

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
APRIL 28, 2020**

At 6:02pm this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. This meeting was properly advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2020 and on April 25, 2020, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present (in person):** Councilman Dewees; Councilman O’Neill; Councilman Smith; Councilman Utts; Council President Perri; Mayor Chau

Solicitor Stein, Engineer Nassar and Deputy Clerk Campbell were also in attendance.

**Present (via telephone):** Councilwoman Korngut; Councilwoman Madden

Chief Newman was also present via telephone.

Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“As everyone knows, based on an Executive Order of the governor, public gatherings are limited to not more than 10 people. Tonight, the following are in attendance via telephone only, using the speaker function of the telephone in the Council Chambers meeting room:

- Councilwoman Korngut
- Councilwoman Madden
- Chief of Police Paul Newman

Also for this reason, members of the public are not able to attend tonight’s meeting in person, but we are pleased to announce that virtual attendance has been made possible via a video-conferencing service called Zoom; participants can dial in by telephone and listen to the proceedings, or they can access the meeting using a web-browser, and be able to view and listen. Instructions on how members of the public can access Zoom have been made available on the municipal website and Facebook pages, and was published in the Press of Atlantic City.

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.

When the time comes for public comment, a specific announcement will be made; one by one telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be unmuted to permit commentary. Web-browser attendees may ask questions or make comments via the ‘chat’ function. Comments will not be acknowledged until the public

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comment portion of the meeting begins; at which time they will be read aloud into the record.”

Council President Perri welcomed everyone in attendance in person and on Zoom. He thanked everyone on the front lines, including nurses, doctors, police, fire and EMS, City and government workers; everyone was doing their best during these extraordinary times. He commended them all for their service.

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

- Radio Tower, Rear of City Hall
  - *An in-person presentation by John Arthur, P.E., President & CEO Wireless EDGE Towers can be arranged for a future meeting at the request of City Council*

Council President Perri believed all had the package that was previously distributed to Council. Mr. Arthur from Wireless Edge had stated he would come in person; given the circumstances that can't happen right now. He asked if there were any questions. There were none. He stated that the existing tower was not suitable for cell usage and there was insufficient ground space as well; alternate locations were proposed.

Councilman Dewees questioned if there were any structural concerns about putting something on the roof.

Council President Perri replied absolutely; he felt the best place was the existing spot. He added that various approvals were required. There was a definite need in this area, the only other avenue may be to have a public meeting on the issue to let them know what our intentions were.

Councilman Smith asked Council President Perri what basis was there for saying there was a need.

Council President Perri explained that in this corner of the town there are dropped calls, late texts, it was almost a dead zone. There seemed like there was no movement on the small node issues.

Councilman Smith asked if there was a carrier willing to put something up on a tower.

Council President Perri replied the tower company would lease the space.

Councilman Smith announced that Council investigated this 10 years ago, and found that there was no interest on the part of carriers. He would like to know if there was a

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carrier that had interest – we could go through the process and find there is no interest.

Council President Perri replied that would be the business of Edge Tower; he felt carriers would get on board if there was infrastructure. He offered to call Edge Tower to ascertain interest and get back to Council. We may have to look at another location that was more feasible for the northeast corridor of our community. He would make the call and advise the Council next week.

Councilman Smith asked can anyone in town call 911 and have a call not go through because of lack of service?

Council President Perri replied absolutely. It happens at Perri's shop. It has happened at Country Club Acres, and Four Seasons.

Councilman Smith questioned, with 911?

Council President Perri replied yes, with any call.

Council President Perri reviewed the submission, and commented that the existing tower can stay there.

Councilman Smith asked Chief Newman if there was a difference between a 911 call and a regular service call from a cell phone.

Chief Newman replied the only thing he is was aware of was a cell phone would find the nearest tower, not necessarily the exact location of the caller.

Engineer Nassar advised that he was planning to come back for the next meeting to go out to bid for the back of the building and the handicapped ramp, this may hold up his ability to go out to bid.

Council President Perri noted that any new tower can't go in the same location; Nassar should just work around it, we could always dismantle it.

Councilwoman Korngut asked was there any downside to that?

Council President Perri assumed we'd still have accessibility to dismantle it.

Councilman Dewees asked if the tower was serving any purpose now?

Municipal Clerk Canesi replied, no.

Councilman Dewees asked why not dismantle it?

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Council President Perri replied it was a preexisting nonconforming use; he would leave it.

Councilwoman Korngut asked if we have to wind up dismantling it, how much would it cost? \$500 or \$10,000.00; should we find out first?

Council President Perri believed it would be in the thousands.

Councilwoman Madden asked if the grassy plot in the rear of parking lot would be suitable?

Council President Perri believed that area was sensitive due to the proximity to residences.

Councilwoman Madden advised that another tower was close to her home; that was not an issue.

Council President Perri noted that was one of the options that was proposed; the issue at hand is to move forward with the construction of the parking lot and handicapped ramp, not a new tower at this time.

Councilman O'Neill asked if there was any difference in cost if we take it down now or after the parking lot was built?

Engineer Nassar replied it would be more costly to work around the handicapped ramp, it would be more labor intensive.

Councilman Smith responded his opinion was to leave it.

Councilman Utts, Councilman O'Neill and Councilwoman Madden agreed with Councilman Smith to leave it.

Councilman Dewees and Councilwoman Korngut were in favor of removing it.

Council President Perri was also in favor of leaving it.

Councilman Smith added, for clarification, it was a law to be able make 911 calls from inactive cell phones.

Council President Perri asked does the call go thru if it is a dead zone?

Councilman Smith shared that he lived in that area by Four Seasons, and had never had an issue. If you call 911 it will go to any service, it did not have to be your carrier.

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- Proposed Dog Park – *Update if applicable from Councilwoman Korngut*

Council President Perri asked Councilwoman Korngut if she had an update on the dog park.

Councilwoman Korngut advised that she met with the Advisory Board. She answered everybody's questions, and all were satisfied. She believed Councilman Dewees asked Councilwoman Korngut to go before the Planning Board to ensure there were no issues with the deed. She would do so and report back.

Council President Perri asked if this was an informal meeting with the Planning Board?

Councilwoman Korngut replied it was up in the air due to the pandemic, she would reach out to them to see what was best.

Mayor Chau asked was she going as an individual or on behalf of the City.

Councilwoman Korngut replied as a citizen of the community.

Councilman Dewees asked was she still planning on following through with the 501c on her own; he was concerned about her doing that as a Council person.

Councilwoman Korngut stated she could discuss that when the time comes. She and Councilman Smith had discussed having other members of the community involved.

*At 6:31pm Councilwoman Madden called Clerk Canesi on Canesi's mobile phone to advise that she'd been disconnected from the conference call; Clerk Canesi called Madden and reestablished her connection on the conference call.*

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

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities
  - Identify Municipal Aid Projects

Engineer Nassar explained the new Municipal Aid project. He had spoken with Public Works, they had a few suggestions, one was Merritt Drive. The grant is only around \$240,000.00 which is less than we've received in the past; in past years we've received \$280,000.00 plus. Oak Avenue was suggested, but that has a few more years left. Engineer Nassar suggested Ridgewood as a possibility, or any other street Council suggested.

Councilman O'Neill suggested Merritt Drive, with the City funding the balance; he asked about curbing.

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Engineer Nassar replied possibly, he was looking at Wabash to New Road and we would have to widen the road for curbing in certain areas.

Councilman Dewees suggested the City attempt a consistent cartway coming from Route 9 to the bike path.

Council President Perri was in agreement.

Councilman Utts agreed as well.

Engineer Nassar would begin working on the application, our deadline was in two months. He would come back to Council; he asked Clerk Canesi if he needed authorization to move forward.

Clerk Canesi advised he would need a purchase order request authorizing him to proceed. Council needed approve to the project; if tonight's discussion approved it, and it was not billable, he would not need a resolution.

Council President Perri took a roll call vote to apply for the grant. All members were in favor.

**PUBLIC SESSION/ FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER**

Council President Perri 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.

Jaclyn Roesch, 2301 Shepherd Drive – via Zoom chat:

“1. My children's safety is of utmost importance. My the time cars come to my house they are flying around the bend. A curb would deter people from driving onto my property and keeping my children safe. I am only able to have a small section fenced because of the location of house on the street. I've had to worry about my children's safety for years and would really like a barrier between the road and my property for the safety of my children. They took the speed bump out because it was not the proper residential bump that needed to be installed. Either way cars are driving dangerous fast past my house especially when they have to be diverted from other streets. 2. It would keep cars from parking on my lawn. 3. If the curbing is not continued I am sure snow removal vehicles will be damaged and cars will run into the curbing because they typically all drive onto my property. 4. When the water is released from the fire hydrants it has damaged the street where they are not installing curbing. So mine and th”

Mayor Chau announced that he had spoken with Mrs. Roesch, he said he'd advised her that we were not doing curbing, he had also asked Engineer Nassar to speak with the resident.

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Engineer Nassar explained that he had spoken with the resident about limits of curbing; as you know this was a Municipal Aid project. At this point the project was costing \$358,000.00, we limited curbing to address drainage issues. For us to curb the entire property was 300 plus linear feet of curbing; that would add \$10,000.00-\$12,000.00 to the project, it was not within the budget to do so.

Council President Perri asked for discussion.

Councilman Dewees asked were there any options for the City to add funds?

Mayor Chau asked were other properties not getting curbing?

Engineer Nassar replied yes, many were not, the problematic sections were getting curbing or a grading change. Mrs. Roesh's concern was not drainage, it was safety and people driving down Shepherd.

Clerk Canesi announced that based on Zoom chat comments, 2304 Shepherd was also asking for curbing.

Mayor Chau added that he had received other requests as well.

Councilman Dewees responded that to be consistent then we can only address drainage issues; he suggested chevrons.

Engineer Nassar noted that was possible.

Sophia Guidara, 2304 Shepherd – via Zoom chat: was “concerned that she is only getting half the curbing.”

Engineer Nassar explained that 2304 Shepherd was also getting only partial curbing, that is part of the design.

Engineer Nassar added that we could use chevron signage to address traffic issues.

Eric Leeds, 802 Debora Street – via Zoom chat: “Regarding the dog park - there is a conflict of interest between a sitting city council member asking the city to give ‘\$1’ land to her foundation. If the dog park is going to continue, the council person need to step down, or hand this park and everything to someone else.”

Council President Perri did not know the legality, it was a legal question that we would have to research and address at the time going forward.

Eric Leeds - from Zoom chat: “Further - The City Labor attorney's office had a founding member (Douglas Long, who was removed from their website on last

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Thursday) pled guilty to tax evasion, there are concerns with the same attorney over charging Galloway, have the bills been audited for the city, in order to make sure this isn't happening here? Also, The law firm has been cited for several ethics violations 2014, 2016 - Who is the deconfliction law firm the city uses? Will they issues notice of intent to remove them from their services?"

Council President Perri announced that the matter was pending, due to an Executive Session, action may or may not be taken tonight.

2304 Shepherd - from Zoom chat: "Hi My name is Carmine Guidara @ 2304 Shepherd Dr, i would like to know why the curb will not continue through the length of my property?"

*(This comment had already been addressed.)*

Council President Perri replied that it was not within the scope of the work nor the original design standard.

Bill Garry, 202 Saint James Place – via Zoom chat: “comment on curbing there are many areas of the city that do not have curbing. this should be at the expense of the homeowner.”

Council President Perri stated that if it was not a drainage issue, for the most part , a lot of the sections if they are not through-streets, new construction does require it. Technically it was something we do for drainage purposes to align with inlets.

Engineer Nassar reminded all that if curb or sidewalk was damaged it was the homeowner's responsibility to repair it.

Mayor Chau added that in all of his years on Council it has been policy that unless it was required for drainage it was the homeowners' responsibility. We have areas that do not have curb and sidewalk and that had been brought before City Council many times.

Councilman Dewees asked that if we have a construction project, in this case Shepherd, if the homeowner wanted curb, could something be worked out, to deal directly with the contractor on site?

Engineer Nassar replied yes, it happened all the time.

Sophia Guidara – via Zoom chat: “but we did not ask for this it was just giving to us.”

Eric Leeds – via Zoom chat: “Last thing regarding labor attorney - Please make sure you discuss the public is aware of the ties of that law firm and Sweeny (Democratic



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leader). Best interests of the City is more important than paying back your political friends.”

Council President Perri replied, so noted.

Mayor Chau, for the record, had a copy of the newspaper article Mr. Leeds was referencing that he will present to City Council.

Clerk Canesi commented in the Zoom chat asking would anyone else like to make a comment during the public comment portion of the workshop meeting? There were no additional comments.

Seeing no others wishing to speak, Council President Perri closed the public session.

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Council President Perri reviewed the regular meeting agenda and made the assignments.

At 7:02pm, on a motion of Councilman Dewees, seconded by Councilman O’Neill, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk