

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, March 16, 2021**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order remotely via Zoom, due to the COVID-19 crisis, by Village President Joan Frazier on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Village Clerk Stacy Sigman called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:

Trustee Tom Terrill – Joined the meeting at 5:42
Trustee John Goodwin
Trustee Greg Lungmus
Trustee Charles Orth
Trustee Todd Fowler
Trustee Tom Whittaker

Absent:

President Joan Frazier

Others Present:

Village Manager Stacy Sigman, Community Development Director Steve Gutierrez, Director of Administrative Services Melissa Jewett, Finance Director Kyle Cratty, Village Attorney Everett Hill and Go Green Northfield resident Betsy Kochvar.

Approval of the February 16, 2021 Report of Proceedings

Trustee Goodwin made a motion, seconded by Trustee Lungmus, to approve the February 16, 2021 Report of Proceedings. The roll call vote of approval was unanimous.

Approval of the March 2, 2021 Report of Proceedings -Proposed FY2021/2022 Village Budget

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whittaker, to approve the March 2, 2021 Report of Proceedings regarding the proposed FY2021/2022 Village Budget. The roll call vote of approval was unanimous.

Discussion continued from the February 16, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting on a seasonal ban of gas powered leaf blowers

President Frazier remarked that at the February 16, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting Betsy Kochvar presented a proposal, on behalf of Go Green Northfield, requesting the Village consider a ban on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers (GLB's.) Due to time constraints, discussion of this matter was continued to this meeting.

Head of the Go Green Northfield – Land, Air and Water Subcommittee, Betsy Kochvar, asked the Board to consider banning GLB's from May 15 through September 30. She noted that

electric and battery leaf blowers would be allowed all year. Betsy Kochvar presented slides (see attached PowerPoint slides at the end) addressing questions and concerns surrounding GLB's. She asked the Board to carefully consider the benefits of passing this ordinance.

Trustee Whittaker noted that President Frazier's newsletter was very biased in favor of the ban on GLB's and he was concerned that this had been put out to residents before the Village Board had time to discuss the matter. In the past, he noted that she had not held this stance and questioned her change in viewpoint.

President Frazier noted that she had been educated by Go Green, changed her mind, and was now in favor of the ban of GLB's during this timeframe. She called for drafting an ordinance so the existing board could vote since this board had heard the discussions on the ban and they might not still be in office next month due to the election.

Trustee Whittaker thanked Betsy for the information. He stated that Northfield was unique because many of its properties were larger pieces of land. He remarked that he had contacted several landscape companies and was told there could be up to a 51% increase in their costs and charges to residents. Trustee Whittaker was not in favor of the ban on GLB's.

Trustee Orth noted that he had received numerous phone calls, emails, and texts and the majority were against the ban on GLB's. He said that there was unwanted noise everywhere and leaf blowers were essential to clean-up. Trustee Orth was strongly opposed to the ban on GLB's.

Trustee Terrill stated that he thought this ban on GLB's should be settled by a referendum. Trustee Terrill was opposed to the ban on GLB's.

Trustee Lungmus noted that he maintained his property and used GLB's. He was conflicted and respected Go Green's position but felt that the technology was not there yet for viable alternatives. Trustee Lungmus was opposed to the ban on GLB's.

Trustee Fowler thanked Betsy and Go Green's admirable work. He questioned if they should investigate if people were still using GLB's in communities where they have been banned. He was hopeful that technology would improve and there would soon be alternatives to GLB's but unfortunately those did not yet exist. Trustee Fowler was opposed to the ban on GLB's.

Trustee Goodwin stated that he had created a hobby of maintaining his property. He noted that he had a nice talk with Betsy. He said that GLB's were very efficient and useful and right now there was not anything better. He believed that enforcement of an ordinance banning GLB's would require a lot of Village resources and not be the best use of time. He also felt this would be creating a precedent that could be a slippery slope. Trustee Goodwin was opposed to the ban on GLB's.

Resident Cathy Kennedy stated she had asthma and as a matter of breathing, she supported the ban of GLB's and felt the date constraints were reasonable.

Resident Charlie Pick noted that he was Betsy’s brother and supported the ban of GLB’s during this timeframe.

Resident Trudy Gibbs noted that only a small percentage of residents used GLB’s and was in support of the ban during this timeframe. She felt it best to have more education on the topic before going forward with a vote.

Resident Kimberly Orth inquired how many people use gas mowers and noted that a ban of GLB’s would create a slippery slope.

Resident Ruth Lucchesi had mixed feelings and stated there were good arguments on both sides regarding the ban of GLB’s. She recommended using the summer to evaluate and gain more educational information on the subject. She liked the idea of a referendum.

Discussion - Shop. Eat. Explore. Find it in Northfield update

President Frazier asked Trustee Orth to provide a brief update on the “Shop. Eat. Explore. Find it in Northfield” initiative and planned future programs. Trustee Orth stated they were currently running a St. Patrick’s Day social media campaign and concluded a successful Valentine’s Day social media campaign that reached over 78,000 people. They were working on developing a branded Northfield gift card program that could be purchased in \$25 increments on the Village website. They were working to create a contest where people send in selfies of them dining or shopping at Northfield businesses and biweekly someone will be selected to win a \$25 Northfield gift card. Trustee Whittaker noted they met with a representative of the business community to get their feedback on program ideas. He thanked staff members for their efforts in this long-term business support program.

Other Business

Trustee Terrill made a motion, seconded by Trustee Orth to adjourn the meeting.

AYES: Orth NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT: 0
 Fowler
 Lungmus
 Goodwin
 Whittaker
 Terrill

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Attach GO GREEN Powerpoint from Betsy Kochvar

