

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 6:00 P.M.
APRIL 21, 2025**

To Order:

Chairman Jason Jacobs called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Led by Chairman Jason Jacobs

Roll Call:

Members present: Councilman Martin DeVries, Councilwoman Holly Swenk, Councilman Eric Shaffer, Councilman Bruce Abens, Councilman Clifford Winkel, Councilwoman Georgia Awig, and President Jason Jacobs.

Also present: Mayor Kevin Corcoran, Planning and Development Director Kim Lieber, Ryan Thomas, City Arborist, and Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani.

New Business:

2025-50 An Ordinance replacing Chapter 1030 Street Trees with new Chapter 1030 Trees and repealing Chapter 1032 Master Tree Plan of the North Ridgeville Streets, Utilities and Public Services Code.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran; First Reading on 03-17-2025)

The Planning and Development Director discussed the following.

- Chapter 1030 is more detailed about the authority of the City Arborist over trees in the right-of-way and public places.
- The request is to adopt the Master Tree Plan as a separate document that would be adopted by the Planning Commission and maintained by the City Arborist.
- The change included establishing enforcement processes for private trees.
- Added a section on boundary line trees and maintained a list of prohibited trees that are not subject to legislative approval.
- Note the requirement for contractors doing tree work to be registered.
- The legislation also includes updated outdated language around penalties.
- Chapter 1030 would be a submission to Planning Commission with a draft master tree plan to review and recommended back to City Council for adoption and filed for administrative enforcement by the City Arborist.
- The Master Tree Plan needs to be updated to reflect current best practices, educational tools, and tree recommendations.

Council Member Questions and Comments:

President Jacobs remarked that he was able to take a tour with the City Arborist to learn about healthy trees, unhealthy trees, and proper maintenance. He agreed with the ordinance and emphasized the need to maintain healthy trees in the city and eliminate any potential dangers.

Councilwoman Swenk asked about the handling of existing prohibited trees on private property.

Director Lieber explained that the change would focus on regulating new tree approvals; however, there is an effort to educate the community about why certain trees are prohibited and the damage that they might cause to stormwater management or streets. If a prohibited tree becomes a disease or a threat to the area, the City will require its removal. The City is not initiating enforcement on healthy trees.

Councilwoman Swenk inquired about the time limits for compliance with tree maintenance orders.

Director Lieber explained that the exact number of days is not indicated in the plan because there might be risks to health and safety or a slow decline in the health of a tree. This approach allows the arborist to relate the amount of time needed to address the issue.

City Arborist Thomas confirmed Director Lieber's explanation regarding the time limit for compliance. He noted that extensions may be possible in certain situations.

Councilman Abens expressed concerns about the eighty-dollar fee for trimming and pruning trees. He noted that he personally takes care of his trees both on his property and on the tree lawn. He suggested that, rather than imposing a fee for maintaining their trees, the city should focus on creating educational videos on tree care for its website. Mr. Abens inquired whether the legislation applies to utility companies.

City Arborist Thomas explained that he would be in contact with the utility companies to make sure they are trimming to standard. Utility companies are required to get permits for certain utility wires and make proper cuts. City Arborist Thomas would enforce the violations.

Director Lieber remarked that City Council could amend the legislation; however, the City needs to regulate any installation that occurs in the right-of-way to decrease the hazards. Director Lieber emphasized the importance of proper tree planting and maintenance to avoid issues like sidewalk structure and visibility blocks.

President Jacobs agreed with changing the eighty-dollar permit fee to a zero-dollar permit fee.

Councilman Abens wanted to know if trees on private property that are not in the right-of-way are an exception.

Director Lieber explained that a landscape plan is subject to Planning Commission review and approval. Individual residential properties would not be able to install prohibited trees. However, they will not monitor any other tree that is diseased or healthy. She recommended that City Council amend the permits and fees legislation as well if Ordinance 2025-50 is amended.

Councilwoman Swenk wanted to know the meaning of “to add a permit fee for planting and removal.” She believed eighty dollars was excessive and recommended changing it to maybe three dollars to be able to monitor activity.

Councilman Abens believes the tree permit is like the fire recreation permit, and the tree permit fee could be zero dollars and still be enforceable at the same time.

Councilman Winkel agreed with removing the eight-dollar fee and having the legislation reference the permit and fees legislation, so there are no redundancies.

Councilwoman Awig inquired about tree regulations in surrounding cities.

City Arborist Thomas explained that the surrounding cities have forest programs like North Olmsted, Westlake, Elyria, Bay Village, and Rocky River. The City is now implementing a tree program. He remarked that he has been training and attending continuing education, and he added that he puts out an educational video monthly.

Councilman Shaffer inquired about the meaning of planting fruit trees.

Director Lieber explained that the master plan had stated that no fruit trees shall be planted along the road that creates a hazard.

Moved by President Jacobs and seconded by Winkel to send Ordinance Number 2025-50 back to City Council for consideration with amendments of removing the words “in the amount of \$80” from section 3.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried.

Yes – 7

No – 0

2025-65 An Ordinance suspending City of North Ridgeville Noise Ordinance No. 634.01(c)(7) for Hammond Construction and its subcontractors in order to avoid costly delays for the construction of a school transportation and maintenance facility and a new high school for the North Ridgeville School District.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran; First Reading on 04-07-2025)

Mayor Corcoran introduced Ordinance Number 2025-65:

- Noted that construction has started, and the timeframe of the construction depends on the weather.
- Hammond Construction asked if the City could waive the start time on a Saturday morning to 7:00 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m.
- The reason for the request is that contractors do not want to work on a Saturday if they do not have to, but it would be when there is a weather delay.
- It is believed that the workers would be deterred from coming to work on a Saturday if it were 9:00 a.m. This change would give the workers the advantage of coming to work early and then enjoying the rest of their weekends, without causing delays in construction.
- The project has a tight timeline to open the new high school by August 2028.
- The importance of keeping the project on schedule to avoid disrupting the school year.
- The community voted in favor of the project, and delays could cause financial harm to the School District and the North Ridgeville Residents.

- The School District met with Hammon Construction in a public meeting to go over their plans and invited all residents impacted by the construction. There were not many people in attendance at the School District public meeting. Hammond Construction responded to a couple of residents regarding dust and the impact of lighting.
- The dust from the demolition would not affect the residents because of the dust suppression water cannons the company uses for demolition.
- At the School District public meeting, there were no issues regarding the noise request.

Councilman Jacobs remarked that he agrees with the majority of the voters who approved the project, and the residents are already paying for it in the property taxes. He agrees with keeping the construction on track; however, he wants to be mindful of the residents who are directly impacted.

Councilwoman Awig asked if it was possible to announce on the City's website the Saturdays when the construction would start, as it does not occur every Saturday.

Mayor Corcoran remarked that it is possible to announce the days on the website. He added that people would have to go to the website to check.

Councilwoman Swenk remarked that she spoke with a construction company owner and stated that they typically work on weekends at 7:00 a.m. if there is a rainy day. From her conversation with the construction company owner, she explained that the workers do not start making construction noise at 7:00 a.m. because there is a period for preparation and discussions. Mrs. Swenk agreed with the Mayor that there is no issue with the request if residents did not attend the School District meeting or the council meeting to express their concerns regarding the request.

Councilman Winkel expressed concerns about naming a general contractor in the ordinance because the contractor might not be the only one on the project. He noted that the legislation says construction noise is not allowed before 7:00 a.m.; however, they could start before 7:00 a.m. with tools that do not make loud noise like jackhammers. The current ordinance states that the Safety Service Director could grant a waiver. He suggested allowing the Mayor to issue special permits for construction noise for special projects because the Safety Service Director position is no longer used.

Mayor Corcoran explained that the project is special, so it was better to bring legislation to the City Council. The reason is to make residents aware of what is going on and have an opportunity to get their concerns addressed regarding a special permit waiver.

Councilman Abens shared personal experiences with construction noise and its impact on residents. He agreed that he does not see an issue with the request.

Councilman Shaffer remarked that he agrees with putting only "general contractor" in the legislation in case the School District switches general contractors.

Councilwoman Swenk wanted to know if the schools would have a list of the subcontractors that Hammond Construction will be using in case of any issues.

Mayor Corcoran explained that there is a phone number residents could call if there is an issue.

President Jacobs opened the discussion to the audience.

Susan Olson, at 7685 Maddock Road, inquired if the impacted residents were notified of the School District's public meeting.

Mayor Corcoran explained that the affected residents received a letter asking them to attend the meeting.

Moved by Winkel and seconded by Awig to send Ordinance Number 2025-65 back to City Council for consideration with amendments to change Hammond Construction to general contractor.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried.

Yes – 7

No – 0

Adjournment:

Chairman Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Approved on May 5, 2025.



Jason R. Jacobs
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL



Nicholas Ciofani
CLERK OF COUNCIL