NORTH RIDGEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Smolik called the Planning Commission meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present were members Frank Toth, Steve Ali, Council Liaison Bruce Abens, Vice-Chairman Paul Schumann and Chairman James Smolik.

Also present were City Engineer Christina Eavenson, Planning & Development Director Kimberly Lieber and Deputy Clerk of Council Tina Wieber.

MINUTES

Chairman Smolik stated that the Commission had received the regular meeting minutes of November 12, 2025 and asked if there were any corrections.

Chairman Smolik stated that there was one correction under Call to Order that stated "Vice-Chairman Schumann called the Planning Commission" and should be changed to "Chairman Smolik called the Planning Commission", with that correction the minutes were approved as submitted.

CORRESPONDENCE

Administrative Approvals

1. PPZ2025-0390 Wild Bill's Tobacco of North Ridgeville, LLC, 32327 Cook Rd, Unit 2
   Approval of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance for a tobacco retailer.

2. PPZ2025-0393 Random Apocalypse Comics & Collectibles, 32660 Center Ridge Rd
   Approval of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance for retail, collectibles.

Chairman Smolik asked Director Lieber to discuss the Administrative Approvals.

Director Lieber stated that since the last meeting, there had been two certificates of zoning compliance, one for Wild Bills Tobacco of North Ridgeville on Cook Road and one for Random Apocalypse Comics and Collectibles and they could be found on Center Ridge Road in the Ninos Plaza.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

PPZ2025-0392 Ridgefield Subdivision, PPN: 07-00-001-000-473
Applicant: Keith Filipkowski/Pulte Homes of Ohio Corp., 387 Medina Rd, Suite 1700, Medina, OH 44256. Owner: Bob Schmitt Homes, Inc., 9095 Gatestone Rd, North Ridgeville, OH 44039. Proposal consists of an amendment to the preliminary plan.

Application was read.

Chairman Smolik asked Director Lieber for findings of fact.

Director Lieber explained that the Ridgefield Subdivision was originally proposed in 1994 by Bob Schmitt Homes. Along with the development proposal, Chapter 1282—governing single-family detached and cluster development—was introduced. She noted that this chapter has been frequently reviewed and has become a foundational code relied upon by many developers in North Ridgeville.

As originally proposed in 1994, the Ridgefield Subdivision consisted of approximately 500 acres and 894 dwelling units, including 701 single-family units and 193 cluster units. At that time, the development included approximately 110 acres of open space, representing 22% of the site, with a density of 1.79 units per acre. The property is zoned partly R-1 Residential and partly B-3 Highway Commercial. In 1994, residential uses within the B-3 District were permitted through conditional use approval by the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals (BZBA).

Director Lieber stated that since the original preliminary plan approval, Ridgefield had been constructed in many phases over several decades. Each phase underwent engineering review and received final plat approval from the Planning Commission prior to recording. The most recently approved phase was Phase 17. As each phase was submitted, minor deviations from the original preliminary plan were approved; however, the developer was required at each stage to demonstrate continued compliance with overall density, unit mix, and minimum open space requirements. She explained that changes in unit numbers, street layouts, and building orientation were expected given the size and long duration of the project.

She further noted that over time, approximately 20 additional acres were added to the development area beyond the original preliminary plan, and the anticipated number of dwelling units increased. For each final plat approval, an exhibit was submitted showing a running total of anticipated units at full build-out. The number of units originally began at 894 and at one point reached as high as 1,048. Current documentation shows the total development area to be approximately 523 acres, with an increase in total open space.

Director Lieber stated that the number of cluster units increased over time, and that Bob Schmitt Homes recently sold the remaining undeveloped portion of approximately 132 acres to Pulte Homes. Pulte intends to assume construction of Phase 18, which was originally submitted by Bob Schmitt Homes and is currently under engineering review at the City's request.

She explained that Pulte is seeking approval of an amended preliminary plan for the remaining undeveloped area of Ridgefield. This amended plan consolidates decades of prior approvals and incremental modifications and establishes a clear framework for the completion of the subdivision. Pulte plans to construct Phases 18, 19, and 20, with Phases 19 and 20 completing the subdivision. These final two phases encompass approximately 124 acres, including approximately 62 acres of open space, and propose 54 single-family units and 137 cluster units.

Director Lieber emphasized that while individual phases may vary in unit count or open space, zoning compliance is evaluated based on the subdivision as a whole. At full build-out, staff reviewed whether

the project complies with the required single-family to cluster unit ratio, minimum open space requirements, and the maximum permitted density of 2.3 units per acre.

She stated that staff prepared a summarized chart comparing the original 1994 proposal, the most recent Phase 17 approval, and the proposed final build-out. Based on the amended preliminary plan, the total number of dwelling units at full build-out would be 980, including 559 single-family units and 421 cluster units. Cluster units would remain within the permitted 35% maximum, total open space would be approximately 160 acres (30% provided where 20% is required), and overall density would be 1.87 units per acre, which is below the maximum permitted density.

Director Lieber concluded that all zoning metrics would be met at full build-out. Residents of future phases would be fully integrated into the existing subdivision and would have access to the same recreational amenities, including the Ridgefield Recreation Center. She stated that the proposed amended preliminary plan was zoning compliant.

She noted that the applicant was requesting three minor modifications to subdivision design standards and one modification related to cluster unit spacing, all of which fell within the Planning Commission's authority to approve. The applicant had addressed prior staff comments regarding sub-lot numbering and setbacks from detention and retention basins and wetlands, and utility locations had been adjusted to avoid sub-lots where possible.

Director Lieber added that a traffic study was submitted earlier that afternoon and had not yet been fully reviewed, but engineering staff would evaluate it as part of the ongoing review process. She stated that additional items to be addressed during engineering review included mailbox locations, landscaping, and the provision of street trees in accordance with City requirements and subject to review by the City Arborist.

City Engineer Eavenson stated that engineering staff had provided several review comments related to the engineering permit process. Those include a request for additional documentation regarding the approved jurisdictional delineation of wetlands and any required Section 401 and/or 404 permits associated with wetland impacts and mitigation within the project area.

She explained that staff also requested riparian buffers be provided for all wetlands, including a minimum 10-foot no-disturbance area beyond the wetland boundaries. She noted that these buffers appear to be shown on the submitted preliminary plan. All wetlands and associated setbacks should remain outside of defined sub-lots to avoid the need for easements within individual lots to protect waterways.

City Engineer Eavenson further stated that shared common swales, drainage systems, floodplains, and similar features located along rear or side yards should be placed within common areas and maintained by the homeowner's association (HOA).

Regarding stormwater management, she indicated that staff requested a comprehensive stormwater management report covering the entire Ridgefield development. To date, a complete report has not been provided that includes pre- and post-development drainage maps and interconnected hydraulic modeling for both existing and proposed conditions.

She noted that one roadway item was reviewed involving a cul-de-sac that exceeded the 600-foot length recommended in the City's codified ordinances. However, she stated that a waiver is acceptable when a street cannot reasonably connect to the broader roadway network. In this case, the cul-de-sac is surrounded by wetlands, making connectivity infeasible.

City Engineer Eavenson stated that during pre-planning meetings, staff discussed enhancing common open-space areas with additional landscaping and amenities, such as walking paths, to improve usability and benefit residents. These enhancements have not yet been shown in the submitted plan set, and staff would like to see further development of these details during the engineering permit review.

She also noted that staff discussed the importance of careful planning for mailbox locations and street lighting. In earlier Bob Schmitt Homes phases, globe-style lights installed in individual yards were permitted to count toward street lighting requirements. However, the current City standard requires traditional carriage-style post lights located along the roadway network. Staff prefer that lighting at intersections, curves, and near mailbox locations conform to current City standards, as discussed during prior meetings.

Finally, City Engineer Eavenson addressed traffic considerations. She stated that a traffic study was requested to evaluate both existing conditions and full build-out conditions. She was unsure whether a traffic study was required at the time of the original Ridgefield Planning Commission approval, as it may have predated current requirements. Although the traffic study was submitted earlier that day, she had not yet reviewed it in detail.

She did note that the traffic study summary identified several turn-lane warrants. In particular, a westbound left-turn lane at the intersection of Bagley Road and Gatestone Drive becomes warranted under full build-out conditions. Other identified turn-lane warrants are already required under existing conditions. Engineering staff would like Pulte Homes to address the westbound left-turn lane at Bagley and Gatestone.

She referenced a similar situation at the Crossing at French Creek, where traffic from a new development connecting to an older subdivision warranted the installation of a turn lane. In that case, the developer was required to construct the turn lane, and staff believed a comparable approach may be appropriate here.

Chairman Smolik asked if there was a representative for the project.

<u>Keith Filipkowski, Pulte Homes, 387 Medina Rd, Suite 1700, Medina, Ohio 44256.</u>

Mr. Filipkowski stated that Pulte Homes was a national homebuilder that constructed approximately 29,000 homes this year and currently has approximately 240,000 lots under control nationwide. He noted that this year marked Pulte's 75th anniversary and that the company is one of the top three homebuilders in the country. He explained that Pulte serves a wide range of consumer segments, utilizes industry-leading building methods and materials, offers an industry-leading warranty, has received the "Great Place to Work" award seven times, and prides itself on doing the right thing.

He stated that locally, Pulte operates in approximately 20 submarkets throughout Northeast Ohio and expects to build approximately 650 homes in the region this year. Pulte currently controls approximately

3,100 lots in Northeast Ohio, representing an estimated 4.5-year supply. He explained that the company's local territory ranges from Avon Lake to Mentor, south to Green, and includes most communities in between.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that Pulte was familiar with the City of North Ridgeville, having successfully developed the Pioneer Ridge community, a Del Webb age-restricted (55+) development and the first Del Webb community in Northeast Ohio. He noted that Pulte recently opened another Del Webb community in Columbia Station consisting of approximately 622 lots, many of which offer product types similar to those proposed for this development. He stated that Pioneer Ridge includes 585 homes and Waterbury includes 205 single-family homes, for a combined total of 790 homes.

He introduced his team and stated that collectively they have more than 132 years of industry experience, noting that he has been with Pulte for 21 years. He explained that he has served in multiple roles within the company, including Director of Construction and architectural oversight, and is currently involved in land entitlement. He emphasized that Pulte serves as both builder and developer, with an in-house land development team and mortgage company, allowing the company to manage projects from start to finish.

Mr. Filipkowski explained that the original 1994 Ridgefield master plan approved for Bob Schmitt Homes encompassed approximately 523 acres. Phases 1 through 18 account for approximately 399 acres, leaving approximately 124 acres of undeveloped land proposed for Phases 19 and 20. He clarified that earlier references to 134 acres included Phase 18, while the raw land being acquired for Phases 19 and 20 totals approximately 124 acres.

He stated that Phases 1 through 18 include approximately 792 homes and approximately 96 acres of open space, representing about 18%, which is below the minimum required under Chapter 1282. He noted that over time, changes to the development were expected for a project of this size and duration. He referenced prior Planning Commission applications showing as many as 1,048 homes, with cluster units exceeding the permitted percentage and open space not meeting minimum requirements at that time.

Mr. Filipkowski emphasized that the appropriate benchmark for evaluation was Chapter 1282, which permits up to 1,204 dwelling units, requires a minimum of 20% open space, and allows a cluster-to-single-family ratio of 35% to 65%.

He explained that the most recent Schmitt Homes proposal for Phases 19 and 20 included 94 cluster units and 80 single-family units, resulting in a total of 966 units, including 381 cluster units and 585 single-family units, with approximately 160 acres of open space. Pulte's proposal includes 980 total units, consisting of 421 cluster units and 559 single-family units, with approximately 159 acres of open space and an overall density of 1.87 units per acre, which is well below the maximum permitted density of 2.3 units per acre.

Mr. Filipkowski presented a side-by-side comparison of the Schmitt and Pulte plans, noting that while there are minor layout differences, connectivity between existing and new development areas remains unchanged. He explained the proposed product mix for Phases 19 and 20, which includes 56 two-story cluster homes on 55-foot lots, 81 ranch-style cluster homes on 40-foot lots, and 54 single-family homes on 80-foot lots, for a total of 191 lots.

He discussed the map shown on the screen and stated that it broke down the phasing and timing, giving insight into everything they were purchasing. He stated that inside Phase 15 was vacant lot 690 and they would be purchasing that as well as in Phase 17 there were 16 lots there that they would be purchasing and that phase was already developed and shovel-ready. He said that Phase 18 was entitled but yet to be land-developed, with construction anticipated to begin in the spring. Pending approvals and completion of engineering review, Pulte anticipates beginning earthwork for Phases 19 and 20 in the summer of 2026, with Phase 20 following in spring 2027. He estimated an overall project duration of approximately four years, concluding around 2029, subject to market conditions.

Mr. Filipkowski described the proposed model park, which would include furnished model homes representing each product line and a temporary sales office operating under a conditional use. Upon completion of sales, the model homes would be converted to standard residential use.

He reviewed three requested waivers, including a reduced road radius necessitated by existing Phase 18 infrastructure and wetlands, a cul-de-sac length exceeding the 600-foot standard by approximately 30 feet, and a reduced setback between a cluster unit and a single-family lot to allow for enhanced buffering along the street frontage. He stated that these waivers are minor, consistent with existing conditions, and common within the Ridgefield development.

Mr. Filipkowski discussed stormwater management, stating that five new wet detention basins will be constructed and oversized to allow for slow release and minimal discharge. He noted that Lorain County has no concerns with the proposed stormwater design and that all basins will be constructed early in each phase to support proper drainage.

He explained that wetlands were delineated by HCW Consultants and that the delineation had been accepted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Approximately 92.4% of wetlands will be preserved, with less than three acres of isolated wetlands disturbed in accordance with permitting requirements.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that Pulte will join the existing Ridgefield Homeowners Association and had been working collaboratively with the HOA board. Pulte will retain developer rights while contributing financially to the HOA through new homeowners. He emphasized coordination with the HOA to ensure complementary architecture, landscaping, buffering, and transitional treatments between existing and new development areas.

He highlighted open space and pedestrian amenities, noting that Phases 19 and 20 will provide approximately 3.37 miles of sidewalks, with approximately 73% of homes backing up to open space or water features. He stated that approximately 50% of Phases 19 and 20 will consist of open space, while maintaining an overall 30% open space ratio for the entire development.

Mr. Filipkowski explained that additional landscaping, fountains within retention basins, varied street tree species, and enhanced buffering will be provided. He concluded by describing the proposed home types and floor plans, noting that architectural elevations are still under development and will be refined through the approval process.

Chairman Smolik stated that he was opening up the floor to the general public.

Debbie Gillette 8905 Longbrook Dr, North Ridgeville 44039.

Ms. Gillette stated that she reviewed the plans and noted references to retention basins and additional landscaped trees throughout the development. She expressed concern that her neighborhood has experienced significant increases in homeowners' association fees over the past three years and questioned whether the proposed features would result in further fee increases. She stated that retention basins and additional landscaping can be costly to maintain and asked whether there were estimates regarding future fee impacts.

Ms. Gillette also referenced comments regarding enhanced landscaping in common areas and requested clarification on what additional landscaping was being proposed.

She stated that she resided at the corner of Longbrook Drive and Gatestone Drive and anticipated increased traffic in the area. She asked whether any buffering or mitigation measures were planned for existing portions of the neighborhood that may be impacted by increased traffic.

Chairman Smolik stated that he would be writing down all of the questions and at the end they would go through them all. He asked if there were any other additional questions or comments.

Lee Sutherland 33063 Meadows Edge Lane, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Sutherland commented that on one of the slides displayed the retention basin or the wetlands shown in the purple areas and then where they were going to build. He stated that those were wetland areas where they were building and his backyard butts up to the west side of that wetland and the woods there were already wet. He explained that his concern was that they were going to raise those lots and where was that water going to go and would he be guaranteed that it was not going to end up making his backyard even more wet.

Gina Morris 9485 Root Road, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Ms. Morris stated that she had the same concern about drainage and said that she had the long skinny piece of land that went up against Phase 18. She discussed that she had concerns about that and the buffer that would be in that area. She added that the two-story buildings and all of the buildings on the other side, Ridgefield, Mr. Schmitt had kept as ranches and now they would have two-story buildings right up alongside their property looking down on them. She stated that they weren't too happy about that.

Beth Clapper 33023 Meadows Edge Lane, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Ms. Clapper stated that her family owned a home adjacent to the pond and wetland area and paid a premium for the lot because of its proximity to the wetland. She explained that she was an avid birdwatcher and that her husband works and volunteers at the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center. She noted that they have observed more than 75 species of migratory birds in the wetland area.

Ms. Clapper identified the affected lots as Lots 870, 873, and 875, which backed directly onto the wooded wetland area. She stated that the existing woods provided significant habitat for migratory birds, particularly during the spring, when the wetland expanded beyond what may be visible during other times of the year. She noted that determining the full extent of the wetland can be difficult during the winter months.

She expressed concern that the proposed development would remove much of the existing wooded area, negatively impacting wildlife and bird migration. Ms. Clapper also stated that when her family purchased the property, they were informed by Bob Schmitt Homes that the adjacent wetland area would remain undeveloped. She expressed disappointment that the proposed plan would allow construction of two-story homes behind her property.

Ms. Clapper stated that she respects Pulte Homes as a builder and acknowledged that she and her husband are realtors who understand the development process. She expressed appreciation that a reputable builder was involved but stated a preference for ranch-style homes and less encroachment into the wetland area.

Tom Bridge 9129 Pleasant Ridge Circle, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Bridge stated that he wanted to hear a little bit more about the plans for phase 18. He said that there was a lot of focus on 19 and 20 and very little on what's going to happen in Phase 18, specifically that extension part of Pleasant Ridge, so if they could provide a little more detail on that he would appreciate it.

Chairman Smolik stated that since they did have a bunch of questions, he was going to have Pulte come up and try and address some of the questions and then he would open it back up to the public.

Pam Hamilton, 8913 Longbrook Dr, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Ms. Hamilton stated that a major concern regarding Longbrook Drive was that it was expected to become a primary traffic route for the development. She noted that the development is planned for family homes, which could result in increased traffic from children and school buses. She expressed concern that the development did not have an additional entrance to help mitigate traffic flow.

Ms. Hamilton asked whether the plans for Phases 18 and 19 backed up to Sprague Road. She also inquired about Phase 17, which she understood was off Riverwood Drive, where new homes were currently being constructed and several lots remained open. She asked whether the new homes in Phase 17 would be two-story homes, noting that the existing homes in that area were ranch-style and valued at approximately $700,000–$800,000. She expressed concern that the design of the new homes may differ significantly from the existing Bob Schmitt homes, and that two-story homes overlooking existing ranch homes could impact property values and privacy for current residents.

Chairman Smolik stated that they would start off with the question on the HOA maintenance. He mentioned that obviously the HOA was the one that establishes the annual dues and asked if that was going to be incorporated within the existing. He asked if maybe Mr. Filipkowski could touch on that. He commented that he guessed until a budget was established, they wouldn't know their dues, or they were going to pay the same dues and asked if that was correct.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that he would answer all the questions but Devin Daugherty with Pulti was there along with him as well and he had been instrumental with the HOA and that he may be able to shed a little bit of light on the HOA portion.

Devin Daugherty, Pulte Homes, 387 Medina Rd, Suite 1700, Medina, OH 44256.

Mr. Daugherty said that they had been working with the HOA and had been discussing the costs of the HOA fees and how that impacted the homeowners. He discussed that one thing Pulte did on a regular basis with their new developments was homeowners pay one-time capital contribution fee at the time of closing which goes directly to the HOA. He explained that essentially, if they were adding roughly 228 homes across all the different phases, depending on what that amount is that was being finalized, it was just additional cash infused into the HOA's budget that can be dispersed through operating or reserved accounts to better handle any infrastructure for the amenities or for operation costs.

Chairman Smolik stated that the next question was "Was there any additional buffering between the proposed stays and the existing homes?"

Mr. Filipkowski stated that they were planning to provide buffering at every single connection between the existing and the new. He mentioned that he personally had in fact gone out and visited specific home sites of homeowners concerned about this and offered additional buffering on top of that.

Chairman Smolik stated that if people had specific buffering questions, then maybe they should contact him.

Audience members asked about buffering on Root Road and Sprague.

Mr. Filipkowski asked if they were talking about the main roadway.

Chairman Smolik stated that there was no real development anywhere near those streets.

Council Liaison Abens commented that if he could maybe get a clarification, he thought the person was asking on the couple of lots that they were going to be building on Riverwood and they were concerned that all of the houses there are ranch and they were worried about a two-story going into those couple of lots.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that he knew there was a lot of discussion about that phase and he had now also called it to attention, he did just want to remind the Commission that they were there for approval of Phases 19 and 20.

Chairman Smolik stated that the question came up that the wetland delineation was performed, in December, but he didn't think people realized everything that went into that delineation like organics, the soil, vegetations and commented that maybe he could explain a little bit about how the delineation was determined.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that it was determined over the summer and that it was the Army Corps of Engineers that they wanted affirmation from. He explained that the delineation was done during the summer months and then the Army Corps had now affirmed that delineation to be accurate.

Chairman Smolik stated that so everyone was aware, land didn't have to have standing water, for those specialists to determine if it's wetland, they looked at all kinds of variables. He explained that they actually looked at the soil, they looked at vegetation, they looked at the Moss on the trees, and there were all kinds of parameters that they looked at and you don't technically need to have water on it to make sure it's a wetland. He stated that they were going back to the question regarding Phase 17 and what that

type may be.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that to answer his questions point blank, all ranch homes.

Council Liaison Abens remarked that that was what they wanted to hear.

Mr. Filipkowski explained that, drawing on his architectural background, the proposed streetscape was designed to blend with the mid-century modern aesthetic of the existing community. He stated that specific materials and color choices, including charcoal tones, were intentionally selected to match the surrounding homes. Unlike some Pulte projects where colors may vary between houses, he noted that this project would maintain a more uniform, monotone palette to better integrate with the existing neighborhood. He indicated that all homes would feature board-and-batten siding on the front façades and flat-panel garages. He also mentioned that certain details, such as lamp lighting, were being sourced to match existing homes as closely as possible.

Audience member asked if this approach would apply to the single lot on Longbrook Drive.

Mr. Filipkowski confirmed that it would.

Audience member then asked why the approach was not being applied to the entire subdivision.

Mr. Filipkowski explained that while they aimed to blend with the existing community, Pulte also wanted to maintain its own brand identity. He noted that the company had specific design standards for floor plans and architecture that they implemented consistently. He stated that the goal was to balance integration with the existing community while also differentiating their product. He added that city staff had helped guide decisions regarding buffers between existing and new homes. He emphasized that the presentation focused on obtaining approval for the land plan, and that architectural details would continue to be refined after land-plan approval.

Chairman Smolik asked about sublots 873, 874, and 875, noting that those areas appeared to involve wetland impacts and inquired whether it had been included in the presentation.

Mr. Filipkowski responded that the referenced wetland area was not part of the property being purchased and that Pulte did not intend to impact it. He noted that the area had not been delineated as wetland on their property.

<u>Donna Barker, 33071 Meadows Edge Lane, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.</u>

Ms. Barker asked that when he talked about open space, what that meant. She asked if that included storm retention or if that was something to beautify the area. She asked about the wetlands behind her and what it took to have wetlands built upon. She commented that they were supposed to stay away from there and now they were going to have part of it built up and a two-story house put on it. She stated that they paid premium for that lot and it was very upsetting and unless all of them lived there, they wouldn't know, but if they did live that in that area, they would know. She said that she just couldn't understand why they would build a house on wetlands and if somebody could maybe call her and let me know, she would appreciate it.

Chairman Smolik stated that they could probably touch base on it a little bit. He asked if there were any other comments or questions from the general audience.

Christy Dunn, 31678 Sprague Road and 31690 Sprague Road, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Ms. Dunn stated that she owns two properties adjacent to the large soy field, which is primarily wetland, and noted that her yard floods for much of the year. She explained that Fortune Ditch runs through her property and also experiences flooding, and she is aware that Lorain County is conducting a project to mitigate flooding in the area. She asked whether the proposed development would direct any water to Fortune Ditch, as that could impact her property.

Ms. Dunn noted that the development plans include a large water retention area near the houses being built along the soy field. She asked whether grades would be adjusted to prevent flooding and whether those adjustments could affect her property. She expressed concern that, despite assurances that surrounding properties would not be impacted, she already experiences significant water issues.

She asked about plans for the existing wetlands in terms of vegetation, noting that invasive grasses were currently taking over and that she would like to see vegetation that better supported wildlife and bird habitat.

Ms. Dunn also requested additional buffering along her property line and her neighbor's property, suggesting three alternating rows of pine and spruce trees to help maintain privacy and block views of the development. She stated that she currently enjoys a peaceful, rural view and expressed concern that new homes and lights from the development are changing that character. She noted that the soy field across the street, located in Eaton Township, was also slated for development, reducing the rural feel of the area, and emphasized that the additional buffer would help preserve some of that rural character.

Ms. Dunn asked about the proposed sidewalks and walking paths intended to increase walkability. She requested clarification on whether those paths would go through existing wetlands or near the large water retention area, as she was concerned that increased foot traffic could result in people, including children, entering her property.

Jeffrey Smith, 124 Middle Ave, Suite 800, Elyria, OH 44035.

Mr. Smith stated that he was there with Peter and Thomas and they lived at 9154 and 9162 Longbrook and stated that the 10th slide, which showed the comparison between Bob Schmitt and Pulte and stated that they were there because they had purchased those homes from Bob Schmitt were told that their backyard was not to be built upon.

Chairman Smolik stated that that was a civil matter and that it did not involve the City of North Ridgeville.

Mr. Smith stated that his concerns related to the developer adding lots, specifically lots 873 through 875. He noted that Bob Schmitt Homes had previously indicated that no homes would be built on those lots, and that Mr. Schmitt's representative, Scott Kubeck, had sent a letter confirming that intent.

Mr. Smith explained that a substantial buffer currently existed between their house and the proposed new phase. While he acknowledged that 73% of properties in the subdivision have open space behind them, in his situation the existing open space would be replaced with new homes. He identified the loss of this open space as their primary concern.

He stated that discussions regarding buffers between existing and new homes were ongoing, and he hoped the Planning Commission would consider additional buffering in light of the increased number of units proposed compared to the original Bob Schmitt plan.

Mr. Smith added that Pulte Homes has been cooperative in discussing potential solutions, including the possibility of purchasing the affected area, and he wanted the Planning Commission to be aware of their concerns.

Peter Bovenzi, 9154 Longbrook Dr, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Bovenzi stated that he wanted to read a note from Scott Kubeck. He explained that Scott had verified in writing what had been previously communicated verbally regarding the land behind their home. The note read in part:

*"Hi Keith, Pete, and Becky Bovenzi,

You stopped by my office today, Friday, to discuss the land behind your home. It was our intention, if Bob Schmitt Homes were to develop the open acreage, to build out the area consistent with the attached plan. We understood that your main concern was the amount of land planned to remain open behind your property compared to the proposed plan by Pulte Homes.

Please note that no contractual agreements were made; this reflects our verbal discussion and what we would have intended to do. I am sharing this information for clarity. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to reach out to me.

Thank you,
Scott Kubeck"*

Mr. Bovenzi stated that he shared this note to provide context regarding the intentions of Bob Schmitt Homes in relation to the open land behind their property.

Matt Thomas, 9162 Longbrook Dr, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Thomas stated that the gentleman from Pulte started the discussion saying that they prided themselves on doing what's right. And their proposal was to build a two-story house in his backyard. He remarked that that was all he had to say.

Mr. Smith stated that the only thing he wanted to add was that in looking at the agenda it had Pulte Homes and it had Bob Schmitt Homes as the owner as well.

Joe Lazaro 33047 Meadows Edge Lane, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Lazaro stated that he knew it was just an early drawing and asked at what point once they got the buffers established would they allow public input and if that was protocol or not. He commented that he wasn't sure if this was public input right now. He said that once the engineer's drawings were done that showed the buffers, etcetera, because they were looking at just the preliminary set of drawings and then they would have the engineered drawings that showed buffers, setbacks, all that.

Chairman Smolik said correct.

Mr. Lazaro asked if the public was allowed to give input.

Chairman Smolik replied, no, then it would get a professional review by a licensed engineer.

Mr. Lazaro asked if they had no input other than the current meeting.

Chairman Smolik stated that they had access to administration anytime they wanted. He mentioned that they could talk to them.

Mr. Lazaro asked how they would be notified when those drawings were done so that they could give input.

Chairman Smolik stated that they could reach out and inquire through the engineering department. He explained that what they currently had was the development plan approval and then they would have to touch base with the administration.

Mr. Lazaro asked if that would be like on a weekly basis to find out what the status was.

Chairman Smolik explained that they were just the Commission and not the administration.

Mr. Lazaro asked if the presentation would be available to the public on the website.

Chairman Smolik stated that the meeting was recorded on a live stream, so he could replay the live stream and see it.

Rebecca Bovenzi, 9154 Longbrook Dr, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Ms. Bovenzi stated that they paid a significant premium—close to $50,000 or more—for their lot because it included the wooded area behind their home. She noted that the proposed development would place three new homes in what had previously been open space.

She explained that, under the original plan with Bob Schmitt Homes, their lot would have had 177 feet of open space before the next house, and her neighbor Matt's lot would have had 115 feet. With the proposed plan, they would lose a significant portion of their backyard view.

Ms. Bovenzi also noted that across the street there were two identical lots, which they could have chosen for similar size and privacy. However, they selected their lot specifically for the 250 feet of open space and the wooded area in the backyard, which they are now losing. She added that, according to Scott

Kubeck, there had been no intention to build on that property under the previous plan, but the current proposal would place two two-story homes directly behind their home.

Frans Jager, 8748 Timber Edge Dr, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Jajer stated that he had a suggestion to the Commission that under no circumstance should the Commission approve a plan that infringes on the precious few wetlands that were now part of their community.

Donna Bakr, 33071 Meadows Edge, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Ms. Baker stated that the illustrations showed mostly one-story homes, but only a few of those backed up to Pulte's property. She expressed concern that on the premium lots behind their homes, two-story homes would be built, impacting their views and privacy. She asked why Pulte could not place one-story homes on those lots, which would satisfy residents without the need for fences that could not adequately screen a second story. She added that the houses would still be built, but one-story homes would make residents happy.

Chairman Smolik noted that cluster subdivisions allowed up to 35% of lots to be cluster homes. He asked whether the calculation had always been based on the allowable number of units or the total built structures.

Director Lieber stated that, according to the Building Official, the calculation has historically been based on the allowable number of units.

Chairman Smolik remarked that if actual built units were considered, the cluster lots would be at 43%.

Director Lieber clarified that the calculation is based on the allowable units, consistent with city interpretation of the code since 1994.

Chairman Smolik acknowledged that even though one phase appears to have about 70% cluster lots, it still met code requirements overall and left evaluation to the Commission's discretion. He then asked if there were any additional questions or comments from the Commission.

Vice-Chairman Schumann asked City Engineer Eavenson whether issues raised in her presentation—including lighting, drainage, mailboxes, traffic warrants, turn lanes, and necessary waivers—should be addressed as conditions, if the Commission were to make a recommendation that evening.

City Engineer Eavenson stated that it was pertinent for those issues to be addressed in the approval process and, if needed, incorporated as conditions in the recommendation.

Council Liaison Abens stated that, as the Councilman for the area, he had received numerous complaints regarding the older cul-de-sacs deteriorating over time. He asked whether the ends of the new cul-de-sacs would be solid concrete or have islands, noting that repairs were expensive for the city.

He also expressed concern regarding fire hydrants, noting that in prior developments by Bob Schmitt Homes, hydrants were often placed inconsistently on both sides of the street, creating parking issues. He hoped Pulte would maintain hydrants on a single side.

Regarding water management, Councilman Abens noted that previous projects helped solve water issues in surrounding areas. He expressed confidence that Pulte's stormwater management plans would similarly address water concerns. He complimented Pulte's work in Pioneer Ridge and Waterbury, noting both communities were well-managed and successful.

Chairman Smolik stated he wanted to revisit some of the residents questions and turned the discussion back to Pulte.

He began by asking about the calculation of open space. He clarified that open space consists of undeveloped land, including stormwater management areas, wetlands, and common areas, and asked if anything else should be included.

Mr. Filipkowski confirmed that the definition was correct. Regarding a question about wetlands mitigation, he clarified that no wetlands directly behind anyone's lots would be impacted. The mitigation areas were located near a new cul-de-sac at the opposite end of the wetland boundary.

Chairman Smolik asked about the level of the wetlands being mitigated.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that they were Level Two isolated wetlands.

Chairman Smolik asked for an explanation of what mitigation meant.

Mr. Filipkowski explained that impacting wetlands required purchasing or preserving wetlands elsewhere, typically at a ratio of two to three times the impacted area. This process effectively "banks" wetlands elsewhere to ensure preservation, rather than simply removing them.

Chairman Smolik noted that the mitigation wetlands were typically of higher quality.

Mr. Filipkowski agreed.

Chairman Smolik asked whether stormwater would outfall to Fortune Ditch.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that while discussions were ongoing at the county level, the project's retention basins were being designed with overcapacity and slow-release systems, ensuring proper stormwater management within the development.

Chairman Smolik asked about beautifying existing wetlands.

Mr. Filipkowski explained that wetlands could not be disturbed and that a 10-foot riparian buffer would remain between the wetlands and built parcels.

Chairman Smolik asked whether any trails would go through wetlands.

Mr. Filipkowski confirmed that no trails would cross wetlands.

Chairman Smolik asked about drainage for new homes along the former soy field.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that each parcel would include a rear-yard swale to manage stormwater on-site.

Chairman Smolik raised concerns about two-story homes being located behind existing ranch homes.

Mr. Filipkowski explained that the development would comply with cluster versus single-family lot requirements and zoning regulations. The mix of homes was designed to ensure community success and variety. He noted that previous sales rates indicated that providing a variety of homes was important for the HOA's financial stability.

Chairman Smolik asked about potential additional traffic on Longbrook Drive.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that he did not foresee significant issues, noting that the traffic study did not specifically address that area.

Director Lieber raised a zoning concern regarding lots 873–875. She noted that the code requires certain setbacks to open space or single-family lots, and it appeared lot 873 may not meet those standards.

Mr. Filipkowski asked for clarification regarding whether the area was a block or open space.

Director Lieber clarified that there was a narrow 20-foot strip, with a single-family lot on the other side, meaning both setback standards would apply. She suggested this could provide additional buffer for existing homes.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that he would review the slide and discuss potential solutions. He noted discussions with residents regarding the possibility of purchasing the land back, adding plantings along the strip, and increasing landscaping for additional buffering. He emphasized that the cluster lot in question was significantly deeper than typical, so homes would not be immediately behind existing houses. He stated that they were committed to working with residents to find suitable solutions.

Mr. Thomas asked whether lot 873 would be a two-story home.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that while the product line was predominantly two-story, they could potentially offer a ranch home on that lot. He clarified that no specific commitments could be made at that early stage, but the company was committed to collaborating with residents. He also reiterated that the common area would not be disturbed and that the nearby pond was not on Pulte property.

Director Lieber stated that just to go back that the code establishes cluster setback from single family, so the Commission would have to grant an additional waiver to that area if they were to entertain the current layout. She indicated that otherwise if they did not entertain that waiver, they would need to meet the required setback or seek a variance.

Chairman Smolik stated that he understood. He asked if there were any other questions or comments

from the Commission.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that he had a question. He stated that he needed clarification on that rule set and asked if the 35 feet was from building to building or if that was from building to property line or what the specifics were of that requirement.

Director Lieber stated it was building to property line, from cluster footprint to single family property line, side or rear.

Mr. Filipkowski commented that not knowing the product that's on it, perhaps there isn't the waiver required because maybe the unit becomes less in width by way of introducing a different ranch home or whatever that might be. He stated that if that were the rule set, they would ask for a waiver on that.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were any other questions or comments from the Administration.

None were given.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were any other questions or comments from the Commission.

None were given.

Moved by Smolik and seconded by Schumann to approve with the following conditions:
1. Bagley Road at Gatestone Road will be improved with a westbound left turn lane as shown to be warranted in the Traffic Impact Study.
2. The Commission grants a waiver for minimum road radius for Longbrook Drive.
3. The Commission grants a waiver for maximum cul-de-sac length for Pleasant Ridge Circle.
4. The Commission grants a waiver for setback from cluster to single family lots in the model home park.
5. No waiver is granted for the cluster setbacks of sublot 873, which shall comply with code.
6. Streetlighting shall be the standard carriage fixture type along the roadway system and for the mailbox units.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Yes – 4 No – 1(Toth)

O 2025-154 An Ordinance Suspending By-Right Cluster Subdivisions in the R-1 Residence District and Amending Chapters 1250, 1280 and 1282 of the North Ridgeville Zoning Code.

Chairman Smolik asked Director Lieber to discuss the legislation before the Commission.

Director Lieber provided an overview of the proposed ordinance and its impact on cluster subdivisions. She explained that the ordinance would amend Chapter 1250 by deleting the second sentence in the intent section that referenced the ability to propose cluster subdivisions and amend Chapters 1280 and 1282 with a new applicability section to indicate the expansion of the respective cluster districts.

She noted that this discussion was timely, given the current meeting's focus on cluster subdivisions. The ordinance would suspend the ability of developers to obtain approval under Chapters 1280 and 1282 in the future, while preserving existing cluster regulations for previously developed neighborhoods such as Ridgefield.

Director Lieber provided a brief history of cluster subdivisions in North Ridgeville. Cluster subdivisions have been permitted by right in the R-1 District since the city adopted its first zoning code in the 1960s. The 1280 cluster style allowed a 30% reduction in lot size in exchange for a minimum open space requirement. Chapter 1282, adopted in 1994, provided greater flexibility. In recent years, developers increasingly used cluster provisions rather than traditional R-1 standards, primarily to reduce lot sizes and gain design flexibility.

She explained that while clusters were designed to be density-neutral (e.g., 2.3 units per acre under both R-1 and 1282), the preserved open space often consisted of stormwater ponds, wetlands, or narrow strips of land, which did not provide functional recreation areas or meaningful amenities. This outcome did not align with the city's original intent of creating usable open spaces while maintaining density neutrality.

Director Lieber stated that the city's zoning code rewrite was well underway, with a complete draft of 120 pages recently compiled. Under the new code, cluster developments would no longer be permitted by right. Instead, any cluster-style residential or mixed-use proposal would follow a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, requiring legislative rezoning by City Council. This approach is intended to give the Planning Commission and Council greater control over development types, density, and neighborhood character, promoting higher-quality developments.

She emphasized that the adoption process for the new code would take time due to the extent of changes, required hearings, and notifications. In the interim, existing provisions for cluster developments would remain in effect, and new projects could continue to be submitted under current rules. The ordinance would "sunset" future cluster subdivisions while preserving the R-1 District and allowing traditional subdivisions to continue.

Director Lieber clarified that the ordinance would not alter existing approvals for cluster developments, including Ridgefield, The Crossing at French Creek, Northridge Pointe, or Hampton. All previously approved clusters would remain legal and zoning-compliant, and the associated regulations would remain accessible for real estate professionals, residents, and financial institutions.

Additionally, the city plans to update maps with clear hatching or color coding to indicate which developments were approved as cluster subdivisions. This would improve documentation and public understanding, addressing confusion over lot widths and prior approvals.

Chairman Smolik stated that he thought she planned it perfect because of what was just presented to the Commission had shown why they needed to redo that.

Director Lieber noted that staff had struggled with subdivision regulations requiring only minimal preliminary submissions, such as lot layouts, two-foot contours, and a north arrow. These requirements did not allow the Commission to fully review functional and interesting open spaces or amenities at the preliminary stage. By the time plans reached the final plat stage, roads, sewers, and water systems were

already installed, limiting the ability to request changes. She stated that the proposed ordinance would address this issue.

Member Toth commented that the legislation was overdue, applauding the administration for taking steps to address these issues and expressing support for greater oversight.

Council Liaison Abens offered a different perspective, noting that he did not oppose the legislation but viewed wetlands and retention ponds as valid amenities. He explained that some residents value passive open spaces, such as areas for birdwatching or canoeing, over playgrounds or swimming pools. He emphasized the importance of preserving such spaces for recreational and environmental purposes.

Director Lieber agreed that passive open spaces and stormwater management areas were important for community health and biodiversity. However, she clarified that the problem arises when these are the only open spaces provided in a development. She explained that the code would now require at least two types of usable amenities in addition to stormwater and wetlands, ensuring developments offer functional open space beyond just passive areas.

Council Liaison Abens acknowledged this concern and noted that developments like French Creek successfully balanced passive and active open spaces, including playgrounds and wetlands.

Director Lieber further explained that under the current "by right" system, staff had limited leverage when negotiating with developers, often relying on informal requests to improve community quality. The new code would formalize these requirements, providing clear standards for usable open space and amenities.

Chairman Smolik expressed support for the changes, noting that prior interpretations of the 35% open space rule were nuanced and often technically compliant but not practical. He emphasized that the proposed ordinance serves as a temporary measure until the full legislation—already 80% complete—was reviewed and adopted.

Moved by Schuman and seconded by Toth to recommend approval of Ord. 2025-154.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Yes – 5 No – 0

O 2025-157 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 1226 Design Standards of the North Ridgeville Subdivision Regulations.

Director Lieber stated that the ordinance amends Chapter 1226, Design Standards, of the North Ridgeville Subdivision Regulations. A replacement version had been emailed to Commission members. She explained that the city routinely reviews subdivisions on sites that include wetlands, natural drainage courses, and other sensitive environmental features. Clearly identifying and keeping those features out of residential lots helps prevent grading issues, encroachments, and homeowner confusion, supports proper stormwater management, and reduces long-term maintenance issues. She noted that placing utilities in private yards or relying on homeowners to manage those areas can cause problems.

The amendment closes these gaps by turning best practices into requirements. Updates had been provided that afternoon, and she asked the City Engineer to further explain the changes.

City Engineer Eavenson stated that over the past year, she and Director Lieber had been working to ensure developers place utilities and common swales correctly. Current ordinances provided limited guidance, so compliance often relied on staff requests. She cited Pulte at Ridgefield as an example of successful compliance, with all common storm sewers and wetlands off sublots. She noted that seven fence permits were currently being issued to contractors who had encroached on common storm sewers, creating extra work for staff. By moving encroachments into common areas, she explained, future issues would be reduced, even if it meant additional HOA oversight or minor costs. She also clarified that revised language added definitions and more explicit guidance to make expectations clear for developers.

Chairman Smolik asked for questions from Commission members. None were given. He asked for clarification on the term “fen” included in the wetlands definition (along with freshwater marsh, bog, and swamp).

City Engineer Eavenson explained that a fen is a type of pooling water, and that the language was taken from EPA guidelines.

Chairman Smolik supported the effort to manage utilities, noting that easements in side yards were often overlooked, especially by DIY property owners installing fences without permits. He appreciated that the revised language included flexibility for unique situations, allowing the city engineer to approve exceptions if appropriate.

Council Liaison Abens raised the issue of old farmer drain tiles, which were often unknown until they failed. He cited examples on Lorain Road and on Mrs. Schartman’s property, noting those tiles are scattered throughout the city.

City Engineer Eavenson explained that for new residential subdivisions, staff were proactively walking property lines and working with developers to identify and address existing drain tiles, either on-site or off-site. She cited Hampton 8 as an example where the design rerouted an old drain tile.

Council Liaison Abens acknowledged that most of the problem tiles were very old, noting that residents sometimes say, “the developer told me,” which can cause confusion.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were any other questions or comments from the Commission.

None were given.

Moved by Schuman and seconded by Toth to recommend approval of Ord. 2025-157 as amended.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Yes – 5 No – 0

O 2025-159 An Ordinance Vacating a Portion of Aspen Street.

Ordinance was read.

Director Lieber stated that the city received a petition from abutting property owners on Ridgeview Boulevard to vacate a portion of Aspen Street. She explained that the 40-foot-wide right-of-way was located on the west side of Ridgeview Boulevard between addresses 5660 and 5674. The rear lot lines of the neighboring properties were adjacent to the Crossing at French Creek subdivision. No road connection from Aspen Street was proposed or desired, and the property was not needed for municipal purposes.

She noted that Section 2 of the ordinance referenced a 20-foot utility easement to the city, but it was not shown in the exhibit. Batner Ditch runs north-south along the east property line of the Crossing at French Creek, nestled within the tree line. The city preferred that the easement be designated as an access and drainage easement to allow for maintenance of the ditch, and that this designation be a condition of the vacation, prepared in accordance with the city engineer's requirements.

City Engineer Eavenson stated she had no additional comments.

Chairman Smolik asked if anyone from the general audience had questions or comments. None were given.

He then asked who would pay the recording fees.

Director Lieber stated she believed the ordinance established the procedure but was unsure of the specifics.

City Engineer Eavenson clarified that the petitioner would handle the recording and associated legwork, including working with their attorney to prepare the necessary documents. The city would not pay those fees.

Chairman Smolik confirmed that this ensured the city would not cover legal costs for the property acquisition, and the parties acquiring the real estate would be responsible. He noted that one party could not attend the meeting that evening and asked if there had been communication from the other party.

Director Lieber responded that she was not aware of any.

Chairman Smolik asked if all legal fees would be the responsibility of one party, with reimbursement from the second party handled privately.

Director Lieber stated that the city would set the conditions, and the petitioners would engage their professionals to prepare compliant documents. The city would not charge for reviewing them.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were additional questions from the Commission.

Council Liaison Abens emphasized the importance of maintaining pedestrian connectivity. He noted that part of the French Creek subdivision approval included a sidewalk through the area to allow residents to safely reach nearby schools. He explained that the city's master plan encourages connecting neighborhoods via sidewalks. With schools facing financial challenges, this pedestrian connection would provide children with a safe walking route within a two-mile radius, rather than requiring longer, less safe routes. He suggested that the vacation be approved only with an easement preserving the sidewalk.

Director Lieber stated that she did not recall a pedestrian connection being a condition of the Planning Commission's approval for the homes along that property edge. She indicated she would need to review the prior discussions to confirm any requirements.

Council Liaison Abens reiterated that he believed the sidewalk condition was part of the original approval and stressed the importance of neighborhood connectivity, especially given potential reductions in school busing. He concluded that vacating the street would be acceptable, provided an easement was maintained for the sidewalk.

Member Toth asked who would pay for it.

Council Liaison Abens stated that it would be Drees responsibility and as far as maintaining that sidewalk, it would be the HOA's responsibility, much like any of the sidewalks that were outside of the development such as along 83, that was the HOA's responsibility to keep those sidewalks clear.

City Engineer Eavenson stated that The Crossings also had a large block on the opposite side of the swale, which had already been platted, and the city did not have any rights over it. She noted that it would be very difficult at this stage to obtain rights for a pedestrian way through that common block area. She recalled that connectivity had been discussed at Rosebelle and other streets where traffic connects with the roadway network, and that sidewalk connection was being addressed. However, she did not recall a connection through this specific area being discussed and noted it would be a hardship due to the swale and the need to renegotiate rights through The Crossing's common space.

Council Liaison Abens expressed frustration, noting that during the previous Commission meeting, about a month prior, it was indicated that the sidewalk issue was resolved. He observed that sometimes conditions or amendments attached to approvals seemed to get lost.

Director Lieber stated that if a motion with conditions had been made, it would be documented, and the situation could be clarified. She added that if the Commission wished to hold the matter until the next meeting, they were still within the 60-day review period for legislation.

Member Toth stated that he believed the connection in question was at Rosebelle.

Director Lieber agreed, noting that was where the street connection was.

Council Liaison Abens clarified that while the road connection was at Rosebelle, it did not necessarily address the sidewalk connection.

Vice-Chairman Schumann suggested that, in the absence of the applicant, the matter could be tabled.

Director Lieber agreed, noting that there was nobody present in support of the application, which was another reason to consider tabling.

Chairman Smolik asked if there was already an easement in place.

City Engineer Eavenson stated that the swale running north-south behind the property was a city-owned ditch that Public Works could maintain, and she did not want to lose access for maintenance purposes.

Vice-Chairman Schumann confirmed that a 20-foot utility easement was being requested across the property.

Director Lieber stated that she was unsure how the easement language had been drafted into the ordinance, noting that the Law Department may have prepared it. The intent was to ensure a 20-foot access and drainage easement while also reviewing approvals from The Crossing at French Creek to ensure nothing was missed.

City Engineer Eavenson added that, based on a review using Google Street Maps, there were several encumbrances on the property, including a utility pole, guide wires, and trees. She recommended that the access easement be applied over the entire property, approximately 40 feet wide, to allow sufficient room for maneuvering and maintenance.

Moved by Schuman and seconded by Toth to recommend tabling Ord. 2025-159 until the next meeting.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Yes – 5 No – 0

Director Lieber stated that she hoped the Commission received and enjoyed their master plan annual report, the first of what would be many. She said that she thought it was a good way of cataloging what had been done to see how many things they were actively making progress on. She wished everyone Happy Holidays and said that she would see them in the New Year.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Smolik adjourned the meeting at 9:22 PM.

James Smolik
Chairman

Tina Wieber
Deputy Clerk of Council

Tuesday, January 13, 2026
Date Approved