

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MARCH 26, 2024**

At 6:01pm 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

Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Mauro, and Chief VonColln were also present.

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 there have been some leaks as all can see, the roof replacement has been delayed due to weather. Public Works installed signs around Birch Grove for frisbee golf.

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

Councilwoman Bucci advised that the Atlantic County Economic Alliance's 'Northfield' page has been added to the Economic Development Page of the City website. She urged all to take a look.

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

Councilman Polistina noted that the budget would be introduced this evening; salaries and wages, insurance, pension, benefits, and operating expenses have all seen increases. During this year, he asked all to try to scrutinize spending, to create surplus for a better position next year. The issue of the Court and EMS are not yet known. He announced Alliance events: Coffee with a Cop on April 12th, a Resource Fair at Northfield Community School on May 17th, a Life Skills event, formerly known as the bike rodeo, on May 18th, as well as Hooked on Fishing, Movie Night

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and National Night Out. Councilman Polistina thanked Alliance Coordinator Shannon Campbell for her help in putting these events together. He attended the Library meeting and shared that the Friends of the Library are sponsoring events as well: a poster contest and essay contest, bake sale and children's tea party – information was available on the Library website. They are also doing some upgrades to signs and lighting. He announced an eclipse event at the Library on April 8th.

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

Councilman Smith stated the Central Court meeting was still on for next week, he hoped to have information to share at the next meeting. For Northfield Little League, he received a message from Jason Yard regarding the Opening Day Ceremony, all are invited but the date was the same as our April 9th Council meeting. The EMS RFP was on the agenda this evening. He congratulated Northfield Community School for their production of Aladdin and the Mainland Regional High School students for their production of Grease.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno echoed Councilman Smith's comments regarding the theatrical production at Mainland, all shows were sold out. She announced Mainland would have 18 staff-reductions due to the loss of State Aid. She hoped they would find alternate sources of funding. Councilwoman Carfagno announced the date for the Cultural Committee Yard Sale, April 13th at the Community School. Northfield Mothers' League held their Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday at the bandstand, it was not soggy and was very well attended. She offered thanks to Library Director Matt Freund and his staff, to Republic Bank and to Officer Kreuz.

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

Councilman Notaro announced he was seeking quotes for the football tower roof.

Council President Leeds – Fire Department/EMS

Council President Leeds indicated the EMS RFP was on the agenda this evening; Inspira sent us a letter indicating they did not want to renew, contrary to what was said in a recent email sent to the Council. He commended Chief VonColln and staff for their participation at an Egg Hunt sponsored by the Police Athletic League in EHT for visually impaired children; this was done on their own time.

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AD HOC COMMITTEES

Electric Vehicles – Councilmen Polistina and Notaro. There was no update.

Special Events Ordinance – Councilwoman Bucci. Councilwoman Bucci reported she was working on the first draft.

Affordable Housing – Councilwoman Carfagno, Councilman Polistina.

Solicitor Facenda referred to a letter from COAH Counsel Surenian which contained recommendations for action on the part of the City; he asked if Council would like to send the Master Plan update to the County Planning Board and if we would like to heed the advice of counsel to put the Planning Board on notice. All agreed, and Solicitor Facenda will handle. Solicitor Facenda would also put Planning Board Solicitor Fleishman on notice to watch for the document noted in the letter.

Insurance Requirements Review – Councilman Polistina, Councilwoman Bucci. Councilwoman Bucci stated we'd be changing the wording in the Ordinance to change the number in a group from 10 to 30.

Solicitor Facenda added that we were running it by our Risk Management Consultant to make sure they have no concerns; we should have it ready for the next meeting.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

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

Clerk Canesi stated there was supposed to be a shared service agreement between the City of Northfield and the County of Atlantic regarding shared stormwater pipes in the area formerly known as Country Club Acres. The County Engineer we were working with has since retired, and this item has been on the agenda for quite some time; do we still need it? Clerk Canesi suggested Councilman Notaro reach out to Superintendent Vitale to see if we should proceed or remove it from the agenda?

Councilman Dewees offered to take care of it as he was familiar with the easement in question that runs from Shore Road, into the bay.

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

Councilman Polistina announced we were presented with a proposed schematic, he would forward to Council.

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WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Engineer Mauro spoke about the NJDOT local project fund. The City identified a restriping project; she reached out to Superintendent Vitale and was waiting to hear back from him.

- Ornamental Street Lighting – Northfield Plaza, *requested by Councilman Dewees*

Councilman Dewees explained the location of the lights; there was an accident recently and one was damaged. The City does not own them nor do we pay for the electricity or maintain them. He deferred to the Solicitor for his opinion as to what we can do.

Solicitor Facenda stated, since the City does not own the light poles, the City does not have an obligation to fix them. He suggested contacting the insurance company for the driver who hit the pole and seeing if a claim could be made to see if they could fix the problem. He did not believe the City had a standing. He invited Northfield Plaza resident, Alisa Elkis, to speak.

Alisa Elkis has lived on Northfield Plaza for 22 years. She has taken care of the replacement of light bulbs and landscaping for years. The lights were on from dusk until dawn.

Charles McGilley, resident of Northfield Plaza for 40 years. From his understanding, according to Atlantic City Electric, the lights are hooked to the street light grid. He believed it was an issue, in terms of safety, that the light was not working. The electric company controls the power in and out.

Solicitor Facenda asked Chief VonColln if any tickets were issued and if damage was noted?

Chief VonColln relied, yes.

Mr. McGilley urged the Council to have the driver who hit the pole do the repair.

Councilman Notaro asked if ACE provided power to the pole, even if they don't know it, can they be compelled to pay for it?

Mr. McGilley asked the Council to contact the driver to put them on notice.

Solicitor Facenda reiterated that we don't have standing to make such notice; he suggested that possibly the Atlantic County Prosecutors Office can get restitution through the court.

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Mr. McGilley asserted that the Council should fix it; put the driver on notice.

Solicitor Facenda explained; if tickets were issued, we can contact the prosecutor to seek restitution, with the Northfield Plaza homeowners as a contact.

Mary Brewster, Northfield, asked who owns the triangles that the lights sit on; since they are in the middle of the street it makes more sense that the City take care of it than the residents.

Solicitor Facenda stated that we have the right of way; we do not own them. We were trying to help.

Councilman Notaro believed we need to determine if the light is controlled by ACE.

Solicitor Facenda added that if they are coming on at the same time as the other poles, they are tied to the streetlights.

Chief VonColln confirmed a summons was issued.

Solicitor Facenda advised he would obtain copy of the summons and contact prosecutor.

Deb Karver, Northfield, announced that she saw the accident happen, there was damage to the driver's car so his insurance company was involved. She was concerned because she has a young driver, that the area is dark. She felt it was a hazard.

- Formation of Committee to Examine/Modify Road Opening Ordinance

Councilman Leeds asked for volunteers for the road opening ordinance amendment committee.

Councilmen Dewees and Notaro volunteered.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Leeds reviewed the agenda and asked if anyone wanted any resolutions pulled?

Councilman Dewees and Councilwoman Bucci asked to pull the salary resolution; all agreed.

Council President Leeds would like to vote on Resolution 78-2024 individually.

Council President Leeds made the assignments.

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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, asked if there were issues with funds being raised and donated?

Clerk Canesi advised Council could accept the equipment purchased by Mr. Brady and donated to the City. by resolution.

Mr. Brady asked if volunteers could assemble the equipment.

Clerk Canesi deferred to Councilman Dewees, would it have to be supervised by Public Works?

Councilmen Dewees and Polistina replied; the terms for the use of volunteer labor would be the same as before.

Solicitor Facenda asked Mr. Brady when he would have these items for donation.

Mr. Brady replied he would let us know when it gets closer.

Solicitor Facenda advised we would just need a heads up.

Pete Brophy, Northfield - was happy to see Council form a committee to address the street opening ordinance; he has been putting on an addition that included a driveway and sidewalk, so he included the apron. The apron, as it turns out, constitutes a street opening. He filled out what he thought was the appropriate form, he referred to the schedule of fees, he wrote what he thought was the correct amount and delivered it to the address on the form; he got a call three days later saying he didn't pay the correct fees and that a surety bond and insurance needed to be posted. He thanked Clerk Canesi for her patient assistance. He then referred to the fine print on the form, that he didn't read. He came to City Hall and Clerk Canesi reviewed it with him, he thanked her again. He found a solution: he's just not going to do the apron. He asked DeBlasio and associates for his money back and was told it was now in Wildwood. He felt the surety bond, and insurance requirements should be on the form.

Mr. Brophy, again, thanked Clerk Canesi for going the extra mile.

Council President Leeds and Councilman Polistina thanked Clerk Canesi as well.

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

At 6:57pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk