

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE BOARD OF ZONING AND BUILDING APPEALS
MINUTES OF
REGULAR MEETING – THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairwoman Masterson called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL:

Present were members James Cain, Brad Weaver, Planning Commission Liaison Frank Toth, Vice-Chairman Paul Graupmann and Chairwoman Linda Masterson.

Also present were Council Liaison Cliff Winkel, Planning and Development Director Kim Lieber, Assistant Law Director Toni Morgan and Deputy Clerk of Council Tina Wieber.

MINUTES:

Regular meeting minutes of November 20, 2025

Moved by Masterson and seconded by Cain to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 20, 2025.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Yes – 5 No – 0

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:

Member Toth stated that the North Ridgeville Planning Commission took action on three items at their regularly scheduled meeting on December 9th, 2025, the first item was:

PPZ2025-0392 Ridgefield Subdivision PPN 07-00-001-00-473, Applicant: Keith Filipkowski Pulte Homes of Ohio Corp, 387 Medina Rd. Suite 1700, Medina, OH 44256. Owner: Bob Schmitt Homes Incorporated, 9095 Gatestone Road, North Ridgeville, OH 44039. Proposal consists of amendment to the preliminary plan. **PC Action:** Approved for recommendation to City Council with the following conditions:

1. Bagley Road at Gatestone Rd. will be improved with the westbound left turn lane as 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 Lot 873, which shall comply with Code.
6. Street lighting shall be standard carriage fixture type along the roadway system and for the mailbox units.

The second item was **Ordinance 2025-154, an ordinance suspending by-right cluster subdivisions in the R-1 Resident Residence District and amending Chapters 1250, 1280 and 1282 of the North Ridgeville**

Zoning Code. This legislation was introduced by Mayor Corcoran as a response to deficiencies identified through the zoning code audit, which was completed late last year. The general premise of cluster zoning is to allow smaller lot sizes than in traditional R1 zones in exchange for greater open space preservation, thus creating functional and interesting open spaces in the development. The audit found that while the city expected the housing density. Between traditional R1 development, development and cluster development to remain neutral at 2.3 units per acre. In actual practice, it has been demonstrated that stormwater ponds, wetlands and narrow, unusable strips of land were areas being set aside by developers to satisfy the 20% open area requirement of the cluster zoning. He stated that this led to developments which look and feel as if every usable area is developed, with areas unsuitable for building being documented as preserved open spaces. Moving forward, developers can still build in North Ridgeville under the R1 zoning codes. However, if they wish to include cluster lot sizes in their development, they will need to apply for legislative rezoning by City Council to planned unit development zoning. This will give both Planning Commission and City Council greater control of the residential development process. He stated that it was important to note this would not affect previously approved preliminary plats within the City, only new residential development submissions applying for approval. **PC Action:** The legislation was approved for recommendation to City Council, and he stated that he was happy to report the legislation was adopted by Council at their 12/15/2025 meeting.

The third item was **Ordinance 2025-157, an ordinance amending Chapter 1226 Design Standards of the North Ridgeville Subdivision Regulations.** He discussed that this piece of legislation was introduced by Mayor Corcoran and would strengthen the best practices currently used by the Engineering Department in subdivision review and establish those practices as requirements in the City of North Ridgeville. It would give developers clearer expectations up front, help streamline the review process, and reduce the need for planned revisions. Overall, the changes created a more predictable and consistent development process. **PC Action:** The legislation was approved for recommendation to City Council with the City Engineers proposed amendments to 1226.02. Council adopted 12/15/2025.

In addition to those three items, Director Lieber advised the Commission on an administrative approval for a Certificate of Zoning compliance for a tobacco retailer to Wild Bills Tobacco of North Ridgeville, LLC, 32327 Cook Rd., Unit 2, and an administrative approval for a Certificate of Zoning. Compliance for retail collectibles to Random Apocalypse Comics and Collectibles, 32660 Center Ridge Rd., and finally, the city released its first North Ridgeville Ready Master Plan annual report. This report details the steps taken to date to implement the North Ridgeville master plan, which was adopted by council in 2024, in categories such as land use, economy, housing, amenities, mobility, physical infrastructure and leadership. The report identifies implementation, actions and future action steps necessary to achieve the vision of the Master Plan. A surprising amount of progress has been made to date. He congratulated all involved and encouraged all residents to view the informational report found at the City's website, northridgeville.org. and the next Planning Commission meeting was scheduled for January 13th, 2026, at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers.

OTHER REPORTS OR CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairwoman Masterson asked if there were any other reports or correspondence?

Schedule BZBA 2026 Training

Director Lieber stated that she wanted to bring to the Board's attention her plans to schedule training for boards and commissions in the coming year. She explained that she intends to offer the Board a training

session in January or February. She reminded members that the first training was conducted in person, while the second was held via Zoom with the same presenter from McBride, Dale, Clarion, which proved effective.

Director Lieber stated that the training would be beneficial both for new Board members and as an annual refresher on procedures. She emphasized the value of having an expert available to answer questions.

She asked for the Board's input on whether they would prefer to schedule the training prior to a regular meeting or on a separate, alternate evening to avoid competing with regular agenda items. She stated that once the Board provides direction on its preference, staff can begin identifying potential dates.

Chairwoman Masterson stated that they would prefer to have it on a night that isn't a meeting night.

Director Lieber stated that she would work with Tina to look at some dates so maybe the end of January or beginning of February when it's kind of quiet and nobody has anything going on.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

PPZ2025-0391 John & Jennifer Phelan, 6460 Stoney Ridge Rd, PPN: 07-00-028-101-098

Proposal consists of constructing a garage. Property is zoned R-1 Residence District. Requests:

1. A variance for a garage in the front yard. Code allows garages in the rear yard only, Section 1294.03(c).
2. A 4-foot variance for height of a garage. Height of proposed garage is 19 feet, code allows 15 feet, Section 1294.03(d)(1).

Application was read.

Chairwoman Masterson asked if there was a representative for the application.

John Phelan 6460 Stoney Ridge Rd, North Ridgeville, OH 44039, was sworn in.

Chairwoman Masterson asked Director Lieber for her administrative review.

Director Lieber stated that the applicant is proposing to construct a 32-foot by 64-foot pole building on their approximately four-acre property on Stony Ridge Road. The purpose of the structure is to store recreational vehicles; therefore, under the zoning code, the building is classified as a garage. She explained that an outbuilding is defined as a storage building for purposes other than the parking of motor vehicles such as cars or trucks. As a result, the proposed structure is considered a garage, not an outbuilding.

Director Lieber noted that while there are minor variances associated with the request, the primary issue relates to building height, as the zoning code imposes a more restrictive height requirement for garages than for outbuildings. The proposed garage height is 19 feet, which exceeds the maximum permitted height of 15 feet, resulting in a four-foot height variance request.

She further explained that the dwelling is set back more than 400 feet from the right-of-way and is located approximately midway toward the rear of the lot. A significant portion of the rear yard—approximately one acre—is occupied by a pond. There is an existing detached garage located between the house and the street. City records indicate that this garage was permitted in 2001 to a previous owner; however, there is no record of a variance being granted for its placement in the front yard. Director Lieber stated that it is possible the permit was issued without that consideration.

The proposed garage would be located between the house and the existing garage, on the same side of the driveway, approximately 360 feet from the street line. Although the structure would technically be located in the front yard by definition, it would be set back a considerable distance from the road. Director Lieber noted that if the house had been built at the minimum required 50-foot setback, the proposed garage would be located in what would otherwise be considered the backyard.

Director Lieber concluded that the applicant is requesting two variances: one for front-yard placement and one for garage height.

Chairwoman Masterson noted a typo in the summary request that incorrectly listed the property as being on Bender Road.

Director Lieber responded that the error appeared only in the narrative; the public notice and cover sheet were correct.

Chairwoman Masterson stated she wanted to address the discrepancy for the record.

Director Lieber added that Ms. Wieber corrected the error online as soon as it was identified.

Chairwoman Masterson stated that the Board had received an email from Laura Shannon and asked the Assistant Law Director how such submissions should be handled.

Assistant Law Director Morgan confirmed that the email had been distributed to the Board and asked whether the members were aware of its contents.

Chairwoman Masterson replied that they were.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that the Board could consider the email.

Chairwoman Masterson noted that the author of the email chose not to attend the meeting.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that there is no rule requiring an individual to appear in person and that there is no provision prohibiting consideration of written submissions.

Chairwoman Masterson indicated that she understood the email could be accepted.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked whether Chairwoman Masterson was referring to reading the email into the record.

Chairwoman Masterson clarified that she was referring to considering the email, noting that there is no opportunity to question or verify the author.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked whether the submission had been verified.

Deputy Clerk of Council Wieber stated that while no follow-up contact was made, she did verify that the submitted address matched the property owner.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that if the Board had concerns regarding verification, it could choose not to consider the email. However, if the Board was satisfied with the verification provided, it could consider the submission and was not required to read it into the record.

Chairwoman Masterson stated that in the past she was told by her that it was just something to consider but it wasn't part of the record.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that was correct. Don't read it into the record, but you do have it and consider it if you're satisfied with it. And in the future, if you want us to do a more stringent check on that, we can do that for you.

Chairwoman Masterson asked the applicant to present his application.

Mr. Phelan stated that he and his wife have lived in North Ridgeville for 21 years. They previously lived in Meadow Lakes and had admired their current home for many years before purchasing it when it came on the market. They have lived in the home for the past six years. He explained that the property offered a balance between a rural setting and nearby neighbors, which appealed to both him and his wife.

Mr. Phelan stated that the property consists of four acres. He explained that his family has always enjoyed camping, particularly because his wife does not like to fly. As their children grew older, camping became a way for them to continue traveling and spending time together. A few years ago, they purchased a motorhome, which is currently stored outdoors on a concrete pad next to the detached garage. He stated that the motor home was a significant investment and that they would like to protect it and extend its lifespan by storing it indoors, ideally for the next 10 to 15 years as they approach retirement.

Mr. Phelan stated that he met with the Building Department and researched the requirements for constructing a 32-foot by 64-foot pole building. He explained that he limited the truss width to 36 feet to avoid the need for extensive engineering drawings. The proposed building size would allow him to store both the motorhome and a car trailer used to transport a tractor or side-by-side vehicle.

He noted that the house is set back approximately 450 feet from the road and stated that he understood why placing a garage close to the street would typically be discouraged. However, in this case, the proposed garage would be located far back from the road, tucked to the left side of the driveway, and would not negatively impact the visual appearance of the property. At the same time, the location would avoid placing the structure deep into the backyard.

Mr. Phelan explained that locating the building closer to the house would also reduce the need to extend the driveway an additional 250 to 300 feet. He stated that maneuvering a 45-foot motorhome that distance would be difficult. He also noted that the proposed location avoids underground utilities, as water and gas lines run across the driveway to the house and not beneath the proposed building site.

He explained that placing the building in the backyard presented additional challenges. Approximately one acre of the backyard is occupied by a pond, with only about one-half acre remaining as usable grass area. He stated that the property is served by a septic system that is approximately 26 years old, and while septic systems can last 25 to 50 years, he may need to relocate it in the future. He expressed concern that placing a building in the backyard would limit future options for septic placement.

Mr. Phelan also stated that the property uses geothermal heating and cooling. He explained that there is no permit record showing the exact location of the underground geothermal lines. He spoke with neighbors, including a former landowner, who estimated that the lines run near the rear fence line. He stated that placing a building or driveway in the backyard could interfere with those lines, which further influenced the decision to locate the structure closer to the house.

Mr. Phelan stated that he initially requested a height variance without knowing the exact building height, estimating it to be between 20 and 21 feet. After reviewing the notice listing the height at 19 feet, he contacted the builder and truss manufacturer and obtained diagrams, which he provided to the Board. He stated that the total building height is 22 feet, 1 inch, with 16-foot walls. He explained that this height is necessary to accommodate a 14-foot garage door, which is required for a motorhome measuring approximately 13 feet, 4 inches tall. He noted that the truss design is standard and not unusually peaked.

Director Lieber explained that zoning height is measured at the midpoint between the eaves and the roof peak for a pitched roof, which is why the zoning height was calculated as 19 feet.

Mr. Phelan stated that the proposed building would be located approximately 350 to 360 feet from the road. He explained that power lines run along the left side of the property about 25 feet from the property line, and the proposed structure would be set approximately 25 to 30 feet inside the southern property line, maintaining roughly 55 feet of separation from the house. He noted that the building would sit just left of the south side of the house and approximately 60 feet farther back than shown in earlier images.

Mr. Phelan stated that camping is a significant part of their lifestyle and that they intend to live on the property long-term. He stated that the proposed pole building would protect the motorhome from winter freeze-thaw cycles and improve its longevity.

Chairwoman Masterson stated that the Board exists to consider reasonable requests that do not meet zoning code requirements. She noted the unique characteristics of the property, including the large pond, the septic system, and the geothermal system with undocumented line placement. She stated that these factors constitute extenuating circumstances affecting the placement of the proposed structure.

Chairwoman Masterson reviewed the Duncan Factors. She read, "*Can this property yield a reasonable return?*" and stated that it could, noting that the motorhome could be parked outdoors. She added that, in her opinion, a well-maintained building would be less visually disruptive than outdoor storage. She read,

“Is the variance substantial?” and stated that while technically it is, the size of the parcel and the placement of the house support the request. She noted that if the structure were classified as an outbuilding, the variance would not be required.

Director Lieber clarified that garages are subject to stricter height limits than outbuildings and that the height variance is required because the structure is classified as a garage.

Member Weaver asked what constitutes acceptable use of an outbuilding.

Director Lieber responded that an outbuilding is intended for storage purposes other than parking motor vehicles, such as lawn equipment or personal items, and that the classification hinges on vehicle storage.

Chairwoman Masterson continued reviewing the Duncan Factors, stating that the variance would not adversely affect the delivery of government services. She acknowledged that the property owner purchased the property with knowledge of zoning restrictions and stated that while alternative placement was possible, it would be difficult given the site conditions. She asked whether any Board members had additional questions or comments.

Member Toth questioned the building height, noting the total height of 22.1 feet and asking how it related to zoning measurements.

Director Lieber reiterated that for zoning purposes, the height is measured at 19 feet.

Member Toth acknowledged the clarification and raised a question regarding sewer availability in the area.

Director Lieber stated that she was not aware of sewer service crossing the property and that if the homeowner remains on septic, it indicates no required sewer connection.

Member Cain stated that sewer lines terminate near the developments on Stony Ridge Road and are not available for properties outside those developments.

Assistant Law Director Morgan noted that there is a distance requirement for mandatory sewer connection, which she did not believe applied in this case.

Chairwoman Masterson stated that she was familiar with the property and confirmed that sewer service is not available at that location.

Mr. Phelan added that his neighbor located directly on the street also uses a septic system.

Member Toth stated that a letter submitted raised concerns about the existing garage located in the front yard and questioned why that structure was not being considered as part of the discussion.

Mr. Cain stated that he believed the proposed additional garage would be counted toward lot coverage and asked Director Lieber to confirm.

Director Lieber confirmed that it would. She explained that, due to the size of the lot, the property is subject to a 10% maximum lot coverage, and there is no limitation on the number of accessory structures. She noted that the existing detached garage in the front yard was permitted and counts toward lot coverage. The total lot coverage would remain within the 10% limit. She added that the existing garage did not receive a variance when it was constructed in 2001, making it non-conforming, but emphasized that this issue is not before the Board.

Member Toth asked whether approval of the variance would result in one conforming garage and one nonconforming garage in the front yard.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that she was unclear on the question.

Director Lieber clarified that there is an existing detached garage, and the applicant is seeking a variance for the placement and height of a second garage located behind it. The existing garage was constructed without a variance.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that variances run with the structure. She explained that the applicant is requesting variances related only to front-yard placement and height, not to size or lot coverage. She stated that those two factors are the sole considerations before the Board.

Chairwoman Masterson asked whether the existing front-yard garage had been properly permitted and inspected and questioned whether the City had failed to identify the need for a variance at the time of construction.

Director Lieber stated that the Building Official acknowledged that the issue should have been identified but explained that, in 2001, there were differing interpretations of front yard requirements. At that time, if a structure was set back beyond the required 50-foot front setback, it was considered acceptable. She explained that the current interpretation defines the front yard as the area extending from the front of the primary structure to the right-of-way. She noted that this interpretation has evolved over time and that the original garage was approved under the earlier understanding.

Chairwoman Masterson stated that she did not want to assign blame but also did not want the homeowners to be penalized for a condition they did not create.

Member Toth asked whether the garage was constructed by a previous owner.

Mr. Phelan confirmed that it was and stated that he has owned the property only since 2019.

Chairwoman Masterson asked whether any Board members had additional comments or questions.

Council Liaison Winkel stated that the proposed variance would not adversely affect the integrity or character of the neighborhood, noting that the structure would be located hundreds of feet from the street. He commented that, based on the Duncan Factor review, the request appeared to be more of a technical variance than a substantive one.

Chairwoman Masterson asked if anyone in the audience had any comments or questions.

None were given.

Moved by Cain and seconded by Masterson to approve the variance for a garage in the front yard.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Yes - 5 No - 0

Moved by Cain and seconded by Graupmann to approve the 4-foot variance for height of garage.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

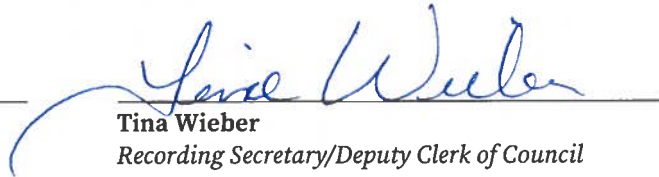
Yes - 5 No - 0

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 PM.



Linda Masterson
Chairwoman



Tina Wieber
Recording Secretary/Deputy Clerk of Council

Thursday, January 22, 2026

Date Approved