

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MAY 26, 2020**

At 6:05pm this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2020 and on May 23, 2020, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

*Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), this meeting will be live-streamed using Zoom conferencing service and the public is restricted from attending in-person. To join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86072231972>; Meeting ID: 860 7223 1972; One tap mobile +13126266799,86072231972# US (Chicago); +16465588656,86072231972# US (New York); Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago); +1 646 558 8656 US (New York); +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown); +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston); +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose); +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma); Meeting ID: 860 7223 1972*

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present (in person):** Councilman Dewees; Councilman O’Neill; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Perri; Mayor Chau

Solicitor Stein and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance.

**Present (via telephone):** Councilwoman Madden

**Absent:** Councilwoman Korngut

Chief Newman was also present via telephone.

Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“As everyone knows, based on an Executive Order of the governor, public gatherings are limited to not more than 10 people. Tonight, the following are in attendance via telephone only, using the speaker function of the telephone in the Council Chambers meeting room:

- Councilwoman Madden
- Chief of Police Paul Newman

Also for this reason, members of the public are not able to attend tonight’s meeting in person, but we are pleased to announce that virtual attendance has been made possible via a video-conferencing service called Zoom; 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 can access Zoom have been made available on the municipal website and Facebook pages, and was published in the Press of Atlantic City.

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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.

When the time comes for public comment, a specific announcement will be made; one by one telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. Web-browser attendees may ask questions or make comments via the ‘chat’ function. Comments will not be acknowledged until the public comment portion of the meeting begins; at which time they will be read aloud into the record.”

Council President Perri welcomed everyone. He thanked everyone on the front lines, including City employees for doing a great job.

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

- Radio Tower, Rear of City Hall– *Update if applicable from Council President Perri*

Council President Perri did not have an update.

- Proposed Dog Park – *Update if applicable from Councilwoman Korngut*

Councilwoman Korngut was absent.

Council President Perri moved to new business.

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

- Temporary Outdoor Dining

Council President Perri announced that Solicitor Stein had put together some recommendations to allow for temporary outdoor dining.

Councilman Dewees noticed that one business on Tilton Road had tables out; had that been addressed?

Mayor Chau replied yes, it had.

Councilman Dewees asked were we allowing it?

Council President Perri replied that Solicitor Stein had gone over a lot of research, he was trying to direct it so they don't have to go before the Planning Board.

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Councilman Dewees hoped we could accommodate the businesses.

Solicitor Stein reviewed the elements of a development application.

Councilman O'Neill asked if we were looking for a straw vote?

Council President Perri advised that an order hadn't been established yet, he confirmed with Solicitor Stein.

Solicitor Stein replied no, but he cannot make policy, he felt a straw vote may not be a bad idea so Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer Dattalo could proceed when the restrictions were lifted.

Councilman O'Neill suggested figuring it out tonight so Mr. Dattalo could be prepared to make decisions.

Council President Perri asked if we needed a resolution?

Solicitor Stein replied no.

Council President Perri asked how would policy not allow him to do it right now?

Solicitor Stein advised that the Governor's order hasn't allowed in person seating. Council needed straw vote to tell Mr. Dattalo it's a good policy and he can proceed.

Councilman O'Neill urged the City to have businesses be proactive so Mr. Dattalo can start now, we should not wait until after the Governor lifted the restrictions.

Mayor Chau asked if there was a fee.

Solicitor Stein replied that development applications require a fee, he asked Municipal Clerk Canesi what the fee was.

Clerk Canesi replied that she did not know; that would be a Planning Board fee.

Solicitor Stein added that outdoor seating could not be in a parking lot, it had to be in the same block and lot. Any denials would be subject to the appeals process under 40:55d.

Mayor Chau asked could temporary structures be erected to accommodate additional seating?

Solicitor Stein replied no.

Councilman O'Neill noted that he had 100% confidence in Mr. Dattalo.

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Council President Perri felt we had to make an effort to support the businesses.

Clerk Canesi asked how were we going to communicate this to the businesses, since it was being recommended that we do so.

Solicitor Stein spoke specifically about a place. He referred to people waiting to get in to facilities, based upon indoor restrictions. He suggested notifying certain restaurants, and by word of mouth, it would spread.

Council President Perri felt that until we get authorization from the Governor, we were putting the cart before the horse. Once the public knows the capability is out there for outdoor dining, we can put it on the webpage or however else we communicate. He felt we could put a provision in place and have it ready.

Solicitor Stein advised that Mr. Dattalo couldn't make a decision until capacity restrictions were known. He could look at them but couldn't make a final decision. The Governor's orders have had future dates.

Clerk Canesi asked how was a plan and drawing submitted without knowing capacity limits?

Solicitor Stein agreed, until a final order comes down Mr. Dattalo can't make a decision, but Mr. Dattalo should be able to make an educated guess.

Council President Perri felt that some businesses weren't going to be able to do it at all.

Solicitor Stein replied that we couldn't give them a permit but could review their application.

Councilman Smith expressed concern that establishments would file an application and be charged a fee, then could be turned down.

Solicitor Stein noted that restaurants would have to make a decision about \$50, he was sure Mr. Dattalo will accommodate.

Mayor Chau added that the Governor may have other ideas.

Council President Perri replied true, he may allow tents, etc.

Solicitor Stein advised that all he did was to try to find an expedited way to do it. It would vary by what was out on the street, so to speak. Businesses would have to make a decision as to whether they want to pay a fee.

Councilwoman Madden suggested drawings.

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Council President Perri replied that would be part of the application.

Councilwoman Madden brought up smoking, would this be considered indoors because there are tables?

Council President Perri replied that was a good question.

Solicitor Stein replied that restaurants would have to decide whether they want smokers or not. Restaurants were not a government building.

Clerk Canesi suggested to Councilwoman Madden that it was difficult to hear her.

Councilwoman Madden replied that she would speak louder.

Council President Perri announced a vote to allow an exempt development for outdoor dining when the Governor approves that process. The Zoning Official would have to review and approve outdoor dining without a development application.

Council President Perri noted that we were in the pre-review stage and said that once approved payment would be due when application was made.

Council President Perri called for a voice-vote, all were in favor, with Councilwoman Korngut absent.

- No Parking, Cresson Avenue between Fabian Avenue and Walnut Avenue

Councilman Perri moved to the next item in new business, which involved a suggestion by the Chief of Police that the City consider restricting parking on a section of Cresson Avenue. All have received the information; he deferred to Chief Newman.

Chief Newman explained that the proposal was to restrict parking on both sides of Cresson Avenue between Fabian and Walnut. Photos were sent to Council to depict the issue; cars were being forced across the center line due to vehicle parking. There were six or seven residences in the area, and all have off street parking.

Councilman O'Neill asked if residents are requesting it.

Chief Newman replied it was a police concern.

Mayor Chau asked was it related to Cresson Hill.

Chief Newman responded not that he was aware.

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Council President Perri would not be opposed to Council sending notices to the affected residences; it could create a hazard; it was a heavily traveled road.

Councilman Dewees to Engineer Nassar, explained it was not a curve, but an angled point in the road; was there is an engineering solution?

Engineer Nassar replied no, but once the road was paved speeds have increased, he also noted that cars don't always park close enough to the curb.

Councilman Dewees asked was there a way to widen the road on the south side of Cresson?

Engineer Nassar replied no.

Councilman O'Neill noted that cars park on both sides of Sutton now.

Discussion ensued between Council President Perri and Engineer Nassar.

*At 6:48pm Clerk Canesi noted for the record that Solicitor Stein was not visible on camera.*

Councilman O'Neill asked if we were putting signs up now.

Council President Perri explained that Council would need an ordinance. The ordinance would need a first and second reading; he would not be opposed to seeking resident input but ultimately it was local jurisdiction.

Engineer Nassar stated that people could park on Walnut and walk up. He suggested the Chief look into other locations and put them in one ordinance.

Councilman O'Neill was concerned if we do it for this street, we will get requests from others.

Council President Perri reiterated that this was a police recommendation.

Council President Perri called for a voice-vote to allow Chief Newman to proceed with working on language to be used for an ordinance. All present were in favor with the exception of Councilman O'Neill who abstained. Councilwoman Korngut was absent.

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Perri asked if there was any new business or any new grant opportunities.

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Engineer Nassar reported that because we do not meet the low-income criteria for the grant, we need to come back with another application for the CBDG project at the park for the pavilion and workout stations. The project needed to benefit ADA, seniors, etc.

Councilman Dewees commented that he had a few suggestions.

Councilman Smith announced that the Governor allowed for batting cages to be open, and said he had received a few texts. Councilman Smith reached out to Northfield Little League and they don't have teams right now, so they weren't in favor of it. He wanted to know what Council thought. He referred to Solicitor Stein's opinion on the subject. He noted there had been requests to open the batting cages at Birch Grove Park.

Solicitor Stein stated that he had prepared an opinion which was sent to Council.

Councilman Dewees asked who would manage the sanitizing, etc., we can't meet that standard, or at least can't sit and oversee it.

Councilman Smith replied that given the Executive Order, he would agree.

Councilman O'Neill asked what would be sanitized?

Council President Perri replied the gates, etc.

Clerk Canesi added that the order would require a reservation procedure, and we would have to have staff present to ensure that people waiting in line were 6' apart.

Council President Perri hoped that restrictions would lessen, but this is what we have right now.

Councilman Smith asked if the opening of City Hall was on the agenda; didn't restrictions lessen?

Clerk Canesi advised that the indoor restriction was still 10 people, and she was working on a plan with Mayor Chau so we could be ready when the date was chosen.

Mayor Chau added that we were working to purchase supplies and equipment so we were ready; at this point we would mandate that employees and visitors wear masks, one department had requested plexiglass shields.

Councilman Smith stated that the question had been raised about the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade, and whether or not we would be holding a parade. He spoke with Roy Clark from the Cultural Committee; we were quickly running out of time. He suggested we discuss whether we should or are even allowed to, have a parade.

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Mayor Chau advised that a main organizer of the parade passed away recently as all knew. Mayor Chau spoke with Roy Clark and Joyce Pullan from the Cultural Committee; we are in desperate need of individuals to join the Cultural Committee. Joyce Pullan was not in a situation to be able to assist. He had previously spoken with Joan Pullan Brennan and asked her to proceed, but Ms Brennan did not have much information. Ms Brennan did proceed nonetheless, and found that many are not making a commitment due to the current restrictions. Mayor Chau and Ms Brennan decided it would be best to cancel. He also spoke with Jay Hurley about the Connolly Mile. As of right now the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade is canceled. He was looking perhaps at Labor Day.

Councilman Smith noted that he had a similar to conversation with Roy Clark.

Councilman O'Neill, to Mayor Chau, commented that if you had one police car and one fire truck, he would have the parade.

Council President Perri reminded all that we would have to have crossing guards, and police officers to close the roads. Would we be sending spectators to the Fire House for hot dogs? If there were walkers in the street, you'd have to shut the road. It was a major undertaking. We would have to put a plan in to place, quickly.

Mayor Chau felt it would be nice to have a police vehicle and fire truck go down the road, but there were considerations. He did not think the expense would be justified, in these hard-economic times.

Council President Perri added we would also have to ensure adherence to social distancing.

Councilwoman Madden thanked Mayor Chau for his comments, it helps to accept the reality and seriousness of what we were dealing with. She did not feel we should have a parade this year.

Council President Perri confirmed the cancellation?

Mayor Chau replied yes.

Councilman O'Neill asked about opening the bathrooms at the park.

Councilman Dewees advised that the same sanitizing rules apply, we don't have the staff to manage. Superintendent Vitale contacted a cleaning service for a quote. Sanitizing once daily, five days per week, would be \$600.

Councilman O'Neill asked if bathrooms had to be sanitized every time they are used. He asked about benches, asking if they were sanitized. He felt bathrooms should be open to encourage people to wash their hands.



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Councilman Dewees reiterated that we did not have the manpower to manage within the rules.

Council President Perri felt the general consensus is that we want them open but don't have the manpower to abide by the rules.

Seeing no other new business, Council President Perri asked all to take out agendas.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER**

Council President Perri 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.

Mary Sundra, 2115 Shore Road, via Zoom chat: "I would like to know if outdoor seating will be approved for a facility that is within a residential zone."

Council President Perri replied they would have to conform to other rules.

Solicitor Stein replied that the zone would have nothing to do with it. If it fits it fits, if it won't it won't. As long as occupancy does not change and it does not change the parking requirements.

Michael Edge, 35 W. Yorkshire Avenue, via Zoom chat: "Ventura's Restaurant in particular is located in a residential neighborhood. Any outdoor dining will be conducted in taxpayers back yards. this is unexceptionable. Children that are being home schooled at this time need their rest. With dining and drinking there is always noise. These residents and their young children should not be placed under any more stress than is necessary. Ventura's does a great takeover business and they have ample seating inside the restaurant for Social Distancing. If there is a vote, my vote is no."

Council President Perri replied, so noted. He was sure the Zoning Officer would be taking this into consideration.

Solicitor Stein replied that was a request in their site plan and it was denied, so it's one place he didn't feel it would happen; it's already been denied.

Clerk Canesi asked for clarification that a previous denial would preclude any permission at this point?

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Solicitor Stein replied that he would leave that up to Mr. Dattalo but he wouldn't think that it should be permitted.

Joseph Sundra, 2115 Shore Road, via Zoom chat: "Once restaurants are opened up will the public be able to comment on a particular permit before it is approved?"

Solicitor Stein replied no, however an appeal can be made by any individual to the Planning Board. There was a remedy.

Joan Brennan, via Zoom chat: "Would like everyone to be aware that another she was a long-time resident and passed at the age of 96. I am sorry should have mentioned her Name was Barbara Fehr who passed"

Council President Perri offered condolences to the family.

Clerk Canesi noted that the Clerk's Office spoke with Mrs. Fehr's daughter today; the family will be collecting donations to purchase a tree or bench on the bike path.

Mary Sundra, via Zoom chat: "asks for steins answer to be repeated re public input."

Clerk Canesi repeated Solicitor Stein's response: "Solicitor Stein replied no. An appeal can be made by any individual to the Planning Board. There was a remedy."

Clerk Canesi asked in Zoom chat if there were any other public comments. There were none.

Seeing no others wishing to speak, Council President Perri closed the public session.

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