

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
AUGUST 10, 2021**

At 6:19pm 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 August 10, 2021 at 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 August 10, 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/89170120254> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13017158592,,89170120254# or direct dial +1 301 715 8592 using Meeting ID: 891 7012 0254. 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 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 August 10, 2021.

Municipal Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“As you may know, in late May, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order No. 242, related to Covid-19 and which eased restrictions on face coverings in indoor public spaces, under certain conditions. The order permits employers to impose stricter requirements regarding face coverings in indoor settings, which, in the best interests of our employees and visitors, the City of Northfield opted to do in May, and continues to do. Based on CDC guidelines, the City of Northfield continues to require face coverings and social distancing in our indoor public spaces, and visitors are made aware of this decision with signs at the entrances to the building.

Due to the continued social distancing requirements, there are limited seats for in-person attendance by members of the public this evening. 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, 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

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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 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 Mayor Chau.

ROLL CALL

Present (in person): Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Madden; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Perri; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Polistina; Mayor Chau.

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

Mayor Chau asked to read a statement.

Councilwoman Madden stated that she'd asked to speak as well.

Council President Polistina advised Councilwoman Madden she could speak after Mayor Chau; he made the same request prior.

Mayor Chau expressed regret for inappropriate behavior at the July Council meeting, he sent an email to Councilwoman Madden, Councilman Dewees and all attendees. He felt the public deserved one too. Something happened earlier in the day that affected him personally, and it affected him that evening too. In hindsight, he should

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not have attended, but did. There was absolutely no excuse for his disruptive outburst and offensive behavior. It was uncharacteristic, irresponsible, and insensitive. He takes great pride in public service, he extended his apologies not only to the City, to everyone at the meeting and especially Councilwoman Madden and Councilman Dewees. It has humbled him and he promised it was a mistake that will never happen. He apologized to the community, to everyone who was there that evening, to City Council, and especially to Councilwoman Madden and Councilman Dewees. Like he said, he cannot erase it. has become an embarrassment and a regrettable event. It has humbled him and it will never ever happen again. He thanked Council President Polistina.

Councilwoman Madden reads the following statement:

“It seems to me sometimes we do live in male dominated society and this Council is no exception. Speaking as a woman and as a Councilwoman for the City of Northfield, I would like to make the following statement... The Republican Party has displayed a lack of respect for women over the past years. Apparently, this misogynistic mindset exists in our City Government, as well. Three years ago, as a newly elected Councilwoman, I felt the ire of a former Councilman, who happened to be a republican. This time our Mayor has lashed out. Mayor Chau’s behavior at the July 13th meeting was unconscionable. Not only was he totally out of control, he was vulgar and falsely accused me of racism. During his five minute eleven second rant, he portrayed himself as the victim, as he did again today. Mayor Chau, you are not the victim here, you verbally assaulted me, your brother-in-law, Councilman Dewees, and our Council President, Mr. Polistina. It has also come to light this type of egregious behavior is not new to you, as you profess. The record exists. Your behavior is unbecoming and quite frankly unacceptable for a leader of this City. Lastly, Mr. Polistina, as President of Council, you lost control of the situation, and as a result, this chaos was allowed to escalate. You did not protect me. When you sit in that chair as Council President, you are here for all of us.”

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Councilman Perri reported the 2021 Road Program was on the agenda this evening, and the ordinance for the acquisition for the property at Zion and Mill was on the agenda. The slip lining would begin next month; Engineer Nassar could bring us up to date on that. There was no activity on the senior citizens committee.

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

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Councilman Utts reported that Mike Dattalo, our Code Enforcement and Zoning Officer's last day was the 30th, he was sorry he missed the ceremony but understood it was moving; he wished him well. The Planning Board gave final approval for an ice cream parlor slated to go on Route 9.

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

Councilman Notaro had no report. He did have questions regarding Engineer Nassar's report but would save them for that portion of the meeting.

Council President Polistina asked Councilman Notaro if he wanted to bring Council up to speed on the new FAN program?

Councilman Notaro announced that FAN works as a separate program from the City. In the future, FAN will be filling out a field use application in order to use the fields. FAN will pay their own insurance and the City will give them a donation.

Council President Polistina added that we would support them financially through a separate donation.

Clerk Canesi asked the Council President if this would be the same procedure for all sports groups?

Council President Polistina replied, yes. As part of the ordinance passed last year for the protection of minors, sports groups would apply to use the fields, as all groups do, and run their programs as a separate autonomous unit.

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

Councilman Dewees reported that Public Works was working on the FAN punch list, some old fencing has been removed. We had purchased a new roll up door to the score tower, locks had been replaced and a new hose bib installed. New bathroom signs have been installed and some interior work on the bathrooms has been done as well, and some plumbing repairs. Public Works also repaired broken boards on a foot bridge. They would also inspect the second foot bridge in case similar repairs were needed. They were also looking at putting up a set of stairs to the score tower, as opposed to a ladder.

Councilman Notaro, regarding the access hatch at the tower, asked could that be removed and locked?

Councilman Dewees replied it was already locked, but they would come up with a plan.

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

Councilman Smith reported that all of Council received an update from Mayor Chau and the County that Hamilton Township had agreed to join the shared court, which improved our numbers and brought us up to eight towns. A meeting was scheduled for tomorrow in Mays Landing at 3:30pm. Councilman Smith would be attending; he assumed the Mayor would as well. It was anticipated that committee assignments would be discussed. Northfield Little League and Babe Ruth were currently registering athletes for the fall season. The South Jersey South Shore Baseball just completed its inaugural season, Joe Bunting began that league and held their All-Star game here in Northfield. Councilman Smith threw out the 1st pitch at that game. He congratulated Joe Bunting and the league on a successful first season.

Council President Polistina, regarding the courts, he believed that Northfield was discussed for the personnel committee.

Councilman Smith noted that was a suggestion, he did not believe we needed to put anyone up yet.

Councilwoman Madden – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden reported the next library meeting would be August 12th, the next Mainland Board of Education would be August 16th, she was unable to attend the last meeting, minutes were not yet available. The next safety meeting would be held Thursday, August 19th. Councilwoman Madden asked Clerk Canesi that her statement from earlier be entered into the minutes verbatim.

Municipal Clerk Canesi agreed.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina reported that a resident stopped by the City Clerk's Office and gave kudos to Michele Kirtsos, Tax Collector, for exemplary service. He acknowledged Ms Kirtsos for her efforts. Regarding the Municipal Alliance, our Coordinator has resigned, we have a resolution on the agenda for the Committee; but do need to replace the Coordinator, which is the Mayor's appointment. Our plan is to post the Coordinator's position in house, along with the Clean Communities Coordinator.

Councilman Perri announced the tax rate was struck and certified, the rounded rate is 3.455.

Clerk Canesi added it was down 1.3 cents, as compared to last year.

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WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

- Zion Road Pump Station Easement – *Update* from Engineer Nassar*

Solicitor Facenda stated there was an ordinance on the agenda tonight authorizing a purchase of a portion Block 38, Lot 1, with a map attached. An agreement of sale has also been prepared, for execution if the ordinance is adopted. The seller's attorney has been provided with the proposed agreement of sale, with two minor revisions - one to change the title agent, and one with regard to attorney fees paid by the City not to exceed \$1500.00; he asked that Council keep that in mind.

Council President Polistina conducted a straw poll with regard to the payment of attorney fees.

All members were in favor.

Solicitor Facenda replied he would make the necessary change.

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

Engineer Nassar did not have an update.

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

The Committee had nothing new to report.

- Sump Pumps discharging into Storm Drains – *Ordinance Pending*

Councilman Perri did not have an update.

Council President Polistina, to Councilman Perri, asked if he would like to start with an ordinance on that?

Councilman Perri replied that was the recommendation, adding that it was more of a planning aspect and land use ordinance. Whether it comes from the Planning Board or the Council would be a legal question.

Council President Polistina noted he would follow-up with Councilman Perri and work on something.

- Stormwater Facilities Shared with the County of Atlantic – *Update if available from Engineer Nassar*

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Engineer Nassar has meeting with Mark Shourds scheduled for this Friday to go through list of pipes we are sharing; there may be other systems we are unaware of, noting that Councilman Dewees found one last year. Once all have been identified, the parties should meet to begin discussing the terms of an interlocal.

Council President Polistina added that it came up in another meeting, regarding the stormwater system and the mapping of it, he asked Engineer Nassar if he knew of any?

Engineer Nassar stated we don't have any, we have maps of outfalls, which is required by the Department of Environmental Protection, but some turned out to be County systems. Our agreement would be tailored to the shared systems.

- Library Ballot Question re County Library System

Mayor Chau reported his intent was to have the committee meet to establish pros and cons for City Council to review.

Councilman Perri announced the library agreement expires in 2022, we have an existing agreement with both parties at this time. Councilwoman Madden brought this to Councilman Perri's attention, the Library Board attorney brought that to their attention. It was a contractual agreement between the parties.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Polistina moved to New Grant Opportunities, seeing none he moved to the next agenda item.

- Potential Public Auction of City Owned Property Block 66 Lot 11

Regarding sale of City property, Council President Polistina felt it best if we have discussion in closed session at the next meeting. Some City property was designed in the COAH Plan.

- Vacancy – Clean Communities Coordinator
- Vacancy – Municipal Alliance Coordinator

Council President Polistina announced the Clean Communities Coordinator and Municipal Alliance Coordinators would be posted, he hoped to fill them quickly.

- Use of Flag and Banner Signs – Northfield Businesses

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Council President Polistina moved to the use of flag and banner signs. He announced there had been some confusion on how the Ordinances were interpreted. As of now, it seems as though some are not permitted, and asked if we should engage in discussion, or refer our suggestions to the Planning Board. There have been complaints about some, but Council President Polistina did not see those as objectionable. Things become more noticeable while we are all trying to fill the void of replacing our Code Enforcement Officer. He asked Council's opinion as to whether they should be permitted.

Councilwoman Madden had no objections.

Councilman Notaro felt there should be parameters.

Council President Polistina advised that right now it's 30 days or a grand opening.

Councilwoman Madden felt we should do all we can to support our businesses.

Mayor Chau said he'd expressed concern to the Code Enforcement Officer about the need to support businesses; Mayor Chau had suggested a permit or something to ensure that they are not up for an extended period, and he had concerns that they may not be anchored securely, or that poor condition may become an issue. Mayor Chau presented these concerns to the Planning Board and to the Code Enforcement Officer. The solicitor had said it was the Code Enforcement Officer's determination so it would be up to that Officer as to how to interpret.

Councilman Dewees asked were banners and flags included?

Councilman Perri replied, they were not regulated. The old car lots used to have the triangle signs and they would become an issue. You can put anything in a regulation, but you have to enforce it. We could only put so much in an ordinance. It's in there now, what we can do and what we can't do.

Mayor Chau noted some were in the right-of-way.

Council President Polistina agreed, safety was a concern.

- Zion Pump Station Project – *Requested by Engineer Nassar*

Engineer Nassar reported we were funding the project through the I-Bank, one of the requirements was to have an SED program, which pertains to use by the awarded contractor to use socially or economically disadvantaged businesses. We needed to have a compliance officer who would need to monitor it - this would occur through a monthly meeting, and take certain steps and report on certain things regarding SED businesses. The general contractor has to make efforts, and we need to make sure they were trying.

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Council President Polistina stated since it's a pump station it should come out of the Sewer Department.

Engineer Nassar agreed, that would make sense. It's a monthly report, the project would take three months and one quarterly report. He sent a copy of the paperwork to Clerk Canesi for review, if all were ok, he would send it up to the State. According to the I-Bank website it seemed like we were ready to go.

Council President Polistina confirmed that we just have to have someone in place, someone who is at the meetings?

Engineer Nassar replied yes, but it couldn't be him because he was not an employee.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Polistina asked all to refer to their agenda packet.

Deputy Clerk Campbell distributed the revision to Ordinance 9, discussed earlier during this workshop session, that included the payment of attorney fees.

Council President Polistina made the assignments, noting that Resolutions 147-2021 and 148-2021 would be removed from the agenda.

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.

Carolyn Bucci, 530 Ridgewood Drive, as a woman and member of the Republican Club, she was deeply offended with the statement made that men of the Republican Party treat anyone with disrespect. The members have treated her and other women she knows with the utmost respect.

Rita Gisondi, 654 Pennsylvania Avenue, Somers Point, announced she put three sons through Mainland Regional High School, and one grandson. She was a credentialed teacher and administrator. Five years she ago filed a police report against Mayor Chau, who sexually harassed her son; she claimed to have proof. The incident happened during lab. She read a statement her son wrote to the school

Note: at this point, Mrs. Gisondi turned her back to the dais, and in doing so, it became difficult for the recording secretary to understand and hear what she way saying.

The statement claimed Mr. Chau made references to her son's private parts during class and that he made inappropriate comments to her son. She reported it through

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the chain of command but no one did anything, no lawyer would touch it. Mayor Chau is the one who pulled privilege. She had a paper from Mr. Marrone, King of Mainland, he's his own boss, he put a letter in Mr. Chau's file. She felt Mayor Chau had abused privilege. There were three incidents, only one was documented. Mr. Chau made intimidating and offensive comments to her son, and then solicited him. The ball was in Council's court, her son would be mortified. Next, she would be going to the school board to discuss Mr. Marrone; she knew that was not Council's venue. She thanked Council.

Craig Tanzola, 10 Magnolia Court, thanked Mrs. Gisondi. He had a son attending Mainland Regional High School and had been aware of this situation for some time. To Mayor Chau, he said: this was unacceptable. Mayor Chau had a report on file at the school and Mr. Tanzola had read it. He was disgusted. He had been to Council many times, but no one has ever seen him like this, he was broken up. To Mayor Chau: you abused that kid, verbally. Mr. Tanzola had talked to an attorney. Mr. Tanzola voted for Mayor Chau; he supported him many times. He felt it was time for Mayor Chau to step down. He had spoken to many about the marijuana, if Mr. Tanzola hasn't discussed it with a member of Council, it was because their mindset was blocked. He had a friend who was a cultivator. We were in great need for medical marijuana. 70% have endorsed marijuana, but he doesn't think 70% want it in their household. This town approved liquor licenses. He believed a grow facility would be beneficial, it could bring in a million dollars. A growery is a sealed facility. We have the land. He urged to get illegal drugs out of households.

Tom Corona, 2602 Leeds Avenue, Northfield, said he was here to talk about medical marijuana, if we don't get on board now, we were going to miss the boat. There was nothing stopping it from being here in our backyard. Citizens of the City should reap some of the benefits. Alcohol kills 261 people a day in this country, but Council would approve a liquor license, but won't approve a marijuana license, when statistics show it's not near as dangerous as a liquor license. He has heard Councilman Smith cite the 70% statistics, to Smith: your constituents have spoken, they passed it here in your City. The bandwagon is leaving, if we don't get on now, we will miss the bandwagon but it will still be in our backyard and we won't get anything.

Christine Gordon, 101 Northfield Avenue, thanked the Police Department and everyone on Council for what they have done to address the issues. It's gotten quieter but the trash was still an issue. She wanted to know what was done after a notice was sent to cease an Air BnB? How were you protecting us? She was worried about Megan's Law. What was being done?

Solicitor Facenda advised that Council's job was to enact legislation, and would adopt ordinances that were subject to the enforcement of the ordinance. That would be the job of the Code Enforcement Officer, if that person felt there were cause to issue a citation or a warning. If a citation was issued, it was up to the judge and the

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prosecutor to adjudicate.

Mrs. Gordon asked how were you going to monitor?

Solicitor Facenda replied the Council could receive complaints and forward to the Enforcement Officer, and up to the judicial branch to enforce.

Mrs. Gordon noted more than 2 ½ weeks have passed and one was still operating.

Council President Polistina added that someone from the City was going on the sites and they were notified of the need to take it down. We were trying to police that.

Councilman Notaro commented if they are advertising on the sites, they are breaking the law.

Solicitor Facenda replied it depends on the length of the stay.

Joe Dooley, 230 Dolphin Avenue, said from 1991-2000 he was a behavioral science specialist with the US Army Reserves. The marijuana issue is not new to him, he had never had a psychologist or psychiatrist he's worked with prescribe marijuana. It masks anxiety and leads to depression and suicide. It doesn't fix the problem. Current data shows that it is a very addictive dangerous drug to those under 30, because it halts development in certain sectors of the brain. He voted to decriminalize marijuana, but he did not vote to put a pot store in his town. His high school children will tell you that the biggest problem with today's kids are pot and heroin. He had seen first-hand the effects it's had on children. If you vote no, you can revisit it at a later date. New research was coming out that shows the dangers. There's not one medical organization that is for legal marijuana. He stated it was about the school children. He thanked Councilman Smith for standing up for them.

Heather Mellon, 2509 Herbert Drive, stated she was opposed to marijuana, it's a stepping stone. She noted you can have it ordered and have it delivered like a pizza. She urged Council to wait.

Mark Howell, 1119 Nugent Terrace, stated he lived here and owned businesses for a long time. He sees a lot of empty stores and places going out of business. He was not a pro marijuana guy, but asked what Council was doing to bring new businesses into town? Northfield had to change with the times. Years ago, Tilton Road was the golden mile, now it's not.

Hugh Giordano, 57 Argyle, Blackwood, NJ, stated he was a representative of United Food and Commercial Union, National Labor Union. They were made up of 1.3 million hardworking families. He represented cannabis workers in the AFLCIO, as well as IBEW and others who will be doing the retrofit and build out of these facilities. Labor Laws were very favorable. The facilities were well protected and

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secure, they were protected by retired police officers and they provide good jobs. Many health officials support medical cannabis. Cannabis was an exit drug, and was used for opioid addiction in NJ. He supported an opt-in ordinance, he referred to the program at Stockton, they are working with them. He suggested Northfield follow Bayonne, Somerdale, Eatontown and Montclair, who have put in a merit-based system. They were working with the Pleasantville facility as well. He thanked Councilwoman Madden for reading his email and calling him, and for making sure worker protections were a part of the process.

Jeffrey King, 24 Elizabeth Parkway, Eatontown, speaking on the telephone via Zoom, urged support of cannabis in Northfield. His town has a fully functional dispensary which was an asset to the community; it was run down and is now a first class ratable. They opened last year and there have been no regrets and they recently passed an ordinance to expand. If you give your community a chance something local will flourish. If we hesitate it may not be as good as what you can do. Even if you do ban, you can still articulate that you believe in the people's sovereign right. He thanked Council.

Clerk Canesi asked the Zoom attendees if anyone else wished to speak, and if so, raise their hand. There were none.

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

At 7:49pm, on a motion of Councilman Notaro, seconded by Councilman Utts, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk