He said he received a certificate of insurance from the State Police today; he would forward it to the Clerk to see if it meets our standards. Chief Newman stressed the need for a policy. It can't be that it's going to be done anyway if we say no.

Council President Lischin asked who would be liable if a K9 officer does a demo and someone gets hurt.

Solicitor Facenda replied that in such an instance, everyone gets hurt.

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Councilman Dewees asked who controls the landing zone, the last time it happened what if someone got hurt.

Chief Newman responded; when it's done properly the Fire Department sets up a safe landing zone.

Councilman Perri explained what happened last year with the rotor wash damaging a batting cage.

Clerk Canesi suggested a use of facilities form and a specific process for approval.

Chief Newman advised that establishing a landing zone required resources and manpower.

Clerk Canesi requested confirmation that no one member of Council had the authority to grant such an approval, or to change an approval granted by Council.

**PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER**

Council President Lischin then advised that he would be going out of order on agenda, and opened this portion of the meeting for any member of the public to speak on any subject, announcing a five minute per-speaker time limit.

Tom Corona, 2602 Leeds Avenue, said in regard to signs that 50 square foot on both sides is a big sign. Lit, on Shore Road; it's a big sign. Your Planning Board was saying 36; they are there to protect the aesthetics of the town. He did not understand why the Council would go against the recommendations of the Planning Board. They were smart people. He urged Council to abide by the recommendations of the Planning Board. Regarding helicopters, when he was on the rescue squad, the only landing zone was at the Storck Reserve.

Aubrey Hires, 3 Park Road, Linwood, spoke and allowed her son Liam Gerhardt to introduce himself. Liam wanted Council to keep snack bar open, he gets his worms there and snacks too. He thanked the City for holding our fishing tournament.

Ms. Hires was sad to hear the snack bar was closing, she heard that there was a grant to be used as a senior center, and asked if anyone had asked the seniors. We have the Senior Center at the county, and they have a luncheon at the library. She asked about the possibility of having a library presence at the Park Center.

Engineer Nassar explained the limitations of the CBDG grant.

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Councilman Perri advised the idea was presented to the senior membership at the last meeting, also with the Friends of Birch Grove and the Advisory Board, adding that it hasn't been fully vetted yet.

Ms. Hires noted the younger population was interested in keeping that space active.

Christine Taggart, 701 Burton Avenue, did not understand why we let Birch Grove Park 'go'; it made money in the past. She grew up in Northfield. Birch Grove Park was run down. She suggested bringing back the RV's and camping.

Councilman Dewees questioned her comment that Birch Grove Park was run down?

Ms. Taggart replied that it was, kind of.

Mayor Chau agreed with Ms. Taggart; camping was great. However, Council decided financially it was not feasible. He advised we had not been making any money.

Ms. Taggart suggested renting the space out, perhaps adding food trucks; you can make money.

Council President Lischin announced that 5 years ago he was in the same boat as Ms. Taggart; he advised that the park facilities would need a major upgrade. Grants don't come in the numbers we need.

Ms. Taggart replied we should have volunteers.

Council President Lischin replied that it's hard to find volunteers.

Councilwoman Korngut asked Ms. Taggart to present a plan.

Mayor Chau reiterated that volunteers were hard to find.

Council President Lischin echoed what Mayor Chau said.

Councilwoman Korngut noted the need was not limited to volunteers; significant money was needed as well.

Clerk Canesi shared that the baseball snack bars could not open this evening because of lack of volunteers.

Councilman Perri advised Council was still committed to the park, and the amenities that are there. He felt the park was in great shape.



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Councilman Dewees agreed, commenting that Public Works cleaned the trails and opened up 28 fishing spots. His vision of the park was that it be a nature park. There was the possibly adding the ability to have bikes in there. From a business standpoint camping and the snack bar did not make money.

Council President Lischin suggested that Ms. Taggart join the Birch Grove Park Advisory Board.

Councilman Perri also suggested she consider the Friends of Birch Grove.

Councilwoman Korngut mentioned that she was proposing a dog park.

Ms. Taggart replied that Northfield residents can't pick up after their dogs as it is; why would they pick it up in a dog park. She also suggested that people should be able to have birthday parties at the park.

Tom Corona spoke again, and said he had been to the campground at Birch Grove Park. You just can't compete with the other parks with the amenities. He suggested vending machines.

Councilman Dewees replied that he had been considering that, for bait.

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

The order of business returned to the items of New Business, on the agenda.

- *Resolution to Oppose Legalization of Recreational Marijuana – Req by Councilman Smith*

Councilman Smith said in light of what was going on in the State of New Jersey, and as an educator, he felt the movement towards legalization was flawed and left a lot of concerns that were not addressed. Legalizing recreational marijuana sends the wrong message, given the opioid epidemic. He thanked Clerk Canesi for putting the resolution together. He referred to the recommendation of the Chief that we support the resolution. He was just looking to send the State a message.

Mayor Chau agreed with Councilman Smith, there were many concerns with the legislation that needed to be addressed.

Councilwoman Madden felt there needed to be more research. Some States have shown decline in opioid use where marijuana was legalized. She felt vaping was an issue that needed to be addressed now; the marijuana issue needed more research, she not sure it should be opposed at this time.

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Councilwoman Korngut was not in support of the resolution at this time; she didn't have all of the research. The fear is that it was going to get to the kids, and she gets that. We just don't have all the facts; she agreed with Councilwoman Madden about vaping.

Councilman Perri believed it should be left up to the Legislature.

Councilman Dewees was okay with putting it on the agenda.

Councilman Smith felt the same.

Solicitor Facenda suggested putting it on the agenda; if it passed it passed, if it failed it failed.

Mayor Chau added that he was against opening shops that sell marijuana.

Councilman Perri felt the State needed to put an effort on the hard drugs that were killing people.

Council President Lischin asked Clerk Canesi to add the resolution to the next agenda.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

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

Councilman Smith advised that he would abstain from Resolution 96-2019.

Councilwoman Korngut asked why we would not put Resolution 97-2019 out to bid.

Clerk Canesi explained that public bidding takes longer, adding that we did get quotes. Our bid threshold was \$40,000.00.

At 7:54pm, on a motion of Councilman Perri, seconded by Councilman Dewees, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Registered Municipal Clerk