

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION**  
**APRIL 26, 2022**

At 6:06pm 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 Mayor Chau.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Councilwoman Bucci; Councilman Dewees; Councilman Leeds; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina; Mayor Chau

**Absent:** Councilman Notaro, Councilman Smith\*

*\*Councilman Smith entered the meeting at 6:14pm.*

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

Council President Polistina welcomed all to the meeting and 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 reported that he still waiting for a response from the painting contractor with regard to the museum job; if he does not get a response, he will move on and find another contractor.

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

Councilman Utts reported that when Purple Heart Way is dedicated, they want to do a Coast Guard flyover – the Fire Department and appropriate parties have been contacted.

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

Councilman Notaro was absent.

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

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Councilman Leeds reported he attended the Fire Department drill last night; the career Captain had asked Councilman Leeds to come. It was a very impressive event by our volunteers to ensure preparedness. We should appreciate what they were doing, especially when they are doing it for free. OEM got to test their light towers; it was very successful.

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

Councilman Smith was absent during the delivery of Committee Reports, but presented it later in the evening, during the NEW BUSINESS portion of this meeting.

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

Councilwoman Bucci reported she was unable to attend the JIF meeting, but the elected officials training is coming up. Everyone should be signed up to attend. She announced the Municipal Alliance now had a new logo, created by Shannon Campbell's daughter. She shared the details of Golf with a Cop (June 4<sup>th</sup>) and Hooked on Fishing (June 5<sup>th</sup>), and National Night Out in August. For the Library, attendance was up slightly. The longest serving library employee will be retiring and a special event will be planned for her, as well as recruiting for her replacement. The Library continues to follow covid protocols.

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

Council President Polistina reported the budget was slated for adoption this evening. As Councilwoman Bucci mentioned, he was planning a Senior event for May.

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 sent an email to the State advising them that we were not in a financial position to make the requested repairs. It was their issue and they needed to fix it. He had not heard back but he would keep Council advised.

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

Engineer Nassar did not have an update on the County storm system mapping; Mr. Shourds was leaving and Engineer Nassar would be dealing with his replacement.

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*At 6:14pm Councilman Smith entered the meeting.*

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

Councilman Notaro was absent.

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

Council President Polistina asked Clerk Canesi if there was an update on the land sale?

Clerk Canesi replied she believed a Committee had been formed.

Councilman Utts responded; the Committee had not yet been able to meet.

- 2022 CDBG Application – *Update from Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar reported he was working on the application to include pad sites as part of the grant.

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

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Nassar reported Mayor Chau received a letter from NJDOT regarding municipal aid. We need to come up with roads to be included in the municipal aid application. Also, there was a new opportunity from NJDEP for lakes and stormwater. Engineer Nassar would attend the meetings and keep council informed.

Council President Polistina reported that CFO Stollenwerk submitted to USDA for a grant that may cover up to 35% of the cost of a fire truck.

Councilman Leeds added that they should have the bid specifications for the truck next week, they have invested 700 hours in it.

Council President Polistina moved to the Regular agenda. He asked Councilman Smith if he had a Committee Report.

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

Councilman Smith said there was a meeting last night for the Northfield Community School Board of Education and they introduced their budget; they have a 1.2 cent increase which amounts to \$174,000.00. It was better than usual for the school. He

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said he'd mentioned to our CFO that he would like to see a visual representation on our website to show where our taxes go.

Clerk Canesi advised that we used to have a pie-chart with this information on the website; we took it off when this information was added to the tax bills. We can put it back on the website once the rate is struck.

Councilman Smith announced that he missed the last meeting because he was supporting his wife who received an honor as Egg Harbor Township teacher of the year. He wanted to be sure it was known that he does not miss Council meetings without good reason. He was late tonight because of a softball game. Northfield Little League season was under way and going strong.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda and made the assignments.

Councilman Leeds asked for Resolutions 102-2022 and 103-2022 to be voted on separately.

**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.

Joan Brennan, 116 Dolphin Avenue, came to talk about the burial site. She went to the County meeting last week and it was discussed that they were considering using the property for housing. There are 2,700 people buried there. She is doing an OPRA request to get as much information as she can. The grass gets cut but the County doesn't do much else. Her neighbor trims and cuts around the sign. We don't really know where all the people are on that property. She wanted the City to buy the property, she realized it was a big ask, but the County will use it, eventually. She was told by a representative of the Diocese that they would move the bodies or work around them. She felt the property should be x-rayed. She sent photos to Mayor Chau. People were buried there from 1881 to 1953. They are buried all over that field, not just in one spot or in one row. When it was still Bakersville, people were bringing the dead from all over to bury them here. If we can't buy it, she asked if we could pay for the x-ray and put something there so we know where the dead are buried? She was also concerned about the 10,000 square foot construction site, further up the street. There was a very old tree. She was very opposed to the current location. There was plenty of room elsewhere on the property where it would be better suited and less visible to area residents. She pays \$8,000 in taxes. She hoped Mayor Chau voted no when he met with the arch diocese.

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Councilman Leeds asked if we have any say in this?

Solicitor Facenda replied if you want to attempt to purchase the property, you can enter in to these negotiations.

Councilman Leeds clarified that he was asking about the project itself.

Council President Polistina noted we have formed a Committee and been invited to meet with them.

Councilman Dewees felt we needed more information about specifically where they are going to build.

Ms Brennan, returned to the dais and said she had heard from someone that there was property by the library going to be used for senior housing, the County should buy that and build here.

Council President Polistina advised that was already in progress, by another developer.

Crystal Baker, Maine. Her grandmother is buried in the potter's field; she has a vested interest that her grandmother's grave not be disturbed. She asked that something be done, x-rays, a monument, something. She is not buried where she should have been, with her husband in Egg Harbor Township. These people need to be handled with respect and dignity and the question of whether they are going to be dug up, is not okay. Any assistance that can be put forth to protect these people would be wonderfully appreciated. She thanked Council for their time.

Council President Polistina did not believe the diocese will want to build on top of a potter's field.

Ms Baker advised that she spoke with them briefly. There did not appear to be a lot of information. She felt there was no real idea where the bodies were, radar penetration testing was needed.

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

At 6:39pm, on a motion of Councilman Utts, seconded by Councilman Dewees, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk