

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
JUNE 13, 2023**

At 6:05pm 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 Mayor Chau.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Absent:** Councilman Smith

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

Council President Polistina moved to Committee reports.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Councilman Leeds** – Fire Department/EMS; Planning Board

Councilman Leeds did not have a report.

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

Councilman Dewees reported the columns for City Hall have been ordered, he would keep Council updated.

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

Councilwoman Bucci announced that the Economic Development Commission would be holding an event at the Atlantic City County Club in August; details to follow. The night before Memorial Day there was vandalism at the park and fields involving bleachers; she commended resident Michelle Costello for her help with clean up, along with members of the Police Department.

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

Councilman Smith was absent.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno reported that Project Refit held an event at Veterans Park on Friday; Councilman Leeds attended along with Councilwoman Carfagno. It was a great event, and they want to come back in August. Vineland High School was also hosting a 3-day event, in Vineland, in commemoration of all veterans from World War I, to present. Mainland High School graduation is scheduled for Friday at 6:30pm.

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

Councilman Notaro reported that he and Councilwoman Bucci attended the Northfield Business Association meeting; they were actively engaging in a membership drive and currently had more than 35 members. It was a great organization comprised of Northfield business leaders. He referred to a ‘no smoking’ sign he obtained from Atlantic Prevention Resources and said perhaps we could use them on the bike path. FAN sign ups were coming up, and the Connolly Mile on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

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

Council President Polistina, regarding Finance and Collections, announced the audit had been received. He would follow up more at the next meeting but there were no significant findings in the audit. The new Library Director, Danielle Simpkins, was onboard and they were transitioning. He urged all to stop by and wish her well. The new treasurer was Wayne Palaia. He announced upcoming library programs including Ken the Magician at Birch Grove Park. The Senior Committee will be meeting at the Library on June 28<sup>th</sup>. It was an open forum for seniors, with refreshments and a light lunch to be served. A member of the Police Department would be present as well.

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)

The committee was still working on the food truck ordinance. Zoning would review next, along with Police and Fire.

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- Insurance Requirements Review (Councilman Polistina, Councilwoman Bucci)

Councilwoman Bucci advised that the committee meeting was pending.

- Affordable Housing (Councilman Polistina, Councilwoman Carfagno)

Council President Polistina announced there was an executive session tonight.

- Sales of Retail Cannabis (Councilwoman Bucci, Councilmen Polistina and Leeds)

Council President Polistina announced that Councilman Smith resigned from the cannabis committee and was replaced by Council President Polistina. He reported that the committee met and made the decision not to move forward. He explained that the referendum included the provision that cannabis sales are not within 1,000 feet of schools, parks, playgrounds etc. Two-thirds of Tilton Road businesses in the formerly proposed area 'back up' to Birch Grove Park or are within 1,000 feet. Once houses of worship and daycares were figured in, that made it unrealistic. He explained the microbusiness portion of the legislation and the initial belief that the municipality cannot control the number of microbusinesses, but he has re-read the legislation and consulted with a local cannabis business owner, and it is now believed that this portion of the law referred to the state's intention not to limit them, and that towns could still control the number of microbusiness licenses. It was also shared with Council President Polistina by the cannabis business owner that the 1,000-foot rule has been challenged and that the cannabis businesses have been winning, versus the municipalities. Even though these two things changed, Council President Polistina believed the committee wished not to move forward but it would be up to Council.

Councilman Notaro did not believe the acres of woods that abut businesses on Tilton Road should be considered part of a park.

Council President Polistina replied; that is based on what that park is today, not what we might make of it in the future. The revenue was the unknown. Based on estimates it could be \$100-200,000 in the first year; it would most likely be less in the first year.

Councilman Notaro asked, if we took the park out of the equation, what was the impact?

Referring to the 1,000-foot issue, Solicitor Facenda said he was not aware of any cases; did this person provide any case law?

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Council President Polistina replied that it was Jersey City, and he believed they had to pay a settlement.

Councilman Leeds commented that they had approved it elsewhere; it was an issue because they agreed to sell it elsewhere.

Council President Polistina added that the referendum passed with 57% of the roughly 3,100 votes cast, about 1,800 yes and 1,300 against. That said, the committee didn't seem to want to move forward.

Councilman Notaro asked if the Council President was looking for a straw vote? He reiterated his belief that the park shouldn't be considered because it's a 5,000-foot distance to the first lake. The 1,000-foot could be thrown out. And the voters said yes, so we should give it to them.

Councilwoman Carfagno said her vote is no; she did not feel we had enough information and would not want it to be anywhere near a daycare or a school.

Council President Polistina stated that all present were aware of Councilman Smith's position on the issue; his vote would be no.

Councilwoman Bucci stated that she agreed with Councilman Notaro, 100%.

Councilman Dewees said his vote is no; he agreed with the committee's recommendation not to move forward.

Councilman Leeds said his vote is no; he agreed with the committee's recommendation not to move forward.

Council President Polistina announced the tally was four against; he was opposed to it, but it is irrelevant at this point. This vote puts it away for now until such time as this Council or a future Council decides to take it forward; but once it's approved it's permanent, so it is a critical decision.

Council President Polistina moved to ongoing business.

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

- Stormwater Facilities Shared with Atlantic County–*No Update*
- Potential Sale / Development of City Owned Properties: Block 66 Lot 11; Block 69 Lot 1.02; Block 121 Lot 1
  - **NEW** - Title Search Authorization: Block 66 Lot 11; Block 69 Lot 1.02; Block 121 Lot 1

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Council President Polistina advised we may have more information on the affordable housing issue after this evening's closed session.

Solicitor Facenda asked the Council for authorization to move forward with the title searches for the three city owned properties. Four to five hundred dollars per property was an estimate.

All members present were in favor.

- Possible Zoning ordinance to regulate Cooperative Sober Living Residences

Solicitor Facenda reported that he sent Councilman Notaro an email; he asked did Councilman Notaro want to discuss it now? He added that if we were adopting an ordinance, we need to include all residential zones.

Councilman Notaro agreed it should be all residential zones.

Solicitor Facenda would apply the ordinance to all zones and send it to all of Council. He would ask Clerk Canesi to put it on the next agenda.

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

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Polistina referred to two grants on the agenda for this evening, for lead-based paint and cyber security.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Council President Polistina announced that Resolutions 133-2024 and 134-2023 would not be voted on this evening.

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.

Christine Gordon, 101 Northfield Avenue, advised Council that there were dogs being walked off-leash on the Bike Path. An additional three dogs have run at-large and attacked people on Northfield Avenue. Numerous excuses are given as to why the dogs are off-leash. She felt these dogs intimidate other dogs and their owners.

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The municipal code had to be rewritten in plain English because people do not understand what at large means. She also asked for a message on the billboard outside reminding people. She read the definition Linwood had in their code.

Clerk Canesi offered that the proposed language was in a draft of a major code revision.

Councilman Notaro asked to have it put on next the agenda.

Joan Brennan, 116 Dolphin Avenue, wished to speak via Zoom but was unable to due to technical difficulties. On her behalf, Clerk Canesi repeated the following: July 4<sup>th</sup> awards would be presented at Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, refreshments in the Fire Department after. The first baby is Naomi Miller born January 1<sup>st</sup>, Paul Glenn is our first Mr. 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and our citizen of the year is Pat McGowan.

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

At 6:38pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk