

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
NOVEMBER 9, 2021**

At 6:02pm 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 November 9, 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 November 9, 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/87247599860> or by telephone using One tap mobile +13126266799,,87247599860# or direct dial +1 312 626 6799 using Meeting ID: 872 4759 9860. 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 November 9, 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

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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 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.

Council President Polistina announced Committee Reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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Councilman Perri congratulated the Republican candidates for their strong showing. He thanked Councilwoman Madden for her time, and congratulated Councilman Smith, Carolyn Bucci and Councilman Dewees.

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

Councilman Utts reported that he spoke with a resident regarding the Zoom meetings, the resident loved them but couldn't tell who was speaking because of the masks. The resident requested that masks be lowered when speaking. The Planning Board had a long meeting the other night with two D variances, one involving the Beacon building requesting a body shop use. The applicant went to great lengths to explain that body shops today are very different from years ago. The only objection was a representative of Cresson Hill, because of the proximity of Cresson Hill to the proposed facility. The Veterans Administration building application was heard; there was very little leeway in terms of design. Several veterans spoke in favor of the facility as being very much needed. A few area residents were concerned about security, but the wooded area buffer seemed to satisfy them. The application was approved. Tonight's agenda includes a Class II Officer and an Electrical Inspector.

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

Councilman Notaro thanked Councilman Perri for his many years of service; he thanked Councilwoman Madden for her service as well and offered congratulations to the Republican candidates. He read the EMS report for October, with average response times.

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

Councilman Dewees reported he was getting prices for replacing the exterior side public entrance to the Police Department, and to paint the museum at Birch Grove Park. Irrigation was scheduled to be turned off by the end of the month. The bathrooms at the tan snack bar would be closed and winterized. The football snack bar would be done at the end of the season, in early December.

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

Councilman Smith shared that Northfield Community School has a coordinated a vaccination program for children with the Linwood schools. He thanked all involved with the for election, the individuals who step up and devote their time are appreciated.

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Councilwoman Madden – Insurance and Safety; Library; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden had no report thing to report for committees. She congratulated candidates; she congratulated Carolyn Bucci and wished her luck.

Council President Polistina – Finance and Collections; Municipal Alliance

Council President Polistina thanked all election participants for stepping up; he thanked those who ran for School Board as well. He announced the City's submission of the Best Practices Inventory and explained that this assesses areas including personnel, budgets, capital procurement, transparency, shared services and some unscored areas that are not applicable, such as the American Recue Plan, tax collection and recreation. Northfield's score was 22.5, out of 23. If a town scores below 15 they start to lose State Aid, he applauded everyone involved. The Municipal Alliance would be meeting next week, he would have more to report at the next meeting.

Council President Polistina moved to old business.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

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

Solicitor Facenda anticipated getting a letter from Planning Board Secretary Robin Atlas that we would be on the agenda for December 2nd; we have the 200' list.

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

Engineer Nassar would discuss during new business.

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

Council President Polistina announced there was nothing new to report.

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

Councilman Perri reported he would have something for the next meeting.

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

Engineer Nassar did not have an update.

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- Potential Acquisition of Fire Truck – *Bid Specifications Pending from Chief Cummings*

Councilman Notaro did not have an update.

- Potential Public Auction of City Owned Property Block 66 Lot 11 – *Draft MOU Pending from Habitat for Humanity*

Clerk Canesi announced that Habitat was very interested; she sent a draft of a sample MOU to Solicitor Facenda for review. We would need to involve our COAH attorney at some point.

Solicitor Facenda would review the agreement for the next meeting.

- Business-Friendly Changes to Sign Ordinance

Council President Polistina moved to changes to our sign ordinance; he had previously requested feedback from the Council but received none, so he went with an attempt to address the most typical complaints. They would be forwarded to the Planning Board.

Councilwoman Madden, regarding the prohibited signs, questioned that blinking was crossed off; did this mean we would allow blinking signs?

Council President Polistina replied, yes, only “open” signs would be permitted to blink, and no blinking signs could be perpendicular to the flow of traffic.

Councilman Dewees asked if were there size restrictions?

Council President Polistina responded they would still fall within the current restrictions, it would remain unchanged, he believes it was 25% coverage.

Council President Polistina continued to review suggested changes.

Councilman Utts, regarding banner signs, asked if we want them up all the time? He felt they lose their effectiveness after time. He suggested a time limit, such as 90 days.

Councilman Smith asked if it was a potential problem if there were five stores in 100 feet; what if they can't work it out amongst themselves?

Council President Polistina replied, this would result in a violation if there were too many signs.

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Councilman Smith asked what if there was no cooperation between businesses? Could it rotate?

Clerk Canesi felt that may be difficult to enforce, a grand opening we can monitor, because of their zoning approval or mercantile license. Adding a permit process would be another layer that was cumbersome. If it's tenancy, they take it up with their landlord.

Councilman Perri spoke regarding blinking signs; he questioned the need for blinking signs.

Council President Polistina noted not just any blinking sign, but those that just say "open".

Councilwoman Madden asked could these be blinking into someone's home?

Council President Polistina replied we would have to look at that.

Councilman Perri felt they should be fixed illumination, blinking signs start to get tacky.

Council President Polistina confirmed: open signs should just be 'on', but no blinking? We'll leave that one out.

Council President Polistina moved banner signs to grand opening only, based on discussion. We would also change the duration from 30 days to 90 days.

Council President Polistina would put these suggestions together and ask for input from the Planning Board, and move on from there.

- Cannabis Regulations – *Report from Committee*

Council President Polistina moved to cannabis and items we would need to add to the ordinance.

Councilman Utts reported that he and Council President Polistina discussed the matter and came to a mutual agreement; they dropped cultivation all together. A delivery license would be limited to those who have a retail store front. He reviewed the proposed licensing fees; it was formulated so as not to burden smaller businesses.

Councilman Utts offered that people were afraid; they questioned if we would need more police with a cannabis establishment. Utts countered these concerns by asking if we needed more police when bootleggers opened. He felt once businesses were established it would be demonstrated that there was no need for these concerns. He was trying to give businesses a little help.

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Council President Polistina advised that the 2% tax was a given, he clarified that even though it was not on the list, it was intended to be included.

Councilman Notaro asked for explanation of the proposed zone.

Councilman Utts explained; it would be Tilton Road, roughly west of the street by Dunkin' Donuts.

Councilman Perri clarified that this would be Debora Street.

Solicitor Facenda asked for confirmation that there was no change to the zone as previously identified.

Council President Polistina confirmed.

Councilman Perri felt if we didn't have five votes, we should not move forward. Mayor Chau could overturn and you need five votes for that.

Councilman Utts suggested a straw poll.

Councilman Notaro suggested two licenses.

Councilman Utts felt three encourages competition and discourages collusion.

Councilman Dewees had heard from many constituents and had only heard from one that was in favor of it.

Councilwoman Madden said she has heard differently.

Councilman Notaro had heard from both sides. This could spur economic growth. It was a tough decision; it could help or it could hinder.

Councilman Utts noted it's going to happen with or without us. If you ask a high school student if it's easier to get liquor or cannabis, the answer is cannabis, but the source is unknown as are any levels of adulterants. Cannabis was already here, and legal cannabis was going to be here. We should help provide a safe product.

Councilwoman Madden reiterated support for cannabis sales and the associated economic benefits.

Council President Polistina suggested a straw poll;

Councilman Perri said he was a yes, but didn't want to spend the money if it's going to fail. You have a different administration coming in before the end of the year.

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Council President Polistina explained the timeline of introduction of the ordinance on November 23rd and final adoption on December 14th.

Councilman Notaro said if only four votes are in favor, Council may not want to proceed.

A straw poll was conducted; Councilman Perri, Councilwoman Madden, Councilman Utts, Councilman Notaro and Council President Polistina were in favor of moving forward.

Councilman Dewees and Councilman Smith were opposed.

Council President Polistina would move forward for the next meeting; he will make sure we get information to Solicitor Facenda to have the ordinance prepared for the next meeting.

Solicitor Facenda said he needed to confirm, legally, if we would start new or amend ordinance 7-2021. The timeframe would not change.

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 Professional Services.

- Professional Services – Review of any Recommended Changes to the RFQ/P

Clerk Canesi explained we traditionally advertise of our professional services, although we were not required to do so. The criteria had been sent to everyone for review, she asked if there were any changes to the criteria.

Council President Polistina, seeing no changes, asked Clerk Canesi to move forward with the same criteria as last year.

- 2021 Best Practices Inventory – Finance Chair Polistina

Council President Polistina stated that he'd reported on the Best Practices Inventory during his committee report.

- Northfield Avenue at Rt 9 Drainage

Engineer Nassar reported regarding the Route 9 drainage; today he had a preconstruction meeting with NJDOT for the Route 9 reconstruction project. Engineer Nassar would work with the project manager to see if there was something

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they could do to help us; that project would not be complete until 2027-2028. They also needed a resolution of support by the end of the year; they would provide us with a sample. This was necessary because of changes to regulations that were coming in the new year. Once the project started it would it will be a year in length.

Councilman Perri asked did the City have any input on turn lanes, such as Mill Road and Route 9.

Engineer Nassar advised this had been the second meeting; we were a stakeholder. We could bring it up to them. The issue was there was that there was not enough right-of-way.

Councilman Perri asked if the drainage lines that run in to Birch Grove would be upgraded.

Engineer Nassar replied that we could give them a list of items we want them to consider.

Councilman Dewees asked how many systems we have that tie in to the State system?

Engineer Nassar replied; Cedar Bridge, Northfield Avenue and Banning.

Councilwoman Madden said she would like to add a New Business item to the agenda. Referring to an email from OEM Coordinator Joo, which provided rationale regarding keeping the truck with him, she would like to comment. Regarding having the vehicle available for rapid response. She asked where Mr. Joo worked?

Coordinator Joo, in the audience, replied that he worked at AlantiCare in Atlantic City.

Councilwoman Madden felt any response from there would not be rapid; she asked if Mr. Joo used the City vehicle for personal use or to drive to work? If it sits in his driveway it can sit in the driveway here.

Coordinator Joo replied, no; but advised that if he is home the response would be more rapid.

Councilwoman Madden felt routine rounds should be made to provide visibility and reduce possibility of decay. A log should be kept of usage, mileage and gas usage.

Mayor Chau directed a comment to Councilwoman Madden: he felt she had some good, valid points, as did Coordinator Joo. It had been policy to allow the vehicle to be driven home. Mayor Chau had no problems either way. He would go with Council's recommendation.

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Council President Polistina felt it made sense to have the car at his home.

Councilman Notaro felt an SUV that looked like a police car at Jackson and Shore would slow traffic down on Shore Road. He felt we had bigger issues to deal with.

Councilman Dewees moved to other new business, and referred to a letter from the County expressing intent to purchase a City owned parcel on Dolphin Avenue. The lot was about one acre and was part of our COAH Plan, if we considered this we would have to come up with another equally sized parcel. Councilman Dewees' recommendation was that we contact the County to see if there was a similarly sized parcel that could be swapped. If they didn't, it was his suggestion that we not move forward. He asked for Council's opinion.

Council President Polistina agreed it was a good idea to ask the County if they could swap.

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, wanted to remind all what the ballot question was, with regard to cannabis. She read the ballot question. Not anywhere in here can you get from this, to selling in our town. She had been campaigning for six months and the majority of people in Ward 1 and Ward 2 were not in favor of this. She urged that Council put this on the ballot as a referendum.

Joe Schiavo, 2547 Cedar Bridge Road, said he has lived here for almost 20 years. He heard about this on the radio. He moved here for the schools. He had asked his friends, people in his church, none of them had heard about this. He felt we do not need to go down this path. He did not feel it would generate the revenue you think it will. He suggested that Council go out and talk to people. This was not what people want. He felt very strongly about this. This did not make sense to have it be more readily available to our children.

Tom Boyd, 117 Northfield Avenue, extended appreciation to Councilman Perri for his many years of service to this town: close to 30 years. A lot of people don't spend that much time in their careers, all the while doing this while running a business and raising a family. He thanked Councilwoman Madden for her service. He congratulated Councilman Dewees. Regarding the parcel that may be donated to Habitat, Mr. Boyd said he spent many years volunteering for Habitat. He asked for detail on the Habitat issue.

Council President Polistina explained the lot was one of several in our Affordable Housing Plan; a private party inquired about purchasing it; we did advise them that it

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was in our COAH Plan. We also reached out to Habitat to see if they would be interested in the parcel.

Mr. Boyd felt the gentleman from Cedar Bridge said it all. Mr. Boyd did not vote for the referendum. He felt Council could find more appropriate means of generating revenue for the City.

Kim Betesh, stated she owns a business 801 Tilton Road. Regarding signs, suggested allowing 90 days for going out business, 30-day clearance, and 30-day anniversary signs. She wanted to address the 'not in my back yard', proposal. The reality was it is in your backyard and how you handle it is going to be the difference. She felt the regulations were reasonable. Zoning is where it is highly visible.

Mayor Chau asked if Mrs. Betesh was a Northfield resident?

Mrs. Betesh replied she was not a Northfield resident. She grew up in Brigantine. She lived in Margate. She stressed that cannabis would create local jobs.

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

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

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

Council President Polistina made the assignments.

At 7:20pm, on a motion of Councilman Notaro, seconded by Councilman Smith, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk