

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 2, 2023**

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

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 during roll call, but arrived at 6:10pm.*

Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Nassar, and Sergeant DiMarco (on behalf of Chief VonColln) were also present.

Council President Polistina welcomed all and moved to the Cannabis presentation; he reminded all that cannabis was not presently legal.

6PM CANNABIS PRESENTATION

Leo B. Schoffer, 1 Canale Drive, Egg Harbor Township introduced himself. He wanted to present facts and information for consideration. This was not part of any application. He was an attorney by training, he has been in his family real estate business for over 40 years; he noted projects he's involved in such as Offshore Commercial Park, and the Kensington Complex. He was also involved in the first cannabis facility in Atlantic County for the past 11 years, the Compassionate Care foundation. He introduced John Fleishman and Kayla Montero as his colleagues. He reiterated they were not applicants here tonight.

Ms Montero distributed a packet to the Council.

Mr. Schoffer noted the Cannabis Regulatory Commission breaks the state of New Jersey down in to three parts: Central, South and North Jersey. Cannabis is a heavily regulated industry. There used to be only one retail facility in Atlantic County, Compassionate Care, now there are two because one opened in Atlantic City. He understood that Northfield was only considering a Class 5 retail license; it was important to know these licenses are approved on an annual basis. All products are grown in a licensed, controlled, environment. He offered members of Council the opportunity to take a tour of his facility. He explained the State has a system in place that tracks every product from seed to sale, and all must be in child-proof containers and must be specifically labeled. He noted that Northfield previously drafted an ordinance to permit retail sales and delivery that was never introduced.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 2, 2023

Solicitor Facenda confirmed this to be true.

At 6:10pm Councilman Smith arrived.

Mr. Schoffer continued, and reviewed requirements he would recommend for any facility Northfield authorized, including adequate HVAC, transparency with police, a letter of approval, a restriction on hours of operation to between 9a and 10pm, and a ban on consumption lounges. He acknowledged that many of these considerations were already in Northfield's previously drafted ordinance.

Mr. Schoffer moved to common concerns. Regarding odor: he recommends no growing; all products are in airtight containers and establishments should have appropriate HVAC. No minors should be allowed, with an access foyer as a double check. No loitering should be permitted and no consumption on the premises.

Mr. Schoffer moved to perceived benefits. As to tax revenue, the City can have a user tax of up to 2% per transaction. Based on current marked trends, each dispensary would generate \$250,000 in annual tax revenue for Northfield. The cannabis market was expected to increase at 6% per year based on wider acceptance by the general public. Twenty-five new jobs per dispensary can be anticipated. It was a closer distance for the citizens of Northfield to purchase cannabis, and they would not be paying a tax to a municipality other than their home municipality. Increased tourism: customers come looking for new dispensaries, travelers to shore communities use Tilton Road and those people would stop on Tilton Road stopping at the dispensaries, resulting in out of towners spending money. You would be collecting taxes from nonresidents. Tax revenue could be used to reduce taxes and produce income for special projects the City felt were important.

Mr. Schoffer explained why a dispensary made sense. Fifty-seven (57%) of Northfield residents voted yes to allow dispensaries. Sixty-seven (67%) of State residents voted yes to decriminalization. Northfield residents should not have to purchase in another municipality. Delivery services would be coming in and out of the City but Northfield would not reap any of the benefits of the revenue. Purchasing from a licensed dispensary is safer than purchasing from the black market. He had experience in being a landlord; many of the concerns that Council may have are addressed in the State legislation. Dispensaries could be very attractive stores; Mr. Schoffer's vision is they look like an Apple store, no neon, no flashing lights, etc. He thanked Council for their time, he offered to answer any questions now or in the future.

Council President Polistina thanked Mr. Schoffer. He asked for clarification on a point in the presentation about reducing availability of cannabis to minors.

Mr. Schoffer felt legal dispensaries would put black market out of business, thereby reducing availability to minors.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 2, 2023**

Council President Polistina moved to Committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Leeds – Fire Department/EMS; Planning Board

Councilman Leeds was working on a few issues; he would report at the next meeting.

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

Councilman Dewees reported the vector truck was out and in service for the first time. Superintendent Vitale was working with the contractor regarding the sign in front of City Hall. He was in contact with the sign company to see if they can come up with an idea to illuminate the sign. He would have an update soon. They are working on the football tower, there was electrical work that needed to be done.

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

Councilwoman Bucci reported for the Municipal Alliance: on May 20th at 10:30am there will be a Life Skills through Bike Skills activity at Tuckahoe Bike Shop. She announced the details of the Fishing Tourney and National Night Out. For the Economic Development Commission, they were continuing to work on the Economic Element and a vision plan for Northfield. The Atlantic County Economic Alliance was hiring a planner to work with the committee on that, at their cost; it was one of the benefits of membership. They were also working on speaker events to engage the different businesses. Councilwoman Bucci also announced details for an upcoming event being presented by the Northfield Business Association.

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

Councilman Smith announced Northfield Little League got off to a rousing start, he wished them success and good weather. Northfield Community School shared their budget proposal at their last meeting; it was on their website for anyone who would like to review it. He did not have an update regarding shared dispatch; he was still working on County Court.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno stated that the Mainland Regional High School Board of Education met in April the budget was discussed; our residents would see a slight increase. Their next meeting was scheduled for May 15th at 6pm. Northfield Community School would be doing an unveiling of a bench for Doreen Nuttall

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 2, 2023**

on May 9th after school, near the playground. She invited all to the Memorial Day Ceremony on May 29th.

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

Councilman Notaro had no report.

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

Council President Polistina had no report.

Council President Polistina moved to the ad hoc committee reports.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

- Electric Vehicles (Councilmen Polistina, Notaro) – there was no update.
- Food Trucks (Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Dewees) – Councilwoman Bucci announced she was working on setting up a meeting for next week.
- Sales of Retail Cannabis (Councilwoman Bucci, Councilmen Leeds, Smith) – Councilwoman Bucci believed the Committee should check with the Police Department.

Councilman Smith apologized for being late, he would have liked to have seen the entire Cannabis presentation. In good conscience, he could not be on this Committee, he didn't think \$250,000 was worth one suicide. He has never wavered in his position. He did not see how the legalization of cannabis reduced the chance of minors using it; Mayor Chau had forwarded information regarding a 40% increase in teen suicides since marijuana was legalized. Councilman Smith withdrew from the Committee.

Council President Polistina asked, did anyone want to replace Councilman Smith on the Committee? There were no responses.

- Affordable Housing (Councilman Polistina, Councilwoman Carfagno) – Council President Polistina announced there was a meeting this week with our Affordable Housing Attorney and Planner.

Council President Polistina moved to ongoing business.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

- Stormwater Facilities Shared with Atlantic County–*No Update*

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MAY 2, 2023**

- Potential Sale / Development of City Owned Properties: Block 66 Lot 11; Block 69 Lot 1.02; Block 121 Lot 1 – *No Update*
- Possible Zoning ordinance to regulate Cooperative Sober Living Residences

Solicitor Facenda reported that Linwood has not gotten any backlash from the ordinance they adopted. If Council wanted him to proceed, he can move forward with drafting an ordinance.

Councilman Leeds would like confirmation that this was legal; Senator Polistina's office said it was not.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Nassar announced we received notice of the Municipal Aid Grant opportunity this week; it will be due in July.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Councilman Leeds noted he would abstain from Resolution 106-2023.

Council President Polistina 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.

Seeing no one, in person or on Zoom wishing to speak, Council President Polistina closed the public session.

At 6:35pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk