

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION  
JUNE 11, 2024**

At 6:04pm 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 Mayor Chau.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Councilwoman Bucci; Councilwoman Carfagno; Councilman Dewees; Councilman Notaro\*; Councilman Polistina; Councilman Smith; Council President Leeds.

Mayor Chau, Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Mauro, and Lieutenant of Police Buccafurni were also present.

*\*Councilman Notaro was present when attendance was taken but had to depart during a duly authorized 6:18pm recess.*

Council President Leeds welcomed the Support the Troops Club.

**6PM MRHS SUPPORT OUR TROOPS CLUB AND CHRISTOPHR MOZITIS, ADVISOR**

Chris Mozitis stated he represented Support the Troops Club from Mainland Regional High School. They had an idea to give our troops more recognition by advocating for a special license plate just for veterans. They produced four different concepts and showed renderings of each.

Emmet Lee, club member, spoke; this was the second year of the Club's existence. He was here to present the Club's license plate initiative and ask for support in the form of a Resolution of the governing body. The Club membership had been surprised to find out that one State had over one hundred license plates for veterans, while New Jersey has none. There are 38,000 veterans in New Jersey. The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission does not offer standalone plates for veterans; there are fourteen military-related standalone plates but none for veterans.

Mark Marrone, Club volunteer, he explained the design; the Country's flag was in each design, with the word 'veteran' in bold at the bottom of each plate. He would like support from the Council in the form of a Resolution. He thanked Council.

Mayor Chau asked had they contacted the Motor Vehicle Commission yet?

Mr. Marrone replied, not yet.

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Mayor Chau asked for names of organizations who have offered support.

Mr. Mozitis responded that they wanted to get local support before approaching motor vehicle; they wanted to get input from law enforcement as well. He showed samples of each design.

Councilwoman Carfagno asked for Council's support to put a Resolution on the next agenda.

Council President Leeds took a straw poll; all members present were in favor of a Resolution in support of the Club's license plate initiative for the next City Council Meeting agenda.

Council President Leeds announced the Oath of Office for Firefighter Cole Leeds.

**6:15PM Ceremonial Oath of Office – Firefighter Cole Leeds**

Mayor Chau announced it was a privilege to administer the oath to this young man, following in the footsteps of his family, including his Dad who was here. He said he remembered Cole at Mainland, and today he is putting his life on the line. It was great to see such dedication.

Mayor Chau administered the Oath of Office to Firefighter Leeds.

Firefighter Leeds thanked all for coming and thanked everyone for their support. He wished his Grandfather could be here.

*At 6:18pm on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of a brief recess.*

*\*After the vote to recess, Councilman Notaro had to depart and did not return for the balance of the meeting.*

*At 6:28pm Council President Leeds resumed the meeting.*

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 the roof work started today; the County did replace the sign at the Oxford Circle Cemetery; he thanked Clerk Canesi. Regarding the pedestrian signal at Bike Path and Tilton, the County replaced the poles but there is

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an issue with the wiring, black bags were over it now and Councilman Dewees will advise when it is repaired.

Councilman Polistina reported the same, for the Burton and Mill Road signal.

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

Councilwoman Bucci thanked Clerk Canesi for reaching out to NJDOT regarding New Road. Regarding Insurance and Safety, Solicitor Facenda was changing the number of people that constitute a group, and this is in progress. She deferred to Solicitor Facenda regarding the Resolution for the Planning Board.

Solicitor Facenda stated that the Council had referred the rehabilitation Resolution to the Planning Board; the Planning Board met. They have 45 days to act and the Board did have a conversation to discuss at their last meeting, they may need a few days extension for further discussion. We may wish to meet in committee with the Planning Board Committee to find consensus. He suggested Planner Morrisey be present at the meeting.

Planning Board Member Utts in the audience and advised the next Planning Board meeting was the Thursday after July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Solicitor Facenda had no objection to an extension if Council doesn't. We would have the Resolution for the next meeting to extend 45 days.

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

Councilman Polistina reported while he was unable to attend recent Alliance events, they went very well, with 55 participants at Hooked on Fishing. He announced the winning fish size and winner for most fish caught, adding that the turnout was larger than last year. Movie Night brought in 60-70 people to the movie in the park, and he recognized Sergeants Heller, VanPelt and Czaplinski who were there interacting with the kids. National Night Out would be held on August 8<sup>th</sup>, exhibitor forms were on the website or contact Shannon Campbell or Sergeant DiMarco. The deadline to register is July 29<sup>th</sup>.

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

Councilman Smith announced graduation season was coming up, he extended best wishes to Northfield Community School and Mainland Regional High School graduates. The last day of school for NCS and Mainland is June 18<sup>th</sup>, he wished all well and safe travels for the summer. Eighth Grade graduation is at 5pm on the 14<sup>th</sup>, with an invitation extended to the Council. Regarding Court, multiple meetings with

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Judge Blee have been postponed, there is another scheduled for Monday, he was hopeful this would not be postponed. Northfield Little League's season was coming to an end. He along with Councilman Leeds and Clerk/Business Administrator Canesi attended meetings with Linwood and EHT regarding dispatch and EMS. AtlantiCare takes over at 7am tomorrow. He was looking forward to a successful relationship with them and for the residents of the City of Northfield.

Mayor Chau asked were other towns looking at joining us for dispatch.

Councilman Smith replied, not at this time.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno reported last night was the Board of Education meeting for Mainland. She congratulated all winter and spring sports teams. The Prom and After Prom were a hit, thank you to all volunteers. Graduation for Mainland will be on the 18<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of the 19<sup>th</sup>; both at 6:30pm. She announced the 4th of July details and that the Cultural Committee was still seeking nominees for Citizen of the Year and Mr. or Ms 4th of July.

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

Councilman Notaro had to leave early; Council President Leeds read the following on his behalf:

“I have been involved in addressing the disturbance issue at the American Legion Hall since November 2021, together with the Chief and now Lieutenant Buccafurni. We have proposed numerous changes, but the unruly behavior of the tenants and traffic congestion persist. Over the past three years, I have watched countless videos and proof of the ongoing nonsense. I am unsure of the solution, but the American Legion Hall must put an end to this chaos in this residential neighborhood. I, along with all of you, would not tolerate this disruption on our doorstep.”

**Council President Leeds** – Fire Department/EMS

Council President Leeds thanked Clerk Canesi for proactively contacting NJDOT regarding Route 9. He also thanked her for catching a dispatch situation, it resulted in a Resolution which will be added to tonight's agenda. It will be read into the record by Solicitor Facenda. He read the Fire Department and EMS report for April and May. As Councilman Smith stated, tomorrow at 7am we will have a smooth transition from Inspira Hospital to AtlantiCare Hospital. He explained that while some residents expressed concern that the City did not renew with Inspira it was they who opted not to renew. We went out for RFP and AtlantiCare provided a very favorable bid for the City. During the hours of 7am-7pm one ambulance will be

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assigned to both Linwood and Northfield and from 11am – 11pm there will be a second Basic Life Support ambulance in service.

**AD HOC COMMITTEES**

Electric Vehicles – *Councilmen Polistina and Notaro.*  
No update.

Special Events Ordinance – *Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Dewees.*  
Councilwoman Bucci stated it was still a work in progress.

Affordable Housing – *Councilwoman Carfagno, Councilman Polistina*  
Councilman Polistina reported that the committee meet with representatives from Fair Share Housing, we should have something for the next agenda.

Insurance Requirements Review – *Councilman Polistina, Councilwoman Bucci.*  
Councilwoman Bucci reported the ordinance was being finalized.

Road Opening Ordinance – *Councilmen Dewees and Notaro.*  
Council President Leeds announced that Councilman Notaro reviewed it and asked Councilman Dewees to review his emails so we could move forward.

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

There was no ongoing business.

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

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

**REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Council President Leeds made the assignments noting the addition of Resolution 134-2024.

**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.

Paul Utts, Northfield - originally came because of the resolution that was presented to the Planning Board and there was confusion on the Planning Board's part. He read a statement; the Planning Board was concerned about negative stigmatism and sidesteps of the processes, they have heard that it may bring a liquor license, Council rejected cannabis. Last year Egg Harbor Township got \$742,000 in cannabis revenue,

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he felt that would have closed the budget gap. The Planning Board has knowledge and experience that Council lacks and should always be the arbiter of what fits. They need a little more explanation as to what the benefits are. On a side note, he sees that the Council has an anti-windmill resolution on the agenda. The planet is dying; he says claims made by windmill opposition are not accurate. We need to do everything we can. This industry will bring jobs and it will help with global warming. He believed it was wrong and immoral to oppose wind power.

Joan Brennan, Northfield – had three items to present. The Cultural Committee has picked the first baby, Maxwell Murphy O’Connell, Ms. 4<sup>th</sup> of July is Eleanor Webb, and Post Crashers are Citizen of the Year. She referred to the MRHS license plate project, and noted signs that Egg Harbor Township puts up on poles that show photos of residents, she believed Northfield should do that, she does not know cost but was willing to participate. It was a Hometown Heroes banner program. Joan offered to work on the project.

Councilwoman Carfagno offered to help as well.

Council President Leeds asked was the Cultural Committee affiliated with the Connolly Run?

Ms Brennan replied, no, it was separate. She also explained the new lineup procedure. The parade sign up was slow, she asked all to share on their social media pages.

Mayor Chau thanked Joan and David for their work on the parade.

Ms Brennan appreciated that, it is a lot of work and so much fun. She thanked Council.

Mark Doherty, Northfield – is the Commander of the American Legion. He thanked Joan for recognizing the Post Crashers, they are an outstanding organization and they and Eleanor Webb are great choices. He announced that this was the third time he had appeared here about noise and related nuisances. They have adjusted the hours, increased security fees, it worked short term but was no longer effective. The residents gave great suggestions, including ending events at 10pm with cleanup done by 11pm. That reduced their business by 50 percent but it has come back. They are unfortunately having problems again; they made changes again in conjunction with Chief VonColln. Chief VonColln assigned Lieutenant Buccafurni and Lieutenant Dever to assist and discuss; a few good suggestions came out, including providing an event schedule to the Police Department. Another suggestion was the installation of security cameras to enable remote monitoring; this needed to be discussed at a membership meeting as it is an expenditure but they do anticipate having the cameras installed inside and out before the next event. They were also going to increase the damage deposit which will be forfeited if the police are called to respond due to nuisance. They were all volunteers and it was difficult to have staff present to

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monitor the onsite activities during an event. They also discussed eliminating nighttime rentals, but this is their only income and they are concerned this will result in them losing the Post, which has been there for 83 years. He wanted Council to understand the complaints are not falling on deaf ears and they are working to control them.

Councilwoman Carfagno asked were most renters from Northfield?

Mr. Doherty replied, very few were however, the Red Cross has four blood drives a month, there are no fees charged to them and other civic groups including the PTO, Charter Tech, the Mothers' Leagues, funeral repasts, the Republican Club, etc. The garden in the back was managed by the Post Crashers, they donate 1,000 pounds of food a year. A lot of good things happen at this place and he would hate to see it end. He asked if there were any questions.

Council President Leeds asked would they consider adding language that the renters could be subject to ticketing for noise?

Mr. Doherty felt the ordinance was almost impossible to enforce.

Lieutenant Buccafurni added the complaint would have to be signed by the resident who complained, unless the Police Department saw the offense occur.

Mr. Doherty noted that he blacklisted people who don't follow the rules. He is open to suggestions, and thanked Council.

Kim Paccitti, Northfield - lives across the street from the American Legion, she appreciated Mr. Doherty's attempts but as he knows they have not worked. She suggested he have someone on the property at 10pm, cars are revving their engines, racing down the street, children are crossing the street. They moved there in 2018, she assumed there would be communications between the Police Department and the Legion, but that was not the case until 2021 when a car landed in their yard. That had nothing to do with the American Legion. She did not know why Northfield does not have a noise ordinance, every other town does. The police are not responsible, Lieutenant Buccafurni has been very helpful. It is not fair and it is dangerous.

Tom Paccitti, Northfield – his main concern is not if, but when. Somebody is going to end up severely injured or dead. He has had conversations with Mr. Doherty. He was trying to take action to ensure people stayed safe. The noise was one thing, but there was a lot of back and forth screaming and yelling and a lot of young kids running back and forth across the street. Someone will be injured.

Mrs. Paccitti appreciated all the hard work the Legion does. They deserve the same respect.

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Mr. Paccitti added that Mr. Doherty is at home where it is nice and quiet, and they live with the noise. When someone ends up dead it will be on Mr. Doherty's shoulders.

Mrs. Paccitti added when music is turned off, she suggested it be added to the contract that they cannot congregate in the street, on the parking lot or sidewalk. There was also no room to load or unload.

Council President Leeds asked what they would like the City to do?

Mr. Paccitti suggested flashing lights on the road to indicate approaching cars.

Solicitor Facenda asked had they filed complaints against anyone.

Mr. Paccitti replied, no.

Solicitor Facenda noted once the Police arrive the offensive action has typically ended. The Council can create rules but cannot enforce them. We do not have police power. We have tried to make a noise ordinance; it has been found to be too cumbersome and too expensive for a court to rely upon.

Mr. Paccitti felt the contract should include security presence.

Council President Leeds replied we cannot compel the Legion to do this.

Councilwoman Carfagno urged them to use ring doorbell footage to use to file complaint.

Mayor Chau added that we do have a noise ordinance, but it is very difficult to enforce. He did a study several years ago, many communities have a noise ordinance, you must have someone certified and the decibel monitor must be calibrated. The operator must be certified. It is very difficult. He urged them to call the police. It is not that we do not hear you, we have complaints about noise around the municipality, even complaints about noise originating in Pleasantville. We cannot put a speed bump on a public road.

Councilman Polistina asked that police monitor cars parked the wrong way.

Lieutenant Buccafurni stated that with the schedules, the Police Department will have a bigger presence there.

Mrs. Paccitti thanked Council for their time.

Bob McNulty, Egg Harbor Township – was the Jr. Vice Commander at the Legion. Stated we are not the enemy; they have gone out of their way to be and stay good neighbors. The things they do require raising funds. Covid really hurt them. They



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have been working with the Police Department. Absent a formal complaint, there was nothing that could be done. There has never been a complaint filed. He suggested Council appoint a committee so the Council can learn what they do and have done. The neighbors need to sign a complaint if they want action. He does not want his phone number on the door to be called when there are problems. The noise ordinance is 11pm. The problem may be that we need to get some thicker skins, people need to file complaints. The reality is that everyone knows nothing is being done about the complaints. They are in competition with facilities that allow later activity. The rentals are the only way they can continue to serve the community and its veterans.

Council President Leeds stated that Mr. Doherty has taken a proactive step, as have the Police Department.

Mr. McNulty replied they were not able to have staff present.

Joy Perkal, Egg Harbor Township - was concerned about Birch Grove Park. The campground has been closed. The rest rooms are closed. The snack bar is closed. There have been rumors about what is being done at Birch Grove Park. She asked were modifications being planned for the park.

Councilman Dewees responded that it will remain a park. The bandstand and picnic area will be renovated. The concession stand has been closed for several years. The bathrooms are open. There are no maintenance staff on weekends. He would look into why bathrooms are not open.

Ms Perkal added that trash is overflowing. She felt feels there should be a public hearing, the public should have a say. She posted something and 1,000 people responded. It is the best park around. Rumor was that they are putting in disc golf.

Councilman Dewees replied that disc golf was already there, a 9-hole course, no trees have been cut down.

Ms Perkal asked if we were cutting trees to widen trails.

Councilman Dewees replied, no. Public Works has been cutting down low hanging brush, but not cutting trees.

Ms. Perkal added that she also heard trees were being cut down for development.

Councilman Dewees replied there was a 99-year lease. There will be no development.

Councilwoman Bucci referred to the Planning Board resolution. We do not have a committee to discuss it.

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Solicitor Facenda confirmed the committee would consist of himself, Councilwoman Bucci, Planner Morrisey and Mayor Chau.

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

At 7:34pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk