

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
APRIL 12, 2016**

At 6:04pm this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City in accordance with Public Law 75, Chapter 231.

FLAG SALUTE

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Dewees, Lischin, Murray, Perri, Travagline

Mayor Chau entered the meeting at 6:34pm, Councilman O'Neill entered the meeting at 6:36pm.

Absent: O'Neill, Piergiovanni, Mayor Chau

Solicitor Kris Facenda, Engineer Kwapinski and Acting Chief Newman were also in attendance.

- Noise Ordinance

Council President Travagline welcomed everyone to the meeting and deferred to Solicitor Facenda to speak about our local noise ordinance.

Solicitor Facenda announced that our noise ordinance was deemed to be invalid by Judge Belasco because it did not conform to the New Jersey Noise Control Act. The City would have to do some work on the noise ordinance, to the extent that we want it to continue. Solicitor Facenda noted that there was a model noise ordinance provided by the State. Solicitor Facenda reviewed some of the requirements, including having a decibel meter, a designated Noise Control Officer and more. This could be quite complicated and there were many standards that the State set forth. He reiterated that as written, ours did not work. He advised that there were many local towns that have State-approved noise ordinances, including Margate, Ventnor, Atlantic City, Brigantine, Hammonton, and others.

Councilman Dewees asked how it would work, would the Noise Control Official have to come out in the middle of the night?

Solicitor Facenda replied that it could be a police officer or officers. He noted that he personally did not have any firsthand knowledge of the device or its uses.

Council President Travagline asked Chief Newman what would happen now, if there were a noise complaint.

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Chief Newman stated that his staff had been asked to handle it as they normally would, try to get the resident to reduce the noise, but without the ability to issue a summons.

Councilman Perri asked if the ordinance was under State Statute.

Solicitor Facenda stated that our local ordinance had been deemed to be unconstitutional.

Councilman Perri asked if the meter had to be used for every complaint, including barking dogs. He suggested an inter-local with another town.

Municipal Clerk Canesi noted that in one of the ordinances, in another town with a State approved ordinance, the dog barking issue was related to frequency and duration of barking; the decibel meter was not referenced.

Solicitor Facenda asked Chief Newman how many noise complaints the City gets.

Chief Newman stated that we may not necessarily get a lot, but there were a variety of different complaints. The repeat offenders were usually the ones that got a summons. The Officers try to handle the situation without issuing a summons but sometimes it was necessary.

Councilman Dewees asked the cost of the machine and a description of what was involved with training.

Council President Travagline asked Clerk Canesi to look into the costs associated with the decibel meter and training.

Clerk Canesi noted that the Clerk's office has taken calls from residents, before and after a noise event; some wanted to know how late they were allowed to make noise. A period of time would elapse where people didn't realize we didn't have an ordinance, but eventually word would get out and there may be a segment of the population that would cause quality of life issues for some residents. We need to have something with teeth.

- Capital Plan for 2016 Budget

Council President Travagline referred to the capital plan. He suggested allocating money to purchase a new Computer Aided Dispatch System. There was the possibility that we will need to purchase one. He added the CAD system for 911 at \$50,000.00 and reduced road and drainage from \$1 million dollars to \$950,000.00.

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Councilman Dewees informed Council that another pole blew over at the football field, the estimated cost to remove and replace it was around \$14,000.00. The timber poles were all seriously decayed and were old. A single windstorm could bring any one of them down. He was still getting estimates and would report back to Council.

- RFP for Campground Site Management

Council President Travagline moved the campground RFP to the next meeting.

- Changes to Sign Ordinance – LED Lighting

Council President Travagline asked if anyone had questions or comments about the proposed changes.

Solicitor Facenda stated that the idea was to have Council take a look at the proposed changes, and consider the Sign Ordinance as a whole to determine if there were any other changes that they would like to consider. Most of the Planning Board changes referred to changing the neon regulations to neon and LED.

Councilman Lischin asked questions regarding the size of signage and how it related to different types of signs.

At 6:34pm Mayor Chau entered the meeting.

Councilman Lischin referred to several sections, and asked if signage restrictions should be different in the different zones.

At 6:36pm Councilman O'Neill entered the meeting.

Solicitor Facenda noted that the 'restrictive' language referred more to the political signs.

Council President Travagline felt the Sign Ordinance was too restrictive; he noted the Country Club Zone and thought we should work to lessen the restrictions.

Councilman Lischin thought that the Council, at the last meeting, was leaning more towards leveling the playing field. If businesses are a neighborhood business that was grandfathered in, they should be allowed to have the same type of signs that all of the other zones have.

Mayor Chau disagreed; residents and businesses need to coexist. A heavily commercial area and a residential area should not necessarily have the same type of signs permitted for businesses.

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Councilman Lischin acknowledged Mayor Chau's concerns, but also asserted that we needed to do what we could to help businesses.

Councilman Dewees stated that Council also needed to consider that trees may need to be removed, etc., to make room for signs.

Councilman Lischin felt a variance should be for size or location, but, not for the type of sign.

Mayor Chau noted a local business who had been warned several times in recent weeks, about a sign that violated the Ordinance. It was not fair to the businesses that follow the rules.

Council President Travagline noted that residents may not realize the types of signs a business could have. Some signs could have brighter lights than an LED light. He specifically cited the Country Club location and their request for a sign. When you have a business with multiple events, there was a need to be able to quickly inform visitors and residents of what is going on.

Councilman O'Neill informed Council that the Country Club had changed hands three times since he'd been on Council, and if they were not successful and had to sell the property, houses could be built. We needed to do whatever we could to help them be successful.

Solicitor Facenda reiterated that the Ordinance does not just govern the Country Club Zone, you had to look at it as the City as a whole.

Mayor Chau noted that the City didn't want to be accused of selective zoning.

Solicitor Facenda urged all Council members to send their comments to him individually.

Council President Travagline stated that Council would revisit the Sign Ordinance again at the next meeting.

- Resolution in Support of ACPD and in Opposition of County Police Model

Mayor Chau referred to a Resolution presented by Chief Newman regarding the support of the Atlantic City Police Department, at the request of the Association of Chiefs of Police. Several other towns including: Pleasantville, Atlantic City, and Galloway have supported this Resolution. He noted that the County Police Force would not be for other towns in the County, rather it would be policing Atlantic City.

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Councilman O'Neill informed Council that he would abstain. He did not feel it was appropriate to tell other towns what they should be doing. He wouldn't want other towns telling Northfield how we should be operating.

Council President Travagline noted that the Resolution has nothing to do with Northfield, other than we would pay for it.

Council President Travagline explained that he had a conversation with Mayor Chau, and Council President Travagline was not 100% certain about voting on this.

Councilman Perri reminded Council that this had no legislative authority.

Mayor Chau noted that Council had done similarly in the past; voted on matters just to put an opinion on record, absent any real authority. Other agencies have asked for our support in the past.

Municipal Clerk Canesi commented that the Resolution was in the packet, if anyone would like to re-read it.

Solicitor Facenda suggested rewording the Resolution to clearly indicate that if there were costs to the City of Northfield, we were not in favor of it.

Councilman Dewees was not opposed to putting it on the agenda for a vote.

Council President Travagline stated it would be put on the agenda in two weeks, once we had more information.

Councilman O'Neill reiterated that he didn't think Northfield should vote on an Atlantic City matter.

AGENDA REVIEW

Solicitor Facenda noted that we would not need to do Resolution 99-2016 and it would be pulled from the agenda.

PUBLIC SESSION

Council President Travagline opened the meeting to the public.

Chief Newman explained the resolution; a County police force would have County personnel patrolling your streets. He reviewed numerous issues that have caused discord in the Police Department, and the County police force would be one more. The Department was finally moving in the right direction. He asked the Council what it would do to the morale of the Police Department. He stated that the resolution was submitted as a draft and he got no feedback to make it more palatable

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to the Council.

Councilman Dewees said it was explained that this was just a County police force that would patrol Atlantic City.

Council President Travagline announced that he would have voted in favor of it.

Chief Newman explained the loss of control and home rule if the County police took over Northfield.

Council President Travagline stated that he did not initially read the resolution properly; he talked to several people about this resolution and his understanding was that it was just Atlantic City.

Councilman Perri assured Chief Newman that he supported the Northfield Police Department.

Chief Newman reminded Council that the Department was at a crossroads, right now it could go either way.

Solicitor Facenda stated that he would work on the wording and return it to Council for consideration.

Joe Lentini, 237 Davis Avenue - referred to the home at 1112 First Street with a large dead oak tree in the back yard, and sinkholes. He was concerned the tree was going to fall and injure him or damage his property.

Councilman Perri noted that he had turned it in himself to the Zoning Officer, twice, over two months ago and nothing had been done.

Councilman Lischin offered to take Mr. Lentini's information. He explained the Community Champions system and assured Mr. Lentini that he would get back to him.

Curt Bopp, 16 East Mill Road – asked Council what was going to do be done about the graveyard.

Council President Travagline responded that Council would address that shortly, it is on the regular agenda, he explained to all who were present for that topic, it would be addressed during the regular meeting.

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

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At 7:19, on motions properly made and seconded, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk