

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
MARCH 18, 2025**

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 11, 2025, and in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Chau led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilwoman Carfagno; Councilman Dewees; Councilwoman Kern; Councilman Notaro; Councilman Polistina; Council President Bucci

Absent: Councilman Smith

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

Council President Bucci announced the ceremonial oath of office for Patrolman Gomez.

Ceremonial Oath of Office – Patrolman Daniel Gomez

Mayor Chau called Patrolman Gomez forward and asked him to say a few words.

Patrolman Gomez said he grew up in Somers Point, and thanked Mayor, Council, and the Chief, for the opportunity to serve in Northfield.

Mayor Chau noted that Patrolman Gomez graduated from Mainland Regional High School.

Patrolman Gomez introduced his wife Nicole who held the bible during his oath.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Patrolman Gomez.

At 6:04pm on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor a of brief recess.

At 6:10pm Council President Bucci resumed the meeting.

Council President Bucci moved to committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Polistina – Finance and Collections; Library; Municipal Alliance; Senior Citizens; Affordable Housing

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Councilman Polistina announced the Budget introduction was tonight, he reminded everyone to do their best at controlling our spending, it was not a budget we were excited about but we need to stay on track. Council didn't want to affect services. On behalf of the Municipal Alliance, Councilman Polistina announced Coffee with a Cop on April 3rd from 9am to 10:30am at Dunkin' Donuts.

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

Councilman Dewees reported the bandstand and picnic area work was nearing completion. Public Works has been getting the fields read for the upcoming baseball and softball season and have been installing bases for disc golf.

Councilwoman Kern – Northfield Sports (FAN)

Councilwoman Kern announced travel and rec basketball have ended their seasons, girls, and boys, and she has invited the Varsity Girls Travel Basketball team on April 8th to be recognized for their winning season.

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

Councilwoman Bucci attended the State Development and Redevelopment meeting, they look every ten years for alignment and realignment with the State and County plans, and they give us a report card. She would review with the Planning Board and report further.

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

Councilman Smith was absent.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno advised the next Mainland Board of Education meeting is scheduled for April 14th at 6pm. The Cultural Club Flea Market is May 3rd 8am-2pm at Northfield Community School, information was on the city website. July 4th Parade registration and information was on the City website, the rain date is July 5th. They are still looking for parade honorees. The Hometown Hero banner flyers should be uploaded this week; she would contact Clerk Canesi. Our Firefighters assisted with a structure fire in Pleasantville last week, she thanked them for their service and all they do.

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Councilman Notaro - Sewer Operations; Inspections, Housing/Zoning.

Councilman Notaro did not have a report.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Electric Vehicles – *Councilmen Polistina and Notaro.*

Solicitor Facenda advised that he should have the ordinance for the next meeting as well as the one for Birch Grove Park.

Special Events Ordinance – *Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Dewees.*

Councilwoman Bucci announced the Ordinance was still being worked on.

Road Opening Ordinance / Remaining Proposed Amendments – *Councilmen Dewees and Notaro.*

Councilman Notaro stated they were still fine tuning the ordinance and will get to the finish line soon.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

- Prohibition of Certain Activities in and on the lakes at Birch Grove Park

Solicitor Facenda had commented earlier; he was still working on the ordinance.

Councilwoman Carfagno asked to give an update on Affordable Housing matters. There was a meeting this afternoon and there were several projects in the works: Diocese of Camden, Habitat for Humanity, Oak Avenue, and Gables at Wabash. Our professionals would be at the April 8th meeting to give an update in closed session.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Councilwoman Kern referred to the Community Development Block Grant, she would like to move forward with ADA bleachers at the football and baseball fields.

Councilman Dewees replied and said they would look into it, they typically like ADA projects.

Clerk Canesi announced that there were only two City Council meetings prior to the May 1st deadline for application submission. She said she had a brief conversation with Engineer Mauro before tonight's meeting regarding handicapped accessible bleachers at our athletic facilities, the same concept referred to by Councilwoman Kern. Council needs to decide if they want to approve that as a project and authorize the engineer to do the work. Formal action needs to be taken on the 8th or 22nd.

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Councilman Dewees asked if the bleachers recently purchased were handicapped accessible?

Clerk Canesi replied no; accessible bleachers were very specific. She suggested smaller bleachers on more fields. The grant is no longer small amounts to each town, they are now awarding between three and seven larger grants per year on a competitive basis.

Councilman Dewees said he liked the idea, and suggests some handicapped accessible stuff at the First Street Playground; could the grant be spread out or confined to one spot?

Clerk Canesi noted that playgrounds are typically not a good project; we do not have a low-mod income census tract area which we'd need for a playground grant. Accessible bleachers are presumed to benefit adults with disabilities, which is a target benefit group.

Engineer Mauro added that Green Acres has 'Jake's Place' playground funding, it's not based on disadvantaged communities, which may be something Council could consider for next year.

Councilman Dewees stated we would look at the First Street Playground when we do capital.

Engineer Mauro explained several I-Bank funding opportunities coming up.

Councilman Dewees asked when does the NJDOT road paving grant come out?

Engineer Mauro replied, she would check.

Councilman Dewees had some projects in mind.

Chief VonColln asked if the I-Bank opportunity, Engineer Mauro mentioned, could be used to slow down ebikes on the bike path?

Engineer Mauro replied, yes.

Engineer Mauro noted that Councilman Notaro asked her about sidewalks on Zion Road, the grant could be used for that as well.

Councilman Dewees suggested an interlocal with the County.

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- Letter to Atlantic County Requesting Donation of Wagon for Hayrides

Councilwoman Bucci referred to upcoming hayrides at Birch Grove Park presented by the Volunteer Fire Company. The County is willing to donate a wagon, they asked us to send a letter asking for the donation.

She conducted a straw poll of Council to see if they were in favor of asking for the donation.

All members present were in favor.

Mayor Chau expressed his concerns about the wagons and would refer the matter to the Solicitor for a review of liability.

Solicitor Facenda stated we always have to be concerned about liability; would have someone inspect them to ensure they are in good condition.

Clerk Canesi offered that similar to items we sell on GovDeals, the wagon would be accepted “as-is.” Firefighter Pepeck has reviewed it and she believed it was in serviceable condition.

Council President Bucci asked Clerk Canesi to prepare the letter for the Mayor to sign.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Bucci reviewed the agenda and made the assignments.

Councilman Dewees advised he would be abstaining from the minutes.

Clerk Canesi confirmed the abstention as noted for the record.

PUBLIC SESSION / FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

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

Brett Hoffecker addressed the Council and announced he was part of the coaching team for Mainland Youth Lacrosse. He said he made a mistake with field use. He paid the light fee for the football field, but they were very short with time so he put in for field use to also use the Babe Ruth Field, he did not realize there was an additional light fee, on top of what they already paid. They used the field already and it was great that it helped the program. He could not get the light fee approved by his board and was initially willing to pay out of his pocket. He did pay the light fee for

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the football field.

Councilman Dewees asked how many times the lights were used.

Mr. Hoffecker replied, six times.

Solicitor Facenda explained; unfortunately, the ordinance was clear. If Mr. Hoffecker was asking the Council to waive the additional fees, it is clear the additional application requires an additional fee for lights.

Councilman Notaro asked if the Council could waive it, and then maybe tweak the ordinance.

Solicitor Facenda did not think the Council had that authority.

Mayor Chau did not recommend it be waived; Mayor Chau would pay the fee.

Solicitor Facenda, to the Mayor, so you are making a donation to Mainland Youth Lacrosse? And Mr. Hoffecker would use that donation to pay the light fee?

Solicitor Facenda announced we are not waiving the fee, Lacrosse is going to pay the fee, and how they get that money is of no concern to us.

Joan Brennan, Dolphin, asked Councilwoman Carfagno if she had questions about the parade?

Councilwoman Carfagno clarified that we were still looking for Mr. or Miss 4th of July, Citizen of the Year, and 1st baby.

Ms Brennan replied, yes, submissions must be in writing. She thanked for all work on bandstand. She would like to ask that we name the bandstand in honor of someone, she suggested Roy Clark, or Joyce Pullan, or Carol Patrick, or even just for the Cultural Committee. They are the ones who originally did the bandstand, and it was moved.

Councilman Dewees added, it's all been upgraded and it has a new life, he was very pleased with the results.

Ms Brennan continued, they would like to do concerts and are trying to find someone to write a grant; they need to get a license for the concerts. Once they are organized, they would apply again.

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

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At 6:39pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk