

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 14, 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 Notaro; Councilman Smith; Council President Polistina; Mayor Chau

Absent: Councilman Utts

Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Nassar and Fire Chief Cummings 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

Councilman Dewees reported the football field was browning up a bit, Public Works would keep an eye on it. There was a request to put picnic tables at the First Street Playground, we have accommodated the request using tables from the campground. The museum painting has been delayed due to issues with the contractor.

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

Councilman Utts was absent.

Councilman Notaro - Sewer Operations; Northfield Football, Cheer, Basketball (FAN)

Councilman Notaro had no report.

Councilman Leeds – Fire Department/EMS

Councilman Leeds read the EMS report for May.

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

Councilman Smith reported Little League and Babe Ruth were moving into All Star season, he announced the details for 8th Grade Graduation; all were invited to attend. Councilman Smith and representatives from Linwood met with EHT to discuss dispatch concerns, Councilman Smith would keep Council informed.

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

Councilwoman Bucci recognized melody Scalise for refreshing the Uncle Sam statue at Veterans Park, It was a nice turnout for Golf with a Cop, Shannon Campbell always does an excellent job and should be commended. National Night Out was coming up on August 2nd. Paul Miola from the Joint Insurance Fund would be attending the July 19th Council Meeting; Council can ask him any questions at that time. Regarding the Library, Aubrey Heirs had prepared a summer reading program, with local sponsors providing prizes. Councilwoman Bucci had her first Economic Development Commission meeting last night, six people showed up, which was a start. One of the obstacles was outreach to businesses that don't have mercantile licenses, she was hosting another meeting Thursday, June 23rd. Councilwoman Bucci would prepare another letter that will be shared by those businesses who were in attendance. to get the word out. The Camden Diocese reached out regarding the housing project; it has been relocated away from the Potter's Field.

Mayor Chau added that the project would take 3 years to complete, 80 units total, and would count towards our affordable housing obligation.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Senior Citizens

Council President Polistina reported the Senior luncheon will be Thursday, June 16th at Little Italy. The group would be meeting for the first time since the Covid shutdown. He attended a meeting today for GWU negotiations; due to a scheduling conflict we had to reschedule for June 23rd. We were 2 years beyond the expiration of the contract. This is the administrative employees in the tax office and police department, as well as the crossing guards. The City recently completed the blue-collar contract and we have a Memorandum of Agreement for the supervisors, which is one supervisor in the tax office and one in public works. This was the biggest unit, hopefully we can get this done soon.

Council President Polistina moved to old business.

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WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

- Northfield Avenue at Rt 9 Drainage –*Update* from Engineer Nassar*
- Stormwater Facilities Shared with the County of Atlantic – *Update* from Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar did not have an update from the county or the state.

- Potential Acquisition of Fire Truck – *Bid Specifications Being Reviewed by CFO / QPA*

Council President Polistina asked where we were with the bid?

Councilman Leeds replied he thought it was on the agenda.

Council President Polistina advised the bid was on the agenda.

Mayor Chau announced that he'd received an email from CFO Stollenwerk regarding the USDA grant we'd expressed interest in; we won't be pursuing via that means as we do not qualify.

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

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Mayor Chau reported he received an email from CFO Stollenwerk regarding the USDA grant, we won't be pursuing funding via that means.

- Request to Community School – No Students Present on Primary Election Day

Council President Polistina moved to the issue of the community school being open on the Primary Election. The Council would like to request that students not be in attendance on Primary Election Day.

Clerk Canesi explained that by state statute, it is the County Board of Elections that chooses the polling place. The various municipal clerks make recommendations to the Board of Elections with suggested polling place locations, but the Board of Elections decides. Canesi only submits the Community School as a suggested location for Northfield, because we have no other locations that can house eight voting districts. Facilities must be ADA compliant. Currently, the law does not allow

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a school to decline serving as a polling place. The community school is closed to students at the General Election, as an in-service day, but students are present at the election in June. After the 2022 Primary, Canesi asked the school administration to designate the Primary as an in-service day, but has been told it was not productive to have an in-service day that late in the school year.

Superintendent Bretonnes advised Clerk Canesi that this topic would be on the next school board meeting agenda and suggested it couldn't hurt to have members of Council present in support of the request.

Councilman Smith offered to go to the board of education meeting on June 27th; if he cannot, Council President Polistina would attend. A letter explaining Council's request would be drafted, and sent to the Board of Education in advance of the meeting.

Council President Polistina noted the election went very well; he was complimented by a poll worker about how well-run our elections are.

- Sober Living Homes

Council President Polistina felt we could regulate where sober living homes could operate.

Solicitor Facenda explained that Egg Harbor City (EHC) has an ordinance that makes it a conditional use, they would have to file an application to prove they meet certain conditions, and this would also satisfy the notification requirement that some have been concerned about. He read from the EHC ordinance. He needed general consensus from Council as to whether we want to do this ordinance, and then what should be in it. He advised that Clerk Canesi confirmed with Captain Steinecke that the police have not had any calls for service at one of these homes that were related to the conduct of the occupants.

Council President Polistina was in favor of an ordinance and in managing proximity of one home to another.

Solicitor Facenda cited examples from the EHC ordinance that required separation between homes of 300 and 600 feet; you could have 2 houses per block with that standard.

Mayor Chau noted that the complaints he has gotten have been from people who don't want it near their homes because they have young children. Other complaints have been about cars, residents have seen violations. He gave the example of cars backing down the street, which was not illegal, but that had been reported as a complaint. Cars have gone through stop signs, and illegally parked cars have prevented EMS vehicles from passing.

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Solicitor Facenda urged caution with treating sober living home residents differently than other single-family homes.

Mayor Chau added that residents felt these homes were an infringement on their rights.

Solicitor Facenda replied, but we know they are not; we can only put in reasonable checks and balances.

Councilman Notaro noted that investors doing this would want the homes close together, it would be easier to manage.

Solicitor Facenda reiterated the question, did the Council want to legislate this?

Councilman Notaro replied that he would support it.

Councilman Leeds stated there had been no police activity at any of them.

Solicitor Facenda asked did Council want to form a committee?

Council President Polistina replied, it was not necessary; we'll just keep an eye on it.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda.

Council President Polistina asked if anyone wanted anything voted on separately? There were no responses. He asked if the changes to the fire manual are in red?

Chief Cummings replied the operating procedures were changed, and some that were no longer needed were removed. He gave an example of outdated language that was removed.

Council President Polistina 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.

Tom Boyd, 117 Northfield Avenue, asked about the piece of land that is on the agenda for potential auction; was Habitat still a potential?

Council President Polistina replied, yes.

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Tom Boyd advocated for Habitat; he spent 10 years volunteering with Habitat, he explained the sweat-equity requirement of 250 hours, adding that they tend to be very responsible homeowners.

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

At 6:53pm, on a motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman Leeds, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk