

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD WORK SESSION
JULY 16, 2024**

At 6:02pm 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 Council President Pro-Tempore Dewees.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Mayor Chau

Solicitor Facenda, Engineer Mauro, and Chief of Police VonColln were also present.

Council President Leeds welcomed all to the meeting and announced that the presentation by Bob Bishop has been moved to August 13th.

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 football score tower roof was being installed as well as handrails around the top, the sink hole on Cedar Bridge has been repaired, with temporary backfill. The Engineer would address further if needed.

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

Councilwoman Bucci thanked the Cultural Committee and Joan Brennan for wonderful 4th of July Parade, the Connolly Mile was also a huge success with a record number of participants. She thanked Police and Fire for their efforts on the parade and every day. She announced the 100th Anniversary event for the Fire Department and said the insurance ordinance change is on the agenda. The EDC joined the Atlantic County Economic Alliance again this year; we benefit from our participation and last year got a grant through them.

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

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Councilman Polistina announced Northfield's Night Out is August 8th, forms were available on the website or in the Clerk's Office. The deadline is July 29th to register as exhibitor. The Library Board has a vacancy, contact Mayor Chau if interested, it is a great organization and they do great work. The tax rate has been certified at 3.592 per \$100 in assessed value, it relates to roughly \$10,776 on a \$300,000 home. He gave a breakdown of the tax rate by the various entities for whom we collect, including both schools and the county.

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

Councilman Smith thanked and commended the volunteers who put the parade together, it was a terrific day. The Connolly Mile was a tremendous success, he commended the Hurleys for their efforts at organizing the event, it was very well done and we look forward to more in the future. For the Court, at the last meeting we were awaiting Judge Blee's decision, there was no update at this time. The Press of Atlantic City reported that we had left the Court, but we are still in and are awaiting the Judge's decision. On September 17th there will be a Special Election at the Northfield Community School for the bond referendum vote.

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

Councilwoman Carfagno also thanked all who worked on the July 4th Parade and Run, she heard nothing but positive comments about living in Northfield. She had been working on the Hometown Heroes project, she distributed a flyer for the City website, she wanted it on a Google form, there would more to follow. The Mainland Regional High School Board of Education had a budget meeting on June 27th, they were discussing their budget, state aid, and tax levies. To Councilman Dewees, she asked about the pedestrian crossings at Tilton and the Bike Path.

Councilman Dewees stated there was an issue with the wiring and the County Engineer is aware and working on it.

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

Councilman Notaro echoed previous comments about the Connolly Mile; Councilman Notaro had been on the Committee for 8 years now, it was a great event. He noted that they put signs on the bike path and this year was the first year that signs were removed from the bike path, he would like the ordinance amended to let local organizations such as the Northfield Business Association, Northfield Little League, etc, put signs on the bike path.

Councilman Leeds took a straw poll; all in favor of proceeding.

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Councilman Notaro continued; as Councilman Dewees mentioned, the football tower is getting a new roof, it will be ready for the next season.

Council President Leeds – Fire Department/EMS

Council President Leeds thanked Councilwoman Bucci for mentioning the Fire Company's Anniversary celebration. There is an issue with the EMS provider and reporting; they also want to use the EMS ready-room downstairs. It has been two months and hopefully we will have some answers soon regarding the air conditioning.

Councilman Dewees noted that we have quotes for the air conditioning and Kathi met today with the electrician. Quotes were between \$15,000 and \$19,000 per unit plus electric. It is a work in progress.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

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

Special Events Ordinance – *Councilwoman Bucci, Councilman Dewees.*
Councilwoman Bucci reported she wants local businesses to be able to hold flea market-style events on their property and to allow vendors at events at Birch Grove Park, if they have a special events permit, including such events as Northfield Night Out. There was an issue of the costs to the City, she referred to Wildwood's ordinance and gave examples of fees that were included. This was a work in progress.

Affordable Housing – *Councilwoman Carfagno, Councilman Polistina*
No update.

Insurance Requirements Review – *Councilman Polistina, Councilwoman Bucci.*
Councilwoman Bucci noted the ordinance was on the agenda tonight.

Road Opening Ordinance – *Councilmen Dewees and Notaro.*
Councilman Notaro announced they had a meeting yesterday; he thanked Clerk Canesi for her knowledge and valuable input. They would be moving on very soon.

Council President Leeds moved to the work session topics for discussion.

WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – ONGOING BUSINESS

There was no ongoing business.

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WORK SESSION / TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION – NEW BUSINESS

- Standing Item – New Grant Opportunities

Council President Leeds announced that the Fire Department was awarded a \$39,000.00 grant; he thanked the volunteers for the work they put into the application.

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Council President Leeds made the assignments.

Council President Leeds advised he would be abstaining from the vote on the approval of the minutes from the June 25th meeting as he was not in attendance.

PUBLIC SESSION / FIVE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Council President Leeds 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.

Jay Hurley, Northfield, said he had been a resident since 1984. He wanted to discuss the Connolly Mile; it started in 1982 in honor of Frank Connolly, a City employee who had died in a tragic accident. His wife, Marge, was a member of the Cultural Committee. They directed the race for 12 years and in 1994, then-Mayor Munafò asked Mr. Hurley to coordinate the race. They have as always had a very good partnership with the City and its various departments. The race has really grown and until this year there has never been a complaint. This year, early on, their signs started to disappear, being removed from City property. It was done in a reckless fashion and without notification. They found them at Public Works, in the trash. \$300 in signs being thrown out, without them being notified. He asked who did it and why he was not notified?

Councilman Dewees replied that Superintendent Vitale did it on his own because he believed it was his responsibility to do so.

Mr. Hurley believed that was irresponsible. He asked why wasn't he notified?

Councilman Notaro stated that this had never happened before and does not know why it happened now. This was why Councilman Notaro believed the ordinance needed to be changed.

Councilman Dewees noted it was something he would address.

Mr. Hurley offered to answer any questions.

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Councilman Notaro thanked Mr. Hurley for the great job he does; the race is a great Northfield tradition.

Councilwoman Carfagno suggested various stations with QR code registration, to help next year.

Councilman Dewees added that he does not believe Superintendent Vitale did anything wrong.

Mr. Hurley's opinion was that he did not believe it was Superintendent Vitale's decision.

Councilman Dewees had never heard that it was anything but Superintendent Vitale's decision.

Councilman Polistina praised Mr. Hurley for the job well done.

Bob Braverman, Northfield, urged all to use their microphones, they cannot be heard. He was here to discuss pickleball. He has heard there is talk of canceling the basketball courts. He had lived on his street for decades and bought it because it is a nice quiet environment, putting in pickleball courts and knocking down trees was a mistake. Talk to anyone in Margate, they hate it. He had talked to Councilman Dewees and Councilman Notaro, and there were a lot of other places in the park to put this. He suggested putting it behind the Fire Department. It should not go behind Northwood Court or behind Henry Drive. He was told the park closes at 7pm, but that could change, lights could go in and then you would have noise all night. It is a great idea but not near the neighborhood. He asked Engineer Mauro how much space was needed?

Engineer Mauro replied, less than an acre is needed.

Councilman Dewees responded that he did hear the resident's concerns and they would research and find another location for it.

Engineer Mauro noted the plan was conceptual and had to be submitted to get the parking approved, but there were other locations being discussed. The locations were not set in stone.

Debra Peary, Henry Drive, echoed what Mr. Braverman said, she had been there for 30 years, she was born and raised here. There were other places this could go.

Councilman Dewees replied we would do research.

Vince Zumpano, Henry Drive, built his home 59 years ago, he had played pickleball for 10 years and knew the sounds; he added that it will bring half of Pleasantville down to play basketball and pickle ball. We did not need this.

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Councilman Polistina stated he takes some of the blame here, he has been pushing for the basketball and pickleball for years because so many residents have been asking for it. It has not been built yet and we do not have the funding.

Councilman Notaro commented; the first thing that was discussed at the initial meeting was that the residents in the area need to be notified and get their feedback. We would never want to put anything there that would cause disturbance to our residents.

Councilman Dewees noted that our intention was to provide recreation for all ages.

Tim Wainwright, Henry Drive, said Northfield was a great town to live in, he agreed we needed these amenities but had an issue with the location. In Margate, the noise can be heard inside the people's homes. The trees that would be removed cast shadows on the ball fields, there would be a lot more sun if the trees were taken down.

Craig Smith, Northfield, said a few weeks ago he was notified by a neighbor about the pickleball. Councilman Dewees came over to his house and took him out in the park to show Mr. Smith what was planned. He thanked Councilman Dewees for opening the conversation. He was not in favor of the location.

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

Council President Leeds reiterated that no final decisions had been made, and there had already been conversations about moving them somewhere else.

At 6:41pm, on motions properly made and seconded, all members present were in favor of adjourning this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Canesi, RMC, Municipal Clerk