

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020**

At 6:01pm 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 June 13, 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. Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82781326203>; Meeting ID: 827 8132 6203; One tap mobile +13017158592, 82781326203# US (Germantown), +13126266799, 82781326203# US (Chicago), Dial by your location +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown), +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), +1 646 558 8656 US (New York), +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma), +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston), +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose) Meeting ID: 827 8132 6203

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present (in person): Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Korngut, Councilwoman Madden, Councilman O’Neill; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Perri; Mayor Chau

Solicitor Stein and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance.

Present (via telephone): Chief Newman

Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“As everyone knows, based on Executive Orders of the governor, public gatherings are still limited – right now that limit is not more than 25% occupancy of the room, and social distancing parameters apply. For this reason, members of the public are still unable to attend tonight’s meeting in person, and virtual attendance has been made possible via Zoom video-conferencing. 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 FB pages, and were published in the Press of Atlantic City.

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, any telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. Web-browser attendees may ask questions or make

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020**

comments via the ‘chat’ function at the designated time. Please note that comments made via the chat function will not be acknowledged until the public comment portion of the meeting begins, at which time they will be read aloud into the record. Tonight, all members are present except for Chief Newman who will be using the speaker function of the telephone in the Council Chambers meeting room.”

Council President Perri welcomed everyone. He thanked everyone on the front lines, for taking care of business and making things easier for us.

Council President Perri then moved to old business.

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. He did have one person who was interested, he asked Clerk Canesi to reach out to the person who made the inquiry.

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

Councilwoman Korngut planned to be present at the July Planning Board meeting to discuss the location of the dog park and would report back at the next meeting.

- No Parking, Cresson Avenue between Fabian Avenue and Walnut Avenue
 - Review of DRAFT ordinance

Council President Perri referred to the draft ordinance.

Mayor Chau recommended that we proceed with the ordinance.

Councilman Dewees supported the ordinance as well, he visited site and felt there was ample off-street parking available for area residents.

All other members present were in favor of the ordinance.

Clerk Canesi referred to the public notice that was discussed at the last Council meeting. There was no requirement to notify the area residents, it’s a public street and it would be subject to the public hearing publication, however, as a courtesy she asked would Council want a copy of the ordinance to be provided to the six affected homeowners, with a cover letter with explanation? Or was Council seeking their input? She asked for direction.

Mayor Chau reminded all that this was a recommendation by the Police Department. It was his recommendation to notify them but not ask for their input.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020**

Councilwoman Korngut asked what prompted this request?

Mayor Chau explained that Chief Newman raised the concern that now the street had been paved and with traffic flow the parked cars can create a hazard.

Councilwoman Korngut asked Engineer Nassar for his opinion.

Engineer Nassar explained parking prohibition would be proper.

Councilwoman Korngut suggested sending a notice, only that it would be on the agenda.

Council President Perri reiterated that it was brought up as a traffic safety concern from the Police Department.

Council President Perri felt that the publication should be satisfactory.

Councilman Dewees agreed.

Councilwoman Korngut reiterated it would be a nice courtesy.

Council President Perri called a straw vote to move forward at the next Council meeting- all were in favor

Clerk Canesi confirmed that we were going with the standard publication only.

Council President Perri moved to new business.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Perri asked if there were any new grant opportunities.

Council President Perri announced that he met with Councilman Dewees, Engineer Nassar and Superintendent Vitale regarding the ADA situation.

Engineer Nassar advised that he was working on the application, they needed some plans and a cost estimate. He should have it wrapped up this week and would send it out to the CBDG/ACIA.

Engineer Nassar added that he was also working on the state Municipal Aid application for Merritt Drive and a portion of Ridgewood, he should have that this week as well.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020

Council President Perri asked if anyone had any new business?

Councilwoman Madden referred to a letter sent by Gabriel Lehne; she felt it was time to open up a dialogue about racial injustice and how it affects our community. She asked Councilman O'Neill if he attended a rally in Washington.

Councilman O'Neill replied, no.

Councilwoman Madden asked if Councilman O'Neill saw Ms Lehne's daughter and son in law?

Councilman O'Neill replied, no.

Councilwoman Madden asked why did he make that statement on Facebook?

Councilman O'Neill stated that during course of a typical day, he accesses Facebook. During the day he saw a post by someone named Christine.

Councilwoman Korngut noted that people are commenting to her in zoom that they cannot hear Council members speaking.

Clerk Canesi announced that people should comment only to the City through the group chat, not privately to a Council member, because these are public records that are not visible if directed only to a single Council person.

Council President Perri stated when a Council person puts something on social media, it is not the opinion of the governing body. He asked that all keep that in perspective and wanted to be sure that is clear. These social media statements are not part of the government.

Solicitor Stein advised that each individual member and the Mayor have their Constitutional 1st Amendment Right of Freedom of Speech, if you choose to exercise that whether it be standing on a street corner or on social media, you are not representing Council or Northfield using your own personal pages, and that is how it should be taken. Facebook is a slippery slope, recognize that when you put it out there, it's out there. As a member of City Council, you do in fact to some extent represent the face of the municipality, he asked all to consider that. He was not asking anyone not to do it. Just asking to take the extra step to think about what you are posting. He hoped that answered the question.

Councilwoman Madden felt it was a good time to open up a dialogue, where we stand on diversity.

Council President Perri agreed. We have standards, policies and procedures, Federal guidelines and directives.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020

Councilwoman Madden wanted the community to know where we stand on diversity and that we did not want to be divisive or inflammatory in any way.

Council President Perri was not really sure what the letter writer was talking about with the school; but we have liaisons to the library, he didn't know what '8cantwait' was.

Councilwoman Korngut spoke, and said for those who didn't know, that Council received a letter from a resident asking that we make some changes. She was disappointed that the Police Department or the Mayor did not put out a statement about what was going on. Chief Higbee put out a statement.

Mayor Chau had already met with Chief Newman to discuss, and had a lengthy discussion. At this time, he was satisfied. Could more be done? Absolutely, but asked City Council if something specific should be addressed?

Councilwoman Korngut, to Council President Perri: all the regulations cited are rooted in systemic racism, and it has to do with blind spots that someone may not be aware of. She was disappointed that we could not put out one sentence, that our Police Department didn't make a statement condemning the murder of George Floyd. She had numerous African American friends who have shared that they are afraid to drive through Northfield and Linwood. Did she think Northfield had issues? No, she thinks we are a country built on stolen land by stolen people and we need to address the remnants of that. We need to implement some procedures that will have some teeth, people will continue to feel uncomfortable. What can we do to make it better, and to give the police the support they need to address the public in a more responsible manner? Some of the suggestions the letter writer made aren't our purview, such as the support of the Amistad curriculum at the Northfield Community School. That's a question for the School Board. She was happy to draft a resolution.

Council President Perri asked if it had been checked if the school had already implemented the curriculum.

Councilwoman Korngut said she had heard it was not being taught. Also, as to '8cantwait', she did not know all objectives so she can't say she supports it in a conclusive way. Another question in the letter was will we support diversity at Otto Bruyns Library; Councilwoman Korngut felt we have an excellent librarian who was committed to diversity and we had some changes on the Board. As to review of our ordinances and development of strategic plan; Councilwoman Korngut would be happy to head up that task force and report back.

Mayor Chau, said, as person of color, he did not and would not tolerate racism. He was aware of the Amistad program, but he did not want to antagonize the situation. He was proud of his record in not tolerating racism. It was not intentional that a

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020

statement was not put on the website. He knew Councilwoman Korngut was very passionate, and thanked her for that.

Councilman O'Neill said he had been on council for nine years. He had never seen any issues with previous members of Council, Mayors or other employees, Police, or Fire, regarding systemic racism.

Clerk Canesi advised Councilman O'Neill he could not be heard by Zoom participants; she asked him to speak more directly into the microphone.

Councilman O'Neill continued; he had never seen a blind spot. We are a mixed town, and our town overwhelmingly elected a man of color. He had never heard anyone from out of town say they are afraid to drive through town. He shared the story of his son, who plays basketball and has traveled in doing so. Every summer O'Neill hosted 15 or so basketball players and coaches, and O'Neill was the only Caucasian. All others were African American. Councilman O'Neill later heard a story that the team's car broke down in Northfield, and the police stopped and helped them. The team later complimented our officers. He had never seen systemic racism with our employees or governing body. Does it exist, yes? But he has not seen it here.

Councilman Utts noted that '8cantwait' was 8 principles to improve, such as no choke holds. He would rather see a county-wide task force. The fact that Councilwoman Korngut had friends who are afraid to drive through Northfield is a problem. Utts' children went through Northfield school system, and if an Amistad curriculum existed, it should be taught. 'All lives matter' comments are systemic racism. If your house is on fire, where do you want them to aim the hose? He agreed that we have an excellent police force, but black people say they are afraid. There should be training on de-escalation, social workers should be part of our public safety system. We should continue to examine and school board should do the same.

Councilman Smith said he knew what Amistad curriculum was; from Social Studies curriculum standards, if all were to be taught, it would take six to seven years. He couldn't speak for the Northfield Community School, but Councilman Smith teaches freshman US History I at Mainland Regional, and every year has taught Amistad. It's not a huge part, but it is part of the curriculum. He knows at the high school level it is in the curriculum; teachers do have some latitude but Councilman Smith does teach it in his classes. As a body, as a town, we are for racial justice and equality. It can't be a bad thing to root that out. He agreed with Councilman Utts that there needed to be larger discussions, that we can be a part of. He offered to participate if done at a local level.

Councilwoman Madden thanked everyone for their input. Several examples of systemic racism have been pointed out this evening. She suggested we look at training with a different eye, how it affects black people and how there is a fear. As to Councilman Smith's comment that it takes six to seven years, there are 12 years of

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020

school. It can be done. She agreed with the idea of a task force. There was systemic racism in Northfield and in this country. She hoped we continued with this dialogue to make things better.

Councilwoman Korngut added that on many occasions as a Council person she has had to remember that she's not in court; this was not one of those times. For a white man to sit in a room with 11 people, in a thousand years she would never compare the Chinese-American history to the African-American experience. She did not feel examples provided are indicative of a lack of a problem. One person's story does not mean there isn't a problem. She was happy to draft a resolution in support of a county-wide task force and perhaps other municipalities would follow suit, and get the attention of the Freeholder Board.

Mayor Chau said he did not want to belittle what the black culture and individuals have experienced, but no matter what color or ethnicity, any kind of discrimination should not be tolerated.

Councilwoman Korngut said she would look for that statement on the Northfield website.

Council President Perri felt education started at home, children need to be taught by the parents, if it's gotten this far it's not being taught at home. Education is the key. Schools, churches and religious community should be involved. He had no issue with a county-wide task force; the head law enforcement in Atlantic County was Mr. Tyner, who is black. We have no authority with law enforcement. He praised our Police Department. Most have no idea what they handle. He thanked God that it hasn't affected our area. He asked Councilwoman Korngut to give him something before the next meeting.

Mayor Chau asked if Council wished that Mayor Chau draft a statement for the website, he was happy to do so.

Council President Perri had no issues with that.

Councilman Utts felt it was a good idea; it would be helpful that Mayor Chau and Chief Newman put it out there. He agreed that racism starts at home.

Councilwoman Korngut appreciated all of Council for the opportunity to have a respectful dialogue. To Mayor Chau she said, what you said was closely resembling 'all lives matter', she would ask that he keep that in mind when drafting a statement.

Mayor Chau asked Councilwoman Korngut to send him suggestions for inclusion.

Councilman O'Neill asked that Mayor Chau mention the dedicated and professional Northfield Police.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020

Mayor Chau, speaking to all, asked that everyone sends their thoughts for inclusion in a message.

Councilwoman Korngut knew we had taken time on this; this was not about honoring the Northfield Police Department, she objected to that. She felt the statement should be that Northfield Police Department opposed brutality, etc.

Councilman Smith said if it was coming from Mayor and Council, he would like all of Council to review it.

Clerk Canesi reminded all that if Council was going to be discussing back and forth it would need to be done at a public meeting.

Mayor Chau invited all members of Council to view letter individually advised that after the letter was drafted.

Clerk Canesi advised that was the same thing; they can't discuss and decide outside of a meeting. She suggested that the Mayor just take all input and draft a letter.

Solicitor Stein agreed; he suggested that Council provide input and the Mayor draft and create the final product.

Mayor Chau read the following statement regarding the Primary Election:

“Voting machines for the July 7th Primary Election will be only open to people with disabilities. Not just here in Northfield, but across the state, pursuant to Governor Murphy’s Executive Order No. 144. All registered Democratic and Republican voters will receive a vote by mail ballot – even if they have never requested one in the past – for use at this election. Registered voters who are not affiliated as Democrat or Republican will receive a vote by mail APPLICATION – by completing and returning the APPLICATION, they will then receive a BALLOT. The Northfield Community School will be open, but voters who visit the polling place in person will be required to vote via a paper, provisional, ballot unless they are disabled. I am encouraging everyone to exercise their right to vote, but all residents need to be aware that this is an entirely vote-by-mail election. Vote by mail ballots will be sent to all registered voters, regardless of party affiliation, and will include a postage paid envelope. **DO NOT RETURN YOUR BALLOT TO NORTHFIELD CITY HALL.** Voters who do not wish to use the postal service mail to return their ballot may only deliver it to a designated ballot drop box; there are 5 across Atlantic County and the closest to the Northfield is the one located at the Egg Harbor Township Municipal Building.”

Councilman Smith reported that he received two videos after last week's downpour, one from a resident of Shepherd Drive and another from Cedar Bridge in the vicinity

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020**

of the school; both videos indicate drainage issues. He had heard that there may have been others.

Council President Perri asked Councilman Smith to send the videos to Engineer Nassar, and copy Council President Perri, since he was the Road Department Chairperson.

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

Alicia Garry, 202 St. James Place, via Zoom Chat – “on the issue of the city addressing racism, may I suggest that rather than focus on the negativity of racism, take the positive and support and educate diversity. To treat all people the same with respect and with no difference regardless of color, religion, social status to name a few. unless you have been subjected to racism, you cannot understand how it feels to be treated differently. so again, I emphasize to to try support positivity, and attempt to unite each and every person as the same. thank you”

Alicia Garry, via Zoom Chat – “in addition I would like to say that acceptance of others starts at home. we should not focus on any specific race. maybe educate the adults?”

Mayor Chau read a thank you letter to Mayor and Council from the Pullan Family.

Christine Ruth, 20 West Rosedale Avenue, via Zoom Chat – “racism cannot be addressed without talking about race. what plans do you have to look at the data from the police department and around the city to ensure justice.”

Council President Perri yielded to the Mayor and Police Chief.

Mayor Chau said he knows in the event of an allegation there would be an investigation, and it could involve the Prosecutor's Office. He asked Chief Newman if there had been charges of racial discrimination, and there had been none.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020**

Christine Ruth, 20 West Rosedale Avenue, via Zoom Chat – “I’m not talking about charges. I’m talking about being proactive.”

Chief Newman announced that he had data for use of force; it was available for public review.

Councilwoman Korngut asked Chief Newman if data was retained about who was pulled over.

Chief Newman was just looking at that issue today; he would have to get back to her.

Chief Newman added that on our City website were summaries of Internal Affairs reports; also, the Early Warning System and Body Cam policies were posted for the public. We have been training in de-escalation for a while; we are out in the front of that as well.

Christine Ruth, 20 West Rosedale Avenue, via Zoom Chat – “Additionally are you aware that councilman O’Neill has been commenting on residents’ posts and naming them publicly? regarding race. and protests.”

Council President Perri stated we cannot control what someone does on social media, whether they are a Council member or not.

Councilman O’Neill does not recall posting about someone’s race.

Council President Perri added that if someone wants to file a complaint against Mr. O’Neill so be it; but social media is not a tool for this legislative body.

Solicitor Stein reiterated his prior comment that these comments do not represent the governing body.

Council President Perri, said for the record, there were individuals on this Council that were not on social media, and were not aware of what is going on. He was thinking about a disclaimer to be read at every meeting that states social media is not the representation of this governing body.

Christine Ruth, 20 West Rosedale Avenue, via Zoom Chat – “Council should be held to a standard of decency.”

Council President Perri reiterated that Council as a whole could not be held accountable for the comments of individual members.

Eric Leeds, 802 Debora Street, via Zoom Chat – “Comment on the City Police Dept. The Officers do an excellent job. Can you confirm with Chief Newman, when an officer clears a traffic stop, they radio the demographics of the person stopped?”

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020

Chief Newman advised that he had been looking at that today; we were doing it in the past. It has something to do with the new C.A.D. system.

Christine Ruth, 20 West Rosedale Avenue, via Zoom Chat – “I am a teacher and I would be fired for the things mr O’Neill has said.”

Council President Perri said, as Council President, he had no control over what Mr. O’Neill said. What option did Perri have? O’Neill is an elected official. It’s his opinion.

Gabrielle Lehne, 210 West Glencove, via Zoom Chat – “am i required to type or may i speak”

Clerk Canesi announced that we did not have a way for her to speak. Clerk Canesi then made adjustments to the Zoom features, and by enabling Ms Lehne’s microphone, she was able to speak.

Gabrielle Lehne, 210 West Glencove – identified herself as the letter writer. She was surprised her letter was posted; she suggested a policy that letters to the Council not be posted on social media. She appreciated the beginning of a conversation. She would like for the schools to be included. She loved the school and respected our police. She felt maligned in social media, she was trying to raise the issue that all of us in our hearts believe that black lives matter. She asked if anyone had questions or comments regarding her letter.

Council President Perri asked the governing body if anyone had questions.

Councilwoman Madden did not have any questions, but thanked Ms Lehne for her eloquence and sincerity.

Councilwoman Korngut thanked her for her letter and suggestions.

Ms Lehne asked was there any way she can volunteer? She had done a County task force.

Council President Perri replied that we are always looking for volunteers. She should contact, Council President Perri, Councilwoman Korngut or Mayor Chau.

Councilwoman Korngut asked Ms Lehne for contact information via private messenger on Facebook.

Council President Perri stated that some of the issues Ms Lehne brought forward, he was not aware of, with the school, the Library, and Police Department. Ms Lehne’s input would be greatly appreciated.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JUNE 16, 2020

Ms Lehne would like to be considered for the Library Board if there were still openings.

Council President Perri suggested she send her resume to Mayor Chau.

Clerk Canesi apologized for the audio quality, adding that we would have to work on that if we were doing this in the future.

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