

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 16, 2020**

At 7:26pm, this meeting was called to order by Mary Canesi, Municipal Clerk. It was advertised in the Press of Atlantic City on January 11, 2020 and June 13, 2020, in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), this meeting will be live-streamed using Zoom conferencing service and the public is restricted from attending in-person. Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82781326203>; Meeting ID: 827 8132 6203; One tap mobile +13017158592, 82781326203# US (Germantown), +13126266799, 82781326203# US (Chicago), Dial by your location +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown), +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), +1 646 558 8656 US (New York), +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma), +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston), +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose) Meeting ID: 827 8132 6203

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mayor Chau followed by a moment of silence as a result of the tragedy in recent weeks, and in remembrance of Debbi Doherty. He offered condolences to the family.

ROLL CALL

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

Solicitor Stein and Engineer Nassar were also in attendance.

Present (via telephone): Chief Newman

Clerk Canesi read the following statement:

“As everyone knows, based on Executive Orders of the governor, public gatherings are still limited – right now that limit is not more than 25% occupancy of the room, and social distancing parameters apply. For this reason, members of the public are still unable to attend tonight’s meeting in person, and virtual attendance has been made possible via Zoom video-conferencing. 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 FB pages, and were 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, any telephone users will be asked to identify themselves and will be

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unmuted to permit commentary. Web-browser attendees may ask questions or make comments via the ‘chat’ function at the designated time. Please note that comments made via the chat function will not be acknowledged until the public comment portion of the meeting begins, at which time they will be read aloud into the record.

Tonight, all members are present except for Chief Newman who will be using the speaker function of the telephone in the Council Chambers meeting room.”

Councilman O’Neill asked about Debbi Doherty.

Council President Perri announced that she was a past council member, a long-time crossing guard, and volunteered actively for many years. The loss was so tragic. She was the same age as Council President Perri. She was a pillar of the community, she helped with the hayrides, family fest, American Legion, you name it. He just couldn’t say enough.

Councilman Dewees asked did her mother also work for the City?

Council President Perri replied yes, Gemma, and Debbi’s dad was a member of City Council.

Council President Perri called for a motion to approve the minutes.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion of Councilman O’Neill, second of Councilwoman Madden, all present with the exception of Councilwoman Korngut who abstained, were in favor of approving the minutes of the meeting of May 26, 2020 without formal reading. They were posted, distributed to Council, and on file in the Municipal Clerk’s Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman O’Neill - Inspections, Code Enforcement, Housing/Zoning; Court/Violations; FAN

Councilman O’Neill had no report this evening.

Councilman Utts – Bike Path, 1st Street Playground, Veterans Park; Planning Board; Economic Development / Chamber of Commerce

Councilman Utts reported that the Atlantic City County Club came before the Planning Board to redo their parking lot with solar canopies on the side that faces the bay. It will have a turn-of-the-century design and will look really nice. They are also addressing some drainage and will improve the façade of the facility.

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Council President Perri added that the Atlantic City Country Club would have outdoor dining as of tomorrow; it's encouraging to see what we can do, but there are problems with what we can't do.

Councilwoman Korngut – Technology/MRHS Channel; Library; Municipal Alliance; Shared Services

Councilwoman Korngut congratulated the graduates from Mainland Regional High School and Northfield Community School. She'd had the honor of giving out high-academic awards to a few of the 8th graders, everything was done online. She hoped it would be a positive experience, she commended Northfield Community School for doing the best they could under the circumstances.

Mayor Chau knew that Councilwoman Korngut speaks quickly, and that she also congratulated all Northfield graduates from VoTech, Y.A.L.E., and others.

Councilman Dewees - Buildings/Grounds; Birch Grove Park

Councilman Dewees reported that we received a bamboo complaint about the easement that runs along Pasadena Drive; he had asked Engineer Nassar to look at boundaries. He would look at it and come up with a plan with Superintendent Vitale to eradicate the bamboo. He reminded all that the park was open but the playground facilities are not open to the public. He explained that we just can't keep up with the requirements that need to be in place to keep people safe.

Councilman Smith – Finance/Collections; Little League/Babe Ruth; Cultural Committee; Northfield Community School

Councilman Smith reported that he spoke with CFO Stollenwerk about Municipal Aid; she had no concerns and also said our collections are where they should be. The Little League season has been canceled, the Babe Ruth program was preparing to have some sort of a shortened season, when the facilities were open. The Cultural Committee was short on membership, he urged interested volunteers, especially those interested in the history of Northfield, to please reach out to Councilman Smith via email at bsmith@cityofnorthfield.org. Regarding Northfield Community School, he echoed the sentiments from Councilwoman Korngut. Councilman Smith's daughter was a member of the 8th grade class, there was a drive-thru for the 8th graders tomorrow, they will get out of their car in their cap and gown and get their diploma. The car parade will then proceed to Mainland Regional High School to view a welcome sign. They were hoping to do a second ceremony in July, as per Governor Murphy.

Councilman Dewees added that he met with Northfield Little League and Babe Ruth about opening up the fields for organized activities. The guidelines for sanitizing and other requirements are so stringent that Northfield Little League didn't think they could manage it. There are other rules, such as keeping kids six feet apart, and coaches' guidelines. We were still waiting to hear from Babe Ruth about their

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possible plan. He just wanted all to know what was going on: Babe Ruth may or may not play.

Clerk Canesi said she'd received an email today from one of the teams previously approved to use the field and they were inquiring about play. If our recreational leagues don't play, Council needs to decide if the fields will be prepped and be made available for the approved outside groups. Or does the fact that our recreational teams don't play negate those prior approvals?

Councilman Dewees would have to know how the outside groups are going to manage these requirements. We have to have some assurances that they can manage these guidelines. Councilman Dewees read a partial list of the current requirements.

Clerk Canesi advised that FAN was also asking about football.

Council President Perri felt as far as the guidelines it was the same situation; it would be dependent upon their ability to meet the standards.

Councilwoman Madden – Fire Department / EMS; Insurance and Safety, Mainland Regional

Councilwoman Madden reported that she was unable to “Zoom” in to the Mainland Regional meeting on Monday; she had nothing to report on the school. She would contact Captain Nixon to get an update on the fire statistics for the next meeting.

Council President Perri asked Councilwoman Madden and Councilwoman Korngut to get him information on EMS.

Councilwoman Madden was hoping to get together with Council President Perri and Councilwoman Korngut for guidelines on how to proceed.

Council President Perri– Public Works: Roads, Engineering, Sewer Operations; Senior Citizens

Council President Perri reported that the Library had things opening such as curbside service, but the building was still shut down. The Senior Group was inactive, but he had been contacting them via the phone and still trying to be an advocate for them. Regarding Sewer operations, hopefully the generator issue was resolved. He would still like to recognize the passing of Joyce Pullan; words cannot express what she did for our community, she was a mover and a shaker. She literally moved houses. She ran many events, was an asset and a pillar of our community and she will be missed. He thanked her and her family for the legacy she left behind. He acknowledged the passing of April Schrader, school employee and Council person, and offered condolences to her as well as to the family of Debbi Doherty. To all the graduates, happy congratulations, and the Class of 2020 will have something to talk about forever.

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MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Chau offered congratulations to all of our graduates, he commented on the sign out front at City Hall. Best of luck to all.

Mayor Chau read the following statement regarding the Primary Election:

“Voting machines for the July 7th Primary Election will be only open to people with disabilities. Not just here in Northfield, but across the state, pursuant to Governor Murphy’s Executive Order No. 144. All registered Democratic and Republican voters will receive a vote by mail ballot – even if they have never requested one in the past – for use at this election. Registered voters who are not affiliated as Democrat or Republican will receive a vote by mail APPLICATION – by completing and returning the APPLICATION, they will then receive a BALLOT. The Northfield Community School will be open, but voters who visit the polling place in person will be required to vote via a paper, provisional, ballot unless they are disabled. I am encouraging everyone to exercise their right to vote, but all residents need to be aware that this is an entirely vote-by-mail election. Vote by mail ballots will be sent to all registered voters, regardless of party affiliation, and will include a postage paid envelope. **DO NOT RETURN YOUR BALLOT TO NORTHFIELD CITY HALL.** Voters who do not wish to use the postal service mail to return their ballot may only deliver it to a designated ballot drop box; there are 5 across Atlantic County and the closest to the Northfield is the one located at the Egg Harbor Township Municipal Building.”

He then refers to letter he wrote to Governor Murphy; he read the following into the record and wanted all of Council to be aware.

“Dear Honorable Governor Murphy:

My name is Erland Chau and I am the Mayor of the City of Northfield, in Atlantic County, New Jersey. Last week, in your daily televised report to our state you referred to a movie theater in Atlantic County that had violated your Executive Order No. 104 by opening to the public. The movie theater (Tilton Square Theatre), is located in my municipality.

The purpose of my letter is not to debate the closure of this movie theater. I recognize the difficult task of creating a workable plan to protect the safety and health of our citizens across the State of New Jersey. However, as you are aware, in recent years, Atlantic County had the dubious distinction of having among the highest home foreclosure rates in the entire country. The closures of five Atlantic City casinos since 2014 had a devastating financial impact on this area of our state; but finally, it seemed we were starting to make a bit of economic recovery when the pandemic hit, pushing us back towards economic crisis, here and elsewhere in our county.

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I have spoken to the owners of the Tilton Square movie theatre and other businesses located throughout my community. They all depend greatly on the ability of our residents to earn and spend money; the financial impact of casino and other employees being able to work, and the dollars spent via the tourism it generates affect every municipality in Atlantic County. I am slowly seeing the deterioration of my business and residential community. I know for a fact that the Tilton Square Theatre has stretched its financial resources to a point that it may mean they will have to close indefinitely. I am fearful that my city, too, may soon face an even deeper economic crisis than the one from which we were slowly recovering.

Respectfully, I believe that New Jersey must move faster to allow our business communities and others to try to recoup their financial losses. In addition, there are businesses that had not been permitted to open, yet other businesses who provided a broader range of products were allowed to be open. For example, Walmart, Sam's Club, Home Depot, etc., which may sell food, home supplies/equipment and clothing were permitted to be open but a standalone clothing or shoe store could not. There have been far greater numbers of people in these big box stores than would have been in the smaller establishments, yet the same products were being sold.

As I said, I don't envy your task in addressing the Coronavirus pandemic that has created both a national and state crisis. I hope that you understand that as the Mayor of Northfield, I am deeply concerned, and I urge you to move more quickly towards allowing all businesses to operate.

Sincerely,

Mayor Erland V.L. Chau

cc: Northfield City Council"

Mayor Chau then referred to an email sent to Councilwoman Korngut and himself from Northfield resident Alyson Bakley suggesting a Christmas in July celebration where residents decorate their homes as a social distancing activity. We would not be having a 4th of July parade, so perhaps Council would like to entertain this idea. He attended Joyce Pullan's viewing and funeral, it was a wonderful show of respect for a person who had done so much for our municipality. Joyce's maiden name was Hampton, and had strong roots in the community and in Atlantic County. He offered condolences again to the family. He announced that we have had resignations on the Library Board that resulted in our inability to meet due to a lack of a quorum, he urged interested volunteers to send their information to Mayor Chau or to the City Clerk. He attended Y.A.L.E. School graduation via video, He congratulates all Y.A.L.E. School graduates. He would like to request that the Police Department move forward with the capital purchase of the one police vehicle. It took about a year to get everything finalized. He asked for approval to proceed.

Councilwoman Korngut asked had it already been provided for in the budget.

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Council President Perri replied yes; he advised Mayor Chau to move forward.

CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT

Engineer Nassar reviewed the Engineer's Report as previously distributed to Council. He reported that the Shepherd Drive paving started on Monday; he anticipated finishing project by next Monday or Tuesday at the latest. The municipal building parking lot and ADA grant bid opening was scheduled for July 7th, he hoped to have an award recommendation at the next meeting. He was working on the application for Merritt Drive using Municipal Aid, and on the CBDG application for ADA improvements at Birch Grove Park. Regarding reconstruction for Fuae Avenue the package was sent the DOT for their concurrence; we had to send a few minor modifications.

Council President Perri asked about the New Road project, specifically with regard to the streets that abut municipal streets.

Engineer Nassar advised that he had called and left messages but not heard back. He listed several areas he plans to address. Regarding the generator, it had been returned and we will be getting a better model at no additional cost.

PUBLIC SESSION/FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Perri opened the public portion of the meeting for any person to comment on any subject.

Council President Perri asked if the building would be open for the next meeting.

Clerk Canesi replied that she hoped so; she asked if there was any word on when the plexiglass for the building department would be in. She explained that the employees requested some physical barriers.

Mayor Chau replied that he would speak with Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Kathi Smith tomorrow.

Clerk Canesi added that we also had to address the issue of the restrooms; as of now they would need to be cleaned after each use.

Seeing no one wishing to make a comment Council President Perri closed the public session.

RESOLUTIONS

All matters listed under the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature, and having been reviewed by Council, will be enacted by one motion. Any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of any Council Member and if so removed, will be treated as a separate matter. Any items requiring expenditure are

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supported by a Certification of Availability of Funds.

On a motion of Councilman Utts, second of Councilman O'Neill, all present were in favor of voting by consent agenda on Resolutions 109-2020 through 111-2020.

- 109-2020** Inserting an Item of Revenue in the 2020 Budget
- 110-2020** Resolution of the City of Northfield, County of Atlantic, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Cancellation of Capital Appropriation Balances
- 111-2020** Authorizing the Assignment of a Tax Sale Certificate

Councilman Utts motioned, second of Councilman O'Neill, to adopt the consent agenda for Resolutions 109-2020 through 111-2020.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O'Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

PAYMENT OF BILLS \$ 320,113.07

Councilman Smith motioned, Councilman Dewees seconded, for payment of bills.

Roll Call: Mr. Dewees - yes, Ms. Korngut – yes, Mrs. Madden – yes, Mr. O'Neill - yes, Mr. Smith – yes, Mr. Utts - yes; Mr. Perri – yes; Motion carried.

Council President Perri read the meeting notices.

At 8:16pm, on motion of Councilman Utts, seconded by Councilman Dewees, this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk