

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MAY 18, 2021**

At 6:01pm 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 May18, 2021 at [www.cityofnorthfield.org](http://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 May 18, 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/84050504498> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13126266799,,84050504498# or direct dial +1 312 626 6799 using Meeting ID: 840 5050 4498. 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](mailto: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 May 18 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

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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 Council Pro Tempore Dewees.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present (in person):** Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Madden; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Perri; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina

**Absent:** Councilman Smith\*; Mayor Chau\*

*\*Councilman Smith arrived after attendance was taken, at 6:06pm, Mayor Chau arrived at 7:04pm.*

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

**FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF NORTHFIELD (FAN) – PRESENTATION**

- Request for Improvements to Recreation Facilities at Birch Grove Park

Angela Borini, 11 Magnolia Court, introduced herself as the President of FAN, and introduced other members of the FAN Board in attendance. She said FAN was a non-profit, and they had 600 families participate in football, cheer and basketball. The Park needs a refresh; she knew grants were available and could be applied for. They wanted to share their ideas with the Council. Working together big changes could be made.

Chris Graves, 26 Jack Sloan Court, stated that FAN was completely reliant on the school for their basketball court. With school shut down, there was no opportunity to play.

*At 6:06pm, Councilman Smith entered the meeting.*

Mr. Graves continued, he referred to a slide presentation that had been included in the agenda packet and was being displayed on a pull-down screen; he explained the proposed location of basketball courts at Birch Grove Park. Mr. Graves noted the proposed area for basketball courts was underutilized, and was adjacent to the

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playground. He felt it could bring an influx of business to Northfield through tournament play.

Julie Pepper, 114 Mt. Vernon Avenue, said she was a lifelong Northfield resident, her maiden name is Foreman. She was the youngest of 5 children. She grew up at Birch Grove Park, she was raising her family here. A few members of Council may have met with FieldTurf on an informal basis about what a turf field could mean for a community. She thanked Council for the sod, although there was an underlying drainage issue. This past year Northfield's football team was very successful and was given the opportunity to host the playoff games but due to heavy rain, the field was damaged and unplayable. They lost snack bar revenue as a result. The turf field could provide multiple sports: flag football, lacrosse, soccer and other activities. This could mean significant revenue for FAN. They have a sponsorship committee, and have a new sponsor for the scoreboard, and volunteers ready to pave the pavement. Her children play travel soccer and she would like them to play here. Time was of the essence and with the Covid grants, it should be considered. Yes, there was high up-front cost and replacement, but it was a lower per-hour cost, and would generate revenue for years to come. It would be a beautiful re-fresh for our fields.

Steve Malia, 106 Julie Drive, introduced himself as the FAN Treasurer. We needed to figure out how to do all of these things. He stated that he had discussions with Councilman Notaro and Councilman Dewees. The more immediate need was the football tower, the top was falling over and couldn't be used. There were rodents as well. FAN was willing to assist. They had a tough year with lost revenue. FAN attempted to cover the costs with general registration and keep costs low. They lost football tournament play and lost basketball games. He discussed various fundraisers. He understood it was the City's land, and emphasized that communication was important. We all felt sports and outdoor activities were needed for the children of this town. He had spoken with Councilman Dewees, sharing that FAN can contribute. When the basketball court idea originally came up, they had someone who was willing to donate the equipment. He wanted everyone to understand what FAN pays for; helmets had to be refurbished every two years, the cost was \$6,000.00. Pom poms were surprisingly expensive. They were painting everything, paid for cleaning supplies, \$4,600.00 in porta-potty bills, as well as Covid supplies. They understood why it's necessary but it drained their bank account. He offered to answer any questions.

Council President Polistina suggested we wait until the public session for questions.

Council President Polistina thanked FAN for the presentation, they did a great job, it was very informative; he moved to Committee Reports.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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**Councilman Perri**– Public Works: Roads, Engineering, Sewer Operations; Senior Citizens

Councilman Perri reported they were still working on the sump pump issue; it could be costly to the homeowner. He met regarding the road project and paving; he did not have a report for Seniors at this time.

Council President Polistina, referring to sump pumps, asked were we anticipating not having any water in the gutter or were we just looking at not having it puddle?

Councilman Perri felt a moratorium going forward would be appropriate for health and safety reasons, but he was still working on the ordinance.

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

Councilman Utts reported the Planning Board was fairly uneventful. All of Council got the job description for the replacement for our Code Enforcement Officer.

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

Councilman Notaro read the following EMS report: TriCare had a total of 153 dispatches, 127 calls with patients, 95 transports, 12 mutual aid calls to Egg Harbor Township and administered zero Narcan.

The summer concerts at the gazebo would be starting up again. The Cultural Committee was gearing up for the 4th of July Parade, and on May 31<sup>st</sup>, at 9:30am, we would have our Memorial Day Ceremony at Veterans Park. He encouraged all to attend.

Councilwoman Madden read the Fire Department report: 4 fire incident calls, 3 hazardous condition calls, 2 service calls for unauthorized burning, 5 good intent calls, 3 false alarm calls and 2 mutual aid calls to Pleasantville.

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

Councilman Dewees was happy to report that the storage shed for the Police Department had arrived and had been installed.

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

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Councilman Smith said Northfield Little League was sponsoring a cornhole tournament this Saturday in Somers Point, he encouraged all to attend. For Shared Court, Linwood did approve an Agreement to advance the Court with Hamilton Township. Solicitor Facenda had a few questions that needed to be cleared up and we are all waiting for the State to adopt legislation and for the County Court to come on line. Linwood's move puts us in a position to address that move; he suggested Solicitor Facenda address.

Solicitor Facenda announced that he, Council President Polistina, and Clerk Canesi had a call with Hamilton and Linwood. Most concerns were addressed. He would discuss further with Councilman Smith, subject to attorney client privilege.

**Councilwoman Madden** – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden reported that the Mainland Regional High School Board of Education meeting for May 17<sup>th</sup> was canceled and rescheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup>. She read the library report for April: attendance was 278, materials and circulation were 735, e-book circulation was 68, audio book circulation was 67, fines collected \$55.23. The conversation with the County about consolidation was ongoing.

Councilman Smith added that the Northfield Community School Board of Education meeting was this Monday, we can celebrate that school would be in-person for all students next year, that was the expectation.

**Council President Polistina** – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina had no report this evening.

Council President Polistina moved to the unfinished business.

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

- Zion Road Pump Station Easement – *Sub Division Plan is Pending*

Engineer Nassar reported he was still working on the Zion Pump easement sub division plan.

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

Engineer Nassar reported that he had a meeting with the NJ Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding Northfield Avenue; six engineers came to look at the problem. Councilman Dewees was there for a bit, as was Public Works. The DOT agreed that at some point somebody took an old pipe and put a smaller pipe inside. They were not willing to fix the problem 100%; they were willing to share the

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cost. Engineer Nassar advised them that he would take that up with the Council. They were willing to hire an engineering company, contractors etc. to fix the problem from their system, and then we'd have to connect to it. Engineer Nassar's recommendation would be to share the cost.

Council President Polistina asked who would take the lead and bid?

Engineer Nassar replied, we would; this was better because we could manage the project in a more fiscally responsible manner.

Councilman Dewees asked about pipe sizes.

Engineer Nassar explained; a six-inch pipe goes in to a twelve-inch pipe. It bottled up for two to three hours and then goes away. He felt a twelve-inch pipe would be sufficient. He cautioned that no system was designed to handle five to six inches of rain in an hour.

Council President Polistina reiterated that the source of the pipe inside the pipe remained unknown.

Engineer Nassar confirmed. There were no records, but, we did not do it.

Councilman Perri asked was the system a Municipal system in a state right-of-way?

Engineer Nassar replied no, they were in our right-of-way. They handle a portion of Route 9 through our system. He would bring more detail to the next meeting.

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

Council President Polistina had no update on the lease agreement.

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

Mayor Chau was absent. Council President Polistina noted Council did receive a few emails, the project was moving forward but he was not sure at what speed.

- Recreational Marijuana – *DRAFT Ordinance Pending*

Council President Polistina announced the ordinance was pending, he asked if there was any discussion.

Solicitor Facenda added that he should have the ordinance for June introduction and July adoption which was in time for the August deadline.

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Councilman Perri asked what was the obligation to the Planning Board?

Solicitor Facenda advised Council would refer to the Planning Board after introduction, they have 35 days. With Council's permission he would like to be able to provide them with an advisory copy.

There were no objections from Council.

Councilman Smith asked, what if we do nothing?

Council President Polistina replied; if we do nothing, we are subject to whatever the state does. If we opt out, we can opt in at any time in the next five years.

Councilman Smith reiterated his prior objection; he felt it would be better to opt out entirely and watch what happens. He urged caution. He would be voting no.

Council President Polistina asked if were there penalties if they do sell to minors?

Solicitor Facenda hasn't read the state legislation but his guess would be yes. He reminded all that the only control the Council had was 'the where'.

Councilman Notaro asked have we gotten any numbers from dispensaries on sales volume?

Council President Polistina did not know of any.

Councilman Notaro felt it would give us an idea of the income, if it's \$20,000.00 a year it may not be worth it.

Councilwoman Madden noted that it passed statewide by 70%, she reminded Councilman Notaro that he'd stated he did a community poll with similar results. We were here to represent the community.

Councilman Notaro added the 30-40% are vocal, they are sending letters. These were just the discussions we needed to have. With only 37 in the state, we don't know the odds.

Council President Polistina added that if all towns opt out, there could be few towns where a license was permitted.

- Sump Pumps discharging into Storm Drains – *Discussion Ongoing*

Councilman Perri had nothing further on sump pumps.

- 2021 Local Road Program – *Update from Engineer Nassar*

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Engineer Nassar advised the list was still in-progress for the local paving programs.

- 2021 Municipal Aid Program – *Update from Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar suggested Ridgewood Drive, from Route 9 to Linwood, or Oak Avenue, from Zion Road to Linwood. Oak Avenue was more highly traveled.

Councilman Dewees was in favor of Oak Avenue.

Council President Polistina asked other Council members; none objected to Oak Avenue.

Engineer Nassar added that Oak Avenue also connects County roads; he would move forward with Oak Avenue for the State Aid project.

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

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Nassar reported he was working on the grants previously mentioned.

Council President Polistina mentioned the transition of the part-time police secretary to a full-time position. During budget time, this was one of the suggestions to address the administrative needs in the Police Department.

Councilman Dewees asked if it was funded?

Council President Polistina replied, yes.

Councilman Perri would like to see breakdown, before the next meeting.

Council President Polistina agreed.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

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

**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, said she loved the FAN proposal, and hoped they get some funding. She stated if the only reason we were going to okay



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marijuana was because of the money it might bring in to the City, it was very sad and it was not a good enough reason to have something like this in our town.

Council President Polistina said, speaking for himself, that is not in the equation.

Clerk Canesi read the following message from the Zoom Chat:

“Devon Kallen, 2037 North Shepherd Drive, Thank you FAN for volunteering your time to work toward the better meant of our local athletes. These are two amazing projects that can enhance our programs and the community of Northfield.”

Clerk Canesi reads the following email submitted by Joe Goukler:

“Joe Goukler, 14 Jack Sloan Court.....I fully support the attempts by FAN to bring to the attention of the City Council, the need to develop outdoor basketball courts in the Birch Grove Park sports complex. As a Northfield resident and father, and former President of FAN, the need for the basketball courts is well overdue. Additionally, my many discussions with members of council regarding this issue have addressed why the timing is now to move forward with this project. Furthermore, I also fully support further discussion by the City with representatives of Field Turf, based upon an initial meeting with members of council and Field Turf that I attended, this project seems to be a solution to a problem that will continue to pose issues. Thank You for your time.....”

Councilman Dewees asked members of the FAN Board about tournament play and asked FAN if they considered parking. He asked about the issues with the sports tower.

Steve Malia, on behalf of FAN, responded that parking was an issue at Birch Grove Park in general, but he hasn't seen Birch Grove crowded in a while. He did not think it would be crowded but they did recognize parking was an issue. Regarding the tower, there were issues with the railing at the “crow’s nest” and some abandoned speakers. He has been told no one was allowed to go up there. There were water issues in the space and the garage-style door doesn't fully close.

Councilman Dewees clarified: so, the interior was fine, it's just the top?

Mr. Malia replied there were cosmetic and safety concerns.

Councilman Utts asked had they gotten estimates for the bathroom repairs or for basketball courts?

Chris Graves, on behalf of FAN, replied there were no recent estimates; the original estimate was \$15,000.00.

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Mr. Malia added that FAN needed to understand the process, they were open to taking care of it. They had many contractors who could help and donate supplies. FAN was using City facilities. What should they be doing? What should the City be doing?

Council President Polistina stated he will get the right Council person involved. We didn't want anyone doing major renovations and being injured. And of course, it must be done up to Code.

Councilwoman Madden, looking to see what the City can do, asked were there any grants that involve basketball courts?

Mr. Malia replied he believed there was one on the agenda.

Councilwoman Madden asked did FAN want the City to make a yearly commitment in terms of funding?

Mrs. Borini stated that in years past the City gave FAN \$10,000.00, but in the past 10 years they haven't.

Council President Polistina replied when FAN was organized and disbanded the prior entity, we lost our ability to have the sports organization included under our existing insurance policy and coverage had to be purchased separately thereafter. The \$10,000.00 now pays for the insurance. The Council tried to stop the disbanding because it would have been beneficial.

Mrs. Borini felt improvements at Birch Grove Park were long overdue. They pay a lot of taxes in this town. Birch Grove Park has declined. She thought it would look really bad if the City didn't pay for the insurance.

*At 7:04 Mayor Chau entered the meeting.*

Mrs. Borini continued; she didn't know what they were allowed to do. She agreed the parking was an issue, but it's because people want to come to the games. They would give a to-do list and the Council can tell them what they can and cannot do.

Councilwoman Madden asked what happened when it rained on turf?

Mrs. Borini replied the drainage was different.

Councilman Notaro added that drainage was part of the cost.

Councilwoman Madden asked how many home games they played?

Mrs. Borini replied, seven.

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Councilman Perri stated it was nice to see the new energy, everything they presented brings back the younger days. He looked back in time at all the volunteering, with his family. There were many people that built that field.

Councilman Notaro added that budget time was February, that was the time to look at these things.

Mrs. Borini noted that she had forwarded grants.

Clerk Canesi acknowledged having received the information provided by FAN, adding that the grants were among those the City was already aware of, and working on.

Council President Polistina encouraged that all grant opportunities FAN was aware of be forwarded to the City.

Councilman Smith echoed Councilman Perri's sentiments. He was born and raised in Northfield. He felt it's overdue for Northfield to step up and do more, he understood budgetary constraints but would love to see improvements at Birch Grove Park.

Councilman Notaro added that he had been sitting in on meetings with these people, they were very organized and had a lot of energy. It was great to have people like them; otherwise, we would have nothing for our kids. It's time we start doing something as a City to take the pressure off.

Council President Polistina thanked all for their volunteerism.

Mrs. Borini distributed tickets to Council for an upcoming FAN fundraiser.

Amanda Buccafurni, 2006 Wabash Avenue (speaking via Zoom), thanked FAN. She asked who was responsible for the bathrooms and the upkeep at the field?

Councilman Dewees believed FAN was cleaning the bathrooms but he could confirm that tomorrow.

Mrs. Buccafurni asked was that the same for Northfield Little League?

Councilman Dewees replied the City takes care of those two days a week, and Little League did it the other days.

Mrs. Buccafurni stated the bathrooms were a disgrace, our taxes are the highest we've ever seen. Teacher salaries were the lowest in the County. It was sad to see, they were trying to get everyone to take a look. The kids needed sports. FAN needed to find out who was responsible, everyone was unsure. She asked how can we figure this out and get clarity. As far as the grant goes, she knew that the deadline was in a

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couple of days. She had a list of grants and asked who could she send them to?

Clerk Canesi replied that Mrs. Buccafurni could sent them to her.

Mrs. Buccafurni replied a lot of them had expired but were annual.

Clerk Canesi advised we needed to see the grant when the grant window is open.

Mrs. Buccafurni asked about the large grant for recreation.

Clerk Canesi advised the local recreation grant was on the agenda and it does include a basketball court.

Mrs. Buccafurni asked if it included anything for the football field or drainage.

Clerk Canesi replied, not in this particular grant, no. FAN mentioning the turf field for the first time. The City knew about the grant prior to FAN forwarding the information, and we have been working on it for a while. In this case, the projects that the City had earmarked for the grant had already been decided. All of Council was open to FAN's suggestions, but ultimately the governing body chooses the project for grant applications.

Councilman Dewees hoped the newly sodded field would alleviate some of the runoff problems; we were sitting on clay. He also hoped new sod would help.

Jerry Breeden, 109 Roosevelt Avenue said regarding the marijuana, Northfield needed all the help it can get. Thursday of last week, someone put commercial-grade weedkiller on the bike path. Right when it was put down there were children sitting on the area. There were signs but they got knocked over. He felt the City should have told people, channel 22, whatever, the City should have told people that they were putting weed killer down.

Councilman Dewees advised that the product was environmentally friendly, but agreed there should have been more signs.

Mr. Breeden, continued; he said there was a class action lawsuit involving that company and cancer. The signs say they can be removed after 72 hours, you're not supposed to walk on it. It gets on shoes, on dog paws, and gets in to people's homes. He would call Don Williams if it happened again. He thanked all for their hard work. He praised the Police Department and Public Works. He thanked all again, and said God bless all of you.

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

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**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

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

*At 7:25pm*, 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