

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 12, 2024**

At 6:00pm this meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Mary Canesi. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 6, 2024, and in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Council President Pro Tempore Dewees.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Councilwoman Bucci; Councilwoman Carfagno; Councilman Dewees; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Polistina; Councilman Smith; Council President Leeds.

**Absent:** Mayor Chau\*

*\*Mayor Chau arrived at 6:17pm but was not present when attendance was taken.*

Solicitor Facenda, Engineer DeBlasio, Engineer Mauro, Chief VonColln, and Planner Tiffany Morrissey were also present.

Council President Leeds introduced Mike DePilato for his presentation.

**PRESENTATION:**

Request for Approval for Drone Use at Birch Grove Park (*Resolution 68-2024*)

- *Mike DiPilato, Airport Research Specialist, FAA Wm. J. Hughes Technical Center*

Mike DiPilato introduced himself and explained the FAA Airport Unmanned Aircraft Systems ('Drone') Detection and Mitigation Research Program project, which began in 2021. He referred to a Power Point presentation displayed on the media screen in Council Chambers and reviewed each slide.

If the Facilities Use Application is approved by the Council, a third-party will conduct Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) operations on behalf of FAA. The program has been in use successfully in Galloway and Egg Harbor Township. They chose Birch Grove Park to establish a testing area farther south than current locations. The FAA is coordinating with local stakeholders, including law enforcement, and no personally identifiable information will be collected – FAA UAS do not have any cameras or microphones that record activities. He described the types and sizes of the various UAS that may be used for the project. At all times, marked FAA vehicles with government tags will be used. He provided a flyer to be posted on bulletin boards in municipal buildings and police department offices to provide awareness of the FAA drone operations, as well as an FAQ geared toward Northfield government officials, and an additional FAQ for the public. Their next

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 12, 2024**

steps would be to update their FAA drone ‘airspace authorization’, which will allow them to legally conduct drone operations over Birch Grove Park; it is anticipated that will occur by the end of March, and thereafter, they will likely conduct limited operations at Birch Grove in early/mid-April, so the drone pilots can become acclimated with the site. They are still waiting for direction from Congress on the next phase of the research effort, and as such would likely not conduct ‘routine operations’ until late summer/early fall. Routine operations will include flying at Birch Grove no more than two times per week. When conducting drone flights, they will yield to all recreational activity at the park. He said he would forward the power point presentation to the Council and offered to answer any questions.

Councilman Polistina asked what was the projected start date?

Mr. DiPilato stated they were in the planning stages; that could take a month, thereafter they'd conduct operations.

Councilman Dewees asked what altitudes the drones use.

Mr. DiPilato replied no higher than 400 feet.

Solicitor Facenda asked if the time-of-day matters?

Tim Goin, FAA, replied; earlier in the day is better, out of the heat of the day.

Mr. DiPilato thanked all.

Council President Leeds moved to committee reports.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Councilman Dewees** – Buildings/Grounds, Athletic Fields; Birch Grove Park, Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park; Public Works: Roads, Engineering

Councilman Dewees reported that Public Works was getting the fields ready for the season.

**Councilwoman Bucci** – Insurance and Safety; Planning Board; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilwoman Bucci, for the Insurance and Safety Committee, advised that since the plan is to change the number of people that constitute a ‘group’ activity from 10 to 30, we would need to change our ordinance. For the Economic Development Commission, they talked about changes in the liquor license law that require that the area be designated as in need of development. Our Planner, Tiffany Morrissey was in attendance this evening and will address that a little bit later. Councilwoman Bucci congratulated the Mainland Girls Basketball team, adding that this was another in a

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 12, 2024**

string of successes that is great for our town. Councilwoman Bucci referred to a seminar Mayor Chau mentioned; she said she'd attended and explained it as a countywide local road safety program. It was a focus group that touched on lane departure, aggressive driving, and different road safety plans.

**Councilman Polistina** – Finance and Collections; Inspections, Housing/Zoning; Library; Municipal Alliance Senior Citizens

Councilman Polistina did not have a Committee Report and said our budget will be introduced soon.

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

Councilman Smith announced the next meeting regarding the Court was scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>. Northfield Little League's opening day will be held on April 9<sup>th</sup>, there was beef and beer fund raiser at DiOrio's on April 6<sup>th</sup>, Venmo for tickets.

*At 6:17pm Mayor Chau arrived.*

Councilman Smith continued; the next Board of Education meeting will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup>; he congratulated the Think Day team and the Basketball team. Northfield Community School has asked about a project that involved the school pursuing a wildflower project along the bike path; what was the process?

Clerk Canesi suggested a formal letter to the governing body outlining the requirements, and we can see what else we might need.

Councilman Dewees suggested the school reach out to him or Superintendent Vitale; we were on board before but nobody followed through.

**Councilwoman Carfagno** - Technology / MRHS Channel; Cultural Committee / Veteran Liaison; Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Carfagno also congratulated the Basketball teams and noted the Cross-Country medley team came in 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation. She provided the dates for the Flea Market and the Egg Hunt at Birch Grove Park and offered a 'shout out' to Michael Grossman from Kensington for the Project Prom event. It was a great project that provided free dresses and accessories to girls.

**Councilman Notaro** - Inspections, Housing/Zoning; Sewer Operations; Northfield Sports (FAN)

Councilman Notaro congratulated the Mainland Girls Varsity Basketball team; they had an amazing season. He thanked the Police and Fire Departments for the wonderful escort. Regarding FAN, the 5th and 6th graders won their championship.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 12, 2024**

For Sewer, Councilman Dewees and Superintendent Vitale met with Councilman Notaro to identify areas in need of slip lining.

**Council President Leeds – Fire Department/EMS**

Council President Leeds read the EMS report for February; to Councilman Smith, was there any update from Linwood regarding the RFP for EMS?

Councilman Smith advised he was still waiting for Mayor Matik to respond.

Council President Leeds moved to Ad Hoc Committee reports.

**AD HOC COMMITTEES**

Councilman Polistina did not have an update on electric vehicles.

Councilwoman Bucci would like the food truck ordinance to be changed to a special events ordinance; she would like the same committee members.

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS**

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

There was no update.

- Potential Sale / Development of City Owned Properties: Block 66 Lot 11; Block 69 Lot 1.02

Clerk Canesi announced that we had a draft of the Affordable Housing Agreement with Habitat that is under review.

- Amendment to Street Opening Permit Ordinance

Solicitor Facenda advised he was reviewing the street opening ordinance at the request of the Engineer.

There were no updates on the work session topics for ongoing business.

**WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS**

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Mauro announced the NJDOT has local projects fund, it was a rolling application up to \$300,000 for various projects; the drainage issue at Cedar Bridge

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 12, 2024**

discussed at the last meeting would be an eligible project. She encouraged the City to pursue funding.

Councilman Polistina noted that he and Councilman Dewees felt roadway striping would be an eligible project.

Clerk Canesi explained that the Engineer would need to submit a purchase order request identifying the desired project, and Council would vote on that at the next meeting.

Council President Leeds moved to the new liquor license legislation.

- New Liquor License Legislation – Next Steps

Clerk Canesi explained that Planner Morrissey will give an overview, and if Council wanted to hire her to do the work required, she would prepare a proposal for the Council to approve at the next meeting.

Planner Morrissey reviewed options, including designating an area in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation, or designating the entire city. She gave details of the process, including DCA approval. There were benefits in addition to providing an opportunity for a new liquor license, including affordable housing. She recommended a city-wide redevelopment plan. Solicitor Facenda would have to prepare a few resolutions. She believed this was a viable option and was a good tool for the municipality to have, in the event you want to utilize it.

Mayor Chau asked how the license fee would be determined.

Solicitor Facenda believed the fees would be between private parties.

Solicitor Facenda, addressed Planner Morrissey: was there any downside to the City being designated as an area in need of rehabilitation?

Planner Morrissey replied, not anymore; this facilitated development. If the City was interested in pursuing at least having the designation, she could prepare a proposal.

Council President Leeds took a straw poll vote, all members present were in favor of the proposal.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Council President Leeds reviewed the agenda and made the assignments. He noted the addition of Resolution 73-2024 that Solicitor Facenda would read into the record.

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
MARCH 12, 2024**

**PUBLIC SESSION / FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER**

Council President Leeds opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject, he asked that they state their name and city of residence for the record and observe the five-minute limit per speaker.

Ian Brady, Linwood. Mr. Brady, regarding disc golf, announced he had seen small groups playing, and said it was moving along quickly. He has identified a few areas where they want to tweak locations. He would like to start moving towards the back nine. He knows Public Works was very busy but would like to do this before the growth comes in. He asked if there were updates.

Councilman Dewees reported that Superintendent Vitale was working on wording for the signs, there was a holdup with some other street signage. He asked who was installing the baskets?

Councilman Smith replied that was discussed in the budget.

Councilman Dewees advised he would get with Superintendent Vitale regarding pricing; Superintendent Vitale wants to move forward.

Councilman Notaro believed the funding was in 2025.

Mr. Brady asked if the City was open to donations.

Councilman Dewees stated he would speak with Superintendent Vitale tomorrow.

Councilman Smith mentioned sponsors for holes.

Councilman Dewees reiterated that he would speak with Superintendent Vitale and call Mr. Brady.

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

At 6:51pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk