

CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
AUGUST 31, 2021

At 6:09pm 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 31, 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 31, 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/85843732460> or by telephone using one tap mobile +13126266799,,85843732460# or direct dial +1 312 626 6799 using Meeting ID: 858 4373 2460. 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 31, 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.

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Instructions on how members of the public could reserve one of the limited seats, as 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 Utts; Mayor Chau.

Absent: Councilman Smith; Council President Polistina.

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

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees announced Committee Reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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Councilman Perri reported Sewer Operations made a repair on Tilton Road on one of the manholes this morning, Engineer Nassar advised Councilman Perri that everything went well. The Senior Committee has not organized yet. For clarification, related to outbursts regarding Councilwoman Madden, Councilman Perri wanted to review the Resolution which established rules of order; Councilman Perri read the section that indicated the Chair had the right to terminate the right to speak of anyone violating the rules. This falls to the Council President. Councilman Perri also looked at the personnel policies and procedures, which also apply to City Officials, and included harassment and bullying. Mayor Chau signed off on these policies. He reminded all of these policies for the future.

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

Councilman Utts had nothing to report for the Planning Board, there was no meeting next week due to no application. It came to his attention that the Zoning Officer needs a vehicle, we have a few that may or may not run. Councilman Utts suggested a vehicle for that department, possibly a hybrid, in the next capital budget cycle.

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

Councilman Notaro completely agreed with Councilman Perri, we all need to respect one another. He has heard comments that have affected him personally. He read a quote that alleged misogynistic behavior on the part of the republican party. He was offended by this personally and on behalf of the party. In the summer of 1983, he lost his father to cancer and was raised by a grieving mother of seven, which included five women who helped raise Councilman Notaro. This statement was not only untrue but disrespectful to him personally and to the party.

Councilwoman Madden replied that she never said Councilman Notaro was.

Councilman Notaro added that he was included in the republican party. He holds no ill will, but wanted to address it, that's all.

Councilman Notaro read the Fire Department report for July: there were 2 fire incidents; 2 hazardous conditions including a gas leak and an accident; 2 calls for service; 3 good intent calls; 1 first responder call and 3 non-incident activities. The EMS report for June included 80 calls with an average response time of 5 minutes, 1 second. July had a total of 151 calls with an average response time of 6 minutes, 23 seconds. Regarding Economic Development, referring to comment made by Mark Howell at the last meeting, Councilman Notaro said he drove around town to look at what was vacant. He met with local business leaders and they came up with the idea to draw national businesses; Councilman Notaro would be setting up a meeting in the near future. Anyone interested can contact Councilman Notaro. FAN had a great

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opening night, dedications were made to children who played who have passed, and to Coach Rod.

Councilman Perri asked Councilman Notaro for the number of mutual aid calls to Northfield.

Councilman Notaro did not have this information; he had the number of calls we provided. He could get the information Councilman Perri was requesting.

Councilwoman Madden, to Councilman Notaro, noted that Inspira rigs are not here. Would they be moving in?

Councilman Notaro advised that the lease was just signed, adding there were some issues, but they would be here. Councilman Notaro was working on it. He commented that our ambulance was out on mutual aid calls quite often, because other towns were not equipped to handle it. If we are out providing mutual aid, that affects us. There was an issue and we were working on it. Service has been better, so far.

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees made it clear that the lease-related delays were with Inspira, not on our end.

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees suggested that we come up with a reasonable sign ordinance to give businesses help, we have struggling businesses. He asked Council to give it some thought.

Councilman Notaro felt Northfield was not doing that badly, all things considered. There's not a lot vacant out there.

Mayor Chau agreed. He noted many new businesses have been opening or will be opening. The Northfield Community School is operating at the old Friar Tucks.

Councilman Perri asked for confirmation that it was the Community School.

Mayor Chau confirmed that this was what he heard.

Councilman Perri thought the referendum required all schooling to be onsite at the community school.

Mayor Chau noted there were many off-site locations for the pre-K program; it was a grant.

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

Councilman Dewees had no report this evening.

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

Councilman Smith was absent.

Councilwoman Madden – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden read the library statistics for this month: attendance was 478; circulation included 1433 items; 81 e-books; 56 audio books; fines and fees collected \$124.09; in person programs 16 with a total attendance of 229. The numbers were certainly much lower than pre-pandemic numbers, she hoped we will see them rise. Regarding the Mainland Regional High School Board of Education meeting, Mr. Marrone outlined several policies: masks would be required, vaccinations were encouraged, students would be 3' apart instead of 6', there were revised lunch procedures, and students on buses would be required to wear masks. There was no virtual option unless a student was sent home by the school. They were making an attempt to return to pre-pandemic procedures as much as possible. She had nothing to report from the safety meeting.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina was absent.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – INCOMPLETE BUSINESS

- Zion Road Pump Station Easement – *Ordinance on Agenda for Purchase*

Solicitor Facenda stated there was an ordinance on the agenda tonight, if approved Mayor Chau could execute the agreement. Solicitor Facenda would work with Engineer Nassar going forward.

- 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 reported he was still working on the process of putting an ordinance together.

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Council President Pro Tempore Dewees suggested Public Works maintain the one problem area, as an interim solution.

Councilman Perri replied he would check it out.

Councilman Notaro asked Councilman Perri to confirm that his plan was to require that the water be kept onsite.

Councilman Perri confirmed, but acknowledged that preexisting would be exempt from new legislation.

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees felt the bigger issue was that the typical single-family home doesn't have a sump pump as part of construction, that happens after the fact.

Engineer Nassar added that according to building code, if you have a basement, and in some cases, a crawlspace, you have to have a french drain or a sump pump. If you don't have the ordinance, you have no rules. It does not say water has to be on site, just has to be a certain distance from the foundation.

Councilman Perri would get something together.

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

Engineer Nassar had a meeting with County personnel regarding storm systems, old plans were reviewed. He anticipated one or two more meetings before we could begin formulating an interlocal.

Councilman Perri asked if when Cresson Hill was finished, would we have as built?

Engineer Nassar replied that would be up to the Planning Board.

- Library Ballot Question regarding County Library System

Neither Councilwoman Madden nor Mayor Chau had comments at this time.

- Use of Flag and Banner Signs, Northfield Businesses – Update to be Provided on 9/14

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

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Council President Pro Tempore moved to New Grant Opportunities, none were presented.

Councilwoman Madden had a few things regarding Ordinance 7-2021. Since the State has issued the rules regarding cannabis, she hoped this document has relieved any fears. The people running these businesses have financial acumen and are highly knowledgeable. We all need to become more educated, she asked would we be willing to provide assistance and be welcoming? There was a huge benefit and she hoped we were willing to embrace this philosophy.

Councilman Notaro didn't think anyone had 'fear', he felt they were just trying to be responsible.

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees wanted to be able to read the document and educate himself.

Councilman Utts stated that he had reviewed most of the document, and the process would be competitive. This may come down to a lottery. Councilman Utts wanted to make a motion to adopt ordinance 7-2021.

Municipal Clerk Canesi explained what she had read based on her limited review of what some of the rules were. The license fee structure for cannabis is similar to mercantile; we cannot charge a fee that is in excess of what it costs the town to issue the license. She reiterated that she has not read the entire document yet. As another example, under the ABC manual, which is quite thick, the Police Department investigates the qualifications of the applicant, and has no timeline for doing so. There is a very narrow statutory deadline for a cannabis license. We want to make sure Chief Newman was prepared for his department to fully vet this. We need a process. There is no limit on the number of micro-business licenses, towns with license limits in their ordinance may end up repealing their ordinance. She felt Council needed to digest all of the rules and be sure we were prepared to effectively manage the process and issue our own license.

Councilman Utts asked if he wanted to motion 7, does it not have to be entertained?

Councilman Perri relied, yes.

Clerk Canesi was concerned with Sunshine; the ordinance was not on the agenda.

Solicitor Facenda agreed, it was not on the agenda, if Council moved forward, it would have to be read in full and he felt there would be significant issues with Sunshine laws and people either attending or not attending the meeting to address an issue that was or was not on the agenda.

Discussion ensued regarding Ordinance 7-2021 and the regulations from the State.

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Solicitor Facenda would appreciate some time to check the Open Public Meetings Act.

Engineer Nassar addressed Council and asked to add Mazza Drive to the 2021 paving project, he was not sure what it would add to the project, he suggested it be an alternate bid.

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees conducted a straw poll vote, all were in favor of adding.

Councilman Perri added to his report that Rob Blaine, City Mechanic, did jobs on two police cars, he installed two water pumps and timing chains; it was an immense amount of work. He gave Mr. Blaine credit for doing it well, in house.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees asked all to refer to their agenda packet.

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees made the assignments.

PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees 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.

Sandra Russo, Yorkshire Avenue, asked had there been any issue with a dispensary in the US? Has anyone ever been held at gunpoint?

Council President Pro Tempore Dewees did not have statistics.

Ms. Russo thanked Council.

Christine Gordon, 101 Northfield Avenue, asked did anyone have anyone in their family with cannabis psychosis? We all have them in our families. We don't need this here. It looks terrible when you drive down the streets in Northfield, we don't need any more of that.

Clerk Canesi advised there was no one participating via Zoom who wished to speak.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Council President Pro Tempore Dewees closed the public session

At 7:10pm, on a motion of Councilman Notaro, seconded by Councilman Utts, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

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Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk