

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026**

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 Steve Ali, Frank Toth, Vice-Chairman Paul Schumann, Council Liaison Cliff Winkel, and Chairman James Smolik.

Also present were Planning & Development Director Kimberly Lieber, Assistant Law Director Toni Morgan and Deputy Clerk of Council Tina Wieber.

City Engineer Christina Eavenson was excused.

MINUTES

Chairman Smolik stated that the Commission had received the regular meeting minutes of April 14, 2026, and asked if there were any corrections.

None were given.

Chairman Smolik stated the minutes were approved as submitted.

CORRESPONDENCE

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

MDP-26-0002 - TowerCo, 37077 Shady Dr, PPN: 07-00-035-102-041

Owner: City of North Ridgeville. Proposal consists of constructing a monopole telecommunications tower at Shady Drive Complex. Property zoned R-1 Residential District.

Application was read.

Chairman Smolik asked Director Lieber for findings of fact.

Director Lieber reported that the applicant, TowerCo, is requesting approval for a new wireless cell tower on City-owned property pursuant to a ground lease agreement approved by City Council in January 2026. She explained that the proposed site is located within the Shady Drive Complex, a City-owned recreational facility designated as a permitted location for wireless telecommunications facilities under Chapter 1462 of the Codified Ordinances.

The proposed facility consists of a 185-foot monopole tower with a 4-foot lightning arrestor and associated ground-mounted equipment designed to accommodate the initial user as well as future co-location opportunities for multiple providers. The lease area is generally located in the southeast portion

of the park near the main parking lot. The equipment compound will be enclosed by an 8-foot-high wood privacy fence, consistent with Parks and Recreation preferences and intended to integrate with the park setting.

Site improvements include underground installation of all utilities and the reconstruction and expansion of a portion of the existing walking path to accommodate maintenance vehicles while maintaining overall park circulation. As part of the landscaping requirements, TowerCo proposes providing the City with a monetary contribution equal to the value of the required landscape screening, as staff determined additional screening around the wood fence would provide limited benefit at that location. The funds may be used for landscape enhancements elsewhere in the park, as determined by the Parks and Recreation Director and City Arborist.

Director Lieber stated that the applicant submitted visual simulation materials for Planning Commission review to evaluate the anticipated visual impact of the facility from surrounding viewpoints. She further noted that the tower is designed to comply with all applicable FCC standards governing radio frequency emissions and will not exceed established federal exposure limits.

She explained that the Planning Commission's review is limited to determining compliance with Chapter 1462 and applicable development standards, including site layout, access, utilities, and design, as the use of the site for a wireless communications facility was previously authorized through the ground lease agreement. Accordingly, the review should focus on whether the project meets applicable standards and is appropriately integrated into the site.

Director Lieber also noted that, following the staff review meeting, the applicant contacted staff regarding a request to use chain-link fencing on two sides of the equipment compound that are less visible from within the park. The applicant cited fire safety concerns associated with the required generator being located near a wood fence. She explained that relocating the generator further inward to avoid proximity to the wood fence could eliminate space needed for one future co-location provider, potentially reducing the tower's capacity and related revenue opportunities for the City. She stated this issue is an area for Planning Commission consideration in balancing visual screening objectives with the functional requirements of the equipment compound.

Lastly, Director Lieber stated that she had asked the applicant during the staff review process to consider installing curbing around the internal gravel surface to prevent gravel from spreading into adjacent lawn areas. She noted the applicant expressed reluctance to install curbing due to concerns about retaining water on the site, but staff remains concerned about gravel migrating into mowed areas, which could create maintenance and safety concerns.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that she would ask the Commission to give favorable consideration to the proposed chain-link fence addition due to the safety factors involved.

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

No representative of the applicant was present at the meeting.

Director Lieber stated that, during the staff review meeting, the applicant indicated that one of her colleagues would attend the hearing; however, Director Lieber had not met that individual.

Chairman Smolik asked the Assistant Law Director if it would be appropriate to table the meeting since the applicant wasn't there.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that the Commission might want to start with just moving to the next item on the agenda and giving them an opportunity to show and then decide later.

Chairman Smolik stated that, at that point in the meeting, the Commission would typically invite the applicant to present any additional findings; however, that portion of the presentation would be postponed. He then opened the floor for questions and comments from the public. He noted that the applicant was not present at the meeting and explained that City staff might or might not be able to answer all questions. He stated that staff would document any questions raised and follow up with the applicant as needed. He requested that anyone wishing to speak approach the podium, state their name and address for the record, and then provide their comments or questions.

Richard Schartman, 8576 Avon Belden Rd, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Schartman stated that some time ago there was a presentation regarding a housing development going into a neighboring property. There was also a discussion of a road that would link that property to existing streets, and he was wondering where the tower would be relative to all the other plans for a housing development.

Chairman Smolik indicated to Director Lieber that there wasn't any planned subdivision in the planning queue at this point in time and asked if that was correct.

Mr. Schartman interrupted that it may not be in the queue, but they had a presentation on it just a few weeks ago.

Director Lieber replied to clarify the location, the parking lot at the south side of the park and then you can see the 4 plex of smaller fields.

Mr. Schartman asked if she was talking about where the walking path was. He asked if she would point to it on the screen.

Director Lieber pointed at the map on the screen and stated that the access would come down Line Drive and go through the parking lot and across an enhanced driveway.

Mr. Schartman stated that what he was asking was that they were planning another development for a plot of ground that was off the picture, in the bottom corner of the picture, and there would be a street that comes across somewhere.

Chairman Smolik stated that unfortunately, they were currently there to the tower. There was nothing on the Planning Commission's agenda for a subdivision.

Mr. Schartman stated that they didn't want to put up a tower and then it conflicted with other plans. He explained that the reason he was making a fuss about it was because he didn't want his property taken by eminent domain because they didn't plan ahead as to where they were going to put their street.

Chairman Smolik explained that land development is undertaken by private individuals, not by the City. He stated that if a private individual owns a parcel of land, they may develop it in accordance with the City Code. He further noted that while the Code generally guides street locations based on potential lot layouts, the City does not dictate the exact placement of roads.

Mr. Schartman stated that the City wanted to connect that future housing development to Waterbury and that it was the City's plan not the developer's plan.

Chairman Smolik indicated that that was not before the Commission today. If there was something the administration knew about, some future street, he wasn't aware of it.

Director Lieber stated that the proposed cell tower would not prevent future connectivity from Waterbury, as it is located well north of the potential future road connection. She explained that the tower is situated off the parking lot, with access traversing through the site without relying on private property and would not impede any future connectivity plans.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that the Commission should refer to Director Lieber's notes regarding the evaluation criteria outlined in Chapter 1462 when assessing the application before them, rather than considering speculative future possibilities. She noted that it is difficult to determine what may occur in the future.

Chairman Smolik stated that was correct, because there's nothing formally brought before the board.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that it's just a guessing game, which would be inappropriate, she thought.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were any further questions or comments from the general public.

None were given.

Moved by Schumann to table the project.

Chairman Smolik asked for discussion.

None was given.

A roll call vote was taken

Yes – 5 No – 0

{Clerk Notes: Discussion was presented, and there was no debate, so the lack of a second does not affect the validity of the motion's adoption.}

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that should they show up before the end of the meeting, then the Commission could bring it back from the table and discuss it if they choose to.

MDP-26-0003 - Devin Daugherty, Pulte Homes, LLC, Ridgefield Subdivision, PPN: 07-00-001-000-473
Owner: Bob Schmitt Homes, Inc, 9095 Gatestone Rd, North Ridgeville OH 44039. Proposal consists of

entrance signage and landscape plan for Ridgefield Subdivision. Property is zoned R-1 Residence District (Chapter 1282).

Application was read.

Chairman Smolik asked Director Lieber for findings of fact.

Director Lieber stated that the applicant was requesting Planning Commission approval for the entrance monument signage and associated landscaping for the remaining phases of the Ridgefield subdivision. She clarified that the amended preliminary development plan approved at a prior meeting was not under consideration and that the Commission's review was limited to the proposed signage and landscaping.

Director Lieber explained that three sign locations were proposed: one at the future model park entrance on Gate Stone Road, one at Pleasant Ridge Circle, and one at Long Brook Drive. She stated that staff had provided the Commission with a summary table comparing the proposal to the applicable code requirements and noted that the signs complied with all requirements related to height, area, sign type, and location.

She further explained that the sign package was before the Planning Commission because only the Commission has authority to approve entrance signs for residential subdivisions. She noted that if the signs had been included as part of the preliminary development plan approval, they could have been reviewed at that time; however, the locations had not yet been identified.

Director Lieber stated that the landscaping associated with the entrance features would generally be located within HOA-maintained common areas. She noted one exception at the Gate Stone model area, where a portion of the landscaping buffer would be installed on individual model home sublots associated with the initial model park.

In addition to the landscaping around the signage areas, she explained that landscaping was proposed within a 20-foot-wide buffer area intended to screen existing homes on Long Brook Drive from future homes on Little Brook Way. She also noted that the developer had submitted a proposed street tree pattern and arrangement for the remaining phases of the subdivision.

Director Lieber stated that staff had recommended that any landscaping located on private sublots be subject to an easement and corresponding plat language to ensure ongoing maintenance and replacement responsibilities by the HOA and to prevent future homeowners from removing or disturbing the landscaping. She noted that the developer had indicated agreement with that approach and that staff recommended it as a condition of approval.

Lastly, Director Lieber stated that the City Engineer requested that all signs maintain a minimum five-foot setback from known utilities during installation. She also noted that plant materials and street tree locations may change based on availability or other factors, and any final landscaping modifications would be subject to review by the City Arborist.

Chairman Smolik asked the applicant to state their name and address for the record.

Keith Filipkowski, Pulte Homes, 387 Medina Road, Medina, Ohio 44256.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that the application before the Commission was limited to approval of the proposed monument signage and associated landscaping. He explained that the purpose of the monument signs was to provide identification and wayfinding for the Pulte model home and the various phases of construction within the development. He noted that the proposed landscaping buffers were commitments previously discussed during the amended preliminary development plan process and stated that the applicant was following through on those commitments.

Mr. Filipkowski presented an example of the existing Ridgefield monument sign and explained that the proposed signs were designed to be consistent with that style. He stated that the larger monument sign would be located at the model home entrance, while smaller arm-style signs would be installed at the two alternate entrances serving the development phases.

He then reviewed the three proposed sign locations. For the Meadows Edge entrance, he explained that the sign would be located within existing and proposed HOA common area property. He noted that a landscaping easement was being proposed to allow the HOA to professionally maintain landscaping extending along the side yard and rear area surrounding the sign.

Mr. Filipkowski next discussed the Littlebrook Way entrance, where a smaller arm-style sign would be installed within a common area parcel. He noted that no easements would be required at that location.

Finally, he reviewed the proposed sign at the entrance to Phase 18, which is currently undergoing final engineering review and expected to proceed to land development first. He stated that this location would also feature an arm-style wayfinding sign within a common area parcel.

Mr. Filipkowski concluded by stating that all sign areas and associated landscaping would be professionally maintained by the HOA.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were any questions or comments from the general audience regarding the application.

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

Ms. Dunn stated that the western and rear property lines of her property would border the proposed development. She stated that, after reviewing the plans, she did not see any proposed landscaping intended to screen the development from her property. She noted that the existing ditch running through the area of the proposed retention basin crosses her property and that a county easement would be required for its maintenance. She explained that the maintenance easement exists at the request of Bob Schmitt Homes and expressed concern that tree removal within the easement area would expose her property to views of the proposed homes, lighting, and backyards. She requested that additional trees be planted to provide screening.

Ms. Dunn also expressed concerns regarding two proposed plant species, the Japanese zelkova and Leatherleaf viburnum, stating that they are considered potentially invasive in neighboring states. She noted that the area is already impacted by invasive species prohibited under the City's master tree plan, including reed canary grass, multiflora rose, and honeysuckle, which she is actively attempting to remove from her property. She requested reconsideration of the proposed species.

Additionally, Ms. Dunn inquired about the landscaping proposed for the large retention area located in the floodplain at the southern portion of the site. She asked whether the area would consist solely of mowed grass or if wetland-appropriate plantings would be incorporated to support wildlife habitat affected by the development.

Lastly, Ms. Dunn asked whether residents would be informed of any future landscaping or planting plan revisions discussed between the developer and the City arborist due to plant availability or other factors, or if those decisions would be made administratively without further public input.

City Engineer Eavenson stated that several key items were identified during Engineering's preliminary review. She noted that all designated open space areas should include at least 20 feet of frontage or access from a public street and indicated that some of the proposed open space areas did not appear to meet this requirement.

She further explained that the existing survey did not depict a swale along the western property line; however, county aerial imagery and RGIS mapping indicate the presence of a defined swale meandering along that boundary. She requested that this feature be clearly shown on the survey and considered in the proposed grading plan to ensure that drainage flow from the Sugar Ridge Road right-of-way was not impeded.

Chairman Smolik stated that he was going to let the administration answer the question once the Arborist reviewed the plant list.

Director Lieber stated that field changes to landscaping species were generally made with City approval. She explained that the City Arborist prepares the approved street tree list and consults with developers regarding landscaping for each phase of development. If field changes are necessary, the Arborist has the authority to approve those modifications.

She further stated that the final landscaping plans would be reviewed by the Planning Commission during consideration of the final plat. At that stage, the Commission's review is generally focused on construction plans, improvement plans, and as-built conditions. She noted that while the Planning Commission could request minor additions or modifications at that time, significant or wholesale changes to the landscaping plan would be unlikely because the plans would already be substantially finalized.

Chairman Smolik stated that he would let the developer come up and speak regarding the ditch where the trees were cleared out and the general pointed landscape questions.

Mr. Filipkowski asked if before Ms. Dunn left the podium, she would mind pointing out exactly where her property was.

Ms. Dunn said yes and pointed to the area on the screen.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that the applicant was willing to work with neighboring property owners regarding buffering concerns. He explained that discussions were already ongoing with several residents within the Ridgefield community whose properties abutted the model park area and the Phase 19 entrance. He noted that, while a landscaping plan had been submitted as part of the monument sign

approval process, the applicant was continuing to work with City staff to develop a more specific buffering plan and intended to meet directly with affected homeowners to reach an agreement. He extended the same opportunity to Ms. Dunn and requested her contact information following the meeting.

Mr. Filipkowski further stated that no work would occur within designated wetland areas, noting that such disturbance would not be permitted. However, outside of wetland areas, he stated that the applicant was willing to explore additional buffering options with neighboring property owners.

Regarding concerns about potentially invasive plant species, Mr. Filipkowski stated that the applicant was open to revising the landscape plans if the City Arborist determined that any proposed species were inappropriate. He stated that alternative species could be substituted based on the Arborist's recommendations.

Finally, Mr. Filipkowski addressed questions regarding the retention basin and landscaping within common areas. He stated that no additional landscaping was currently proposed within the retention basin area. He explained that non-wetland common areas would be professionally maintained and generally planted with grass, although the specific grass type could vary depending on the location. He noted that some areas may contain taller-growing grasses intended to appear more naturalized rather than regularly manicured but stated that the overall goal was for the areas to remain aesthetically maintained.

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

None were given.

Chairman Smolik asked regarding the monument signs being located in the common area, was there language within the plat that talked about the responsibility, like protecting that landscaping or anything like that.

Mr. Filipkowski said that they didn't have a plat situated for Phases 19 and 20.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were discussions regarding putting information on there.

Mr. Filipkowski stated that they could either cover it through the HOA documents themselves, which he thought was the preferred route, but if it was necessary to put something on the plat, they could look at doing that.

Chairman Smolik commented that at the end of the day, they would be responsible for it, so wherever that information lands, and so long as it runs with the land, that's fine by us. He said that the administration liked to make sure everything is well known and that the HOA understands exactly what they are ordered to maintain.

Moved by Schumann and seconded by Toth to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. All sign placements shall maintain a minimum 5-foot setback from known utilities.

2. Proposed landscaping shall be located and designed so as not to impede access to stormwater and utility infrastructure.
3. A landscape easement with vesting language shall be included on the plat cover sheet for any phase where required landscaping is located on private sublots. The easement shall define maintenance and replacement responsibilities of the HOA and shall prohibit homeowner disturbance of the landscaped areas.
4. Final street tree locations and any changes to proposed street trees shall be approved by the City Arborist.
5. City Arborist shall review plant/tree list to make sure they are appropriate and not invasive.

A roll call vote was taken

Yes – 5 No – 0

Q 2026-45 **An Ordinance amending the zoning map of the City of North Ridgeville such that a ±12.5 acre portion of a parcel owned by the City of North Ridgeville, as more fully described in Exhibit A and depicted in Exhibit B, be rezoned from R-1 Residence District to I-2 Light Industrial District.**
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran)

Application was read.

Chairman Smolik asked Director Lieber for findings of fact.

Director Lieber explained that the City owns approximately 46 acres of industrially zoned property on Route 83 near the intersection of Sugar Ridge Road and Avon Belden Road. She stated that the City had the opportunity to purchase an additional 12.5-acre parcel from a property owner with frontage on Chestnut Ridge Road. She noted that the exhibit showed the consolidated parcel, with the addition located in the southeast corner. The red outline represented the existing property, and the proposed rezoning would classify the additional acreage as Light Industrial, consistent with the City's goal of developing an industrial park in that area.

Director Lieber further explained that sanitary sewer service is not currently available at the site; however, the City is working on a project to extend sanitary sewer service down Sugar Ridge Road, terminating across Route 83 on the east side of the street. She stated that, while there was no specific end users identified at this time, the City has proactively sought opportunities to foster economic development rather than additional residential growth and viewed this acquisition as an opportunity that should not be overlooked.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were any questions or comments from the general audience.

Larry Liszewski, 8225 Avon Belden Rd, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Liszewski stated that he had no problem with the rezoning and thought it was great. He stated that his concern was the existing area that had been rezoned because as they were building up that area the ground level in the area that they were working at was kind of up almost like a foot and all of their

properties were getting a little wet. He said that they wanted to know long term what the plans were. First, if the City had any irrigation plans back there because they were seeing some of that runoff in their backyards. And then also, know, just due to property values, they didn't really know what's going on, and asked if there would be some sort of buffer or some type of visual protection for them to protect their properties. He wondered if they could provide answers to that.

Director Lieber stated that any future industrial development would be subject to a comprehensive Planning Commission review process and would be required to comply with all applicable codes in effect at the time of development, including buffering and screening requirements between residential and non-residential uses. She noted that the City currently has buffering requirements in place for such situations and that staff were also working on code amendments intended to strengthen those screening and buffering standards.

She further stated that, because the City is the property owner, it is in a position to be more responsive to resident concerns regarding future development, including the design, end use, and overall project layout.

Regarding concerns related to runoff and current site conditions, Director Lieber stated that she could not directly address those issues at the meeting but would discuss them with the Public Works Director. She explained that the Public Works Department's current use of the site was intended as a temporary solution due to space limitations at its Ranger Way facility and noted that the long-term plan was not for those buildings to remain in permanent use by the department. She added that, as the site develops in the future, operations may be relocated and expressed hope that Public Works will eventually secure a more permanent facility. In the meantime, she stated that the City would work to ensure that temporary operations do not negatively impact neighboring properties.

Mr. Liszewski stated that everything was kept really neat there. He said that he was impressed with how they maintained everything there. He asked where they would put a road going back into there and if it would be off of 83.

Fran Gideon, 8418 Avon Belden Rd, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Ms. Gideon stated that she understood the proposal involved future development and that many details were still undetermined. She noted that she was familiar with the Street Department overflow area, as she lives across the street, and commented that it has been well maintained. However, she asked whether the location of a future roadway had been determined, expressing concern that traffic conditions in the area were already very congested.

Director Lieber stated that they didn't have any design plan, and they didn't know if there might be one user or multiple users. She said that it would require a traffic study if they were creating new roadway intersections. She stated that they didn't have any location yet and that would be part of, if there's a planning process that would come in the future it'll be largely driven by the end user that they attracted to the area.

Ms. Gideon commented, so this isn't going to be done like next year, we're going to start on this or 6 months from now. There's no actual time frame. You're just, from what I understood from reading before, you're buying it now to save it from housing developments down the road.

Director Lieber stated that that was certainly part of it and as she had mentioned, without sewer it wasn't ready for development. So, their focus right now is what could they do right now to make the site development ready, which is that sanitary sewer extension. And once that's in, then we have the ability to market the property to the development community and then consider what end uses we think are appropriate. She stated that it was not going to happen in 6 months, but something could start moving next year potentially, but the process to take a plan from concept through Planning Commission to permit, to construction, takes a while. So even if something starts moving next year, the idea that there's going to be new buildings as soon as next year is probably....

Ms. Gideon interrupted and said just speaking to what was brought up regarding sewers, she was assuming that that would probably end up having to go down both sides of 83, which would be another burden to the homeowner.

Director Lieber stated that it may or may not. She mentioned that currently it would terminate just across Sugar at 83 with a manhole on the east side but sewer might just be extended into the property, not necessarily north or south right away on 83.

Ms. Gideon mentioned that it was kind of straight across into them. She stated that they were just getting it now but asked if there were no actual plans right now.

Director Lieber stated that was correct.

Ms. Gideon asked if there would be other meetings when that came about.

Director Lieber said, absolutely.

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

Michael Kral, 35482 Chestnut Ridge Rd, North Ridgeville, OH 44039.

Mr. Kral stated that most of his questions had been answered but the only question he still had was if the land would continue to be farmed or if they would expand the City's use of it. He mentioned that it had been farmland for the entire time that he lived next door.

Director Lieber stated that the City had a lease with the farmer and it would be her intent to continue to honor that lease. She indicated that the Public Works Director and herself did battle over his desire for more space and her desire to maintain it for economic development, but she knew that they would continue to use the property. She stated that they were trying to keep their options open for future development.

Chairman Smolik asked if there were any other questions from the general audience.

None were given.

Chairman Smolik stated that as a member of the Master Plan Steering Committee, they had a lot of discussion on income tax in the City and how North Ridgeville was a bedroom community and this was one step closer to trying to get more income tax for city services. He stated that he thought it was a good

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win for the City and he was totally in favor of it. He asked if there were any other questions or comments from the Commission.

None were given.

Moved by Winkel and seconded by Schumann to recommend approval of Ordinance 2026-45.

A roll call vote was taken

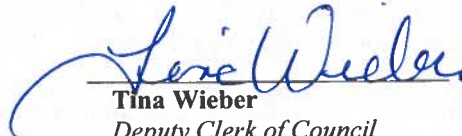
Yes - 5 No - 0

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Smolik adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.



James Smolik
Chairman



Tina Wieber
Deputy Clerk of Council

Tuesday, June 16, 2026
Date Approved