CITY OF NORTH RIDGEVILLE
HOUSING COUNCIL MEETING
April 9, 2025
1:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Corcoran at 1:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Mayor Kevin Corcoran, Member Roxann Ramsey-Caserio, Member Jennifer Swallow, Member James Smolik, Member Jacqueline, and Councilman Bruce Abens.

Also present were Finance Director April Wilkerson, Planning & Development Director Kim Lieber, Law Director Brian Moriarty, and Assistant Clerk of Council Fijabi Gallam.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

CRA Housing Council Meeting Minutes dated June 12, 2024

The minutes were approved as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Community Reinvestment Area 2024 Annual Review:

Finance Director Wilkerson presented an overview of the annual agreement.

The Housing Council reviewed the status of seven active CRA agreements. Most agreements were found to be in compliance with their terms, including school donations, reporting requirements, and employment commitments. However, two agreements—Avenue at North Ridgeville and Isomer Group (Drug Mart)—were flagged for non-compliance with their terms.

Mayor Corcoran explained that, typically, if businesses are meeting the terms of their agreements, the Housing Council would allow them to continue under those terms.

Finance Director Wilkeson noted inconsistencies in year-over-year reported employment numbers and discussed the impact of 2022 ordinance changes, which shifted the focus from employee count to payroll.

Avenue at North Ridgeville:

- Employment Requirement: 100 full-time and 20 part-time employees.
- Reported: 68 full-time and 42 part-time as of December 31, 2024. 217 full-time and 84 part-time were reported in 2023.
- Payroll: $4.3 million reported on the RITA data website, instead of $4.5 million required within its agreement for the 2024 tax year.

Finance Director Wilkerson explained that there is a significant deviation from the year prior. Avenue at North Ridgeville is currently not meeting its required numbers. The current tax data is not available at this time because the reconciliations have not been completed.

Mr. Smolik wanted to know whether the low numbers are because Avenue has employees working from home, and that is not reflected in their numbers.

Finance Director Wilkerson explained that a letter is sent out annually for businesses to certify their employment numbers as part of their agreement.

Director Lieber noted that the previous ordinance was based on the number of jobs created with a certain tier. She inquired about the minimum requirement and the tier to which they belong.

Finance Director Wilkerson explained that the ordinance requires Avenue to maintain 100 full-time and 20 part-time employees. The two factors have always been followed.

Director Lieber noted that if the Housing Council is considering revoking Avenue's CRA agreement, there may be a challenge based upon an overestimation; they are still entitled to the benefit under the previous ordinance. She advised conducting an investigation into their tier requirements. The reason the ordinance was changed was that the City received less, and the business received the same.

Mayor Corcoran believed Avenue should adhere to the agreement entered into.

The Isomer Group (Drug Mart):

Finance Director Wilkerson explained that Isomer Group has a required headcount and an estimated payroll, as outlined in the Isomer Group (Drug Mart) agreement. Director Wilkerson noted that Wendy Fanta, the School District Interim Treasurer, reported they had not received any school donations from Isomer Group to date. Furthermore, Isomer Group is not fulfilling its obligations under the agreement.

- Employment Requirement: 53 full-time and eight part-time employees.
- Reported: 23 full-time and 32 part-time.
- Payroll: $1.3 million reported vs. $1.5 million required. Isomer Group's estimates are about $1,800,000.
- School Donation: No payments made for two years—a $40,000 annual commitment.

Director Wilkerson noted that the City has had conversations with Steven Ferris, Finance and Governmental Affairs Director for Isomer Group. There is a dispute regarding the school donation from Mr. Ferris, specifically regarding when they initially applied to participate in the tax abatement program, which offered a 40/60 split. This means that whatever was abated, Isomer Group would contribute 40% of that to the schools, while Mr. Ferris wanted to maintain a 60% profit. However, the appraised value came in lower than anticipated for Drug Mart, so Mr. Ferris agreed to a flat $40,000 instead of the 40/60 split. Mr. Ferris has been attempting to have his agreement restructured; however, in the most recent conversation with Mr. Ferris, it was indicated that it would not be advantageous to the schools to restructure their agreement because the schools would fall short of about $14,000 a year. The $40,000 covers the school's abated amount.

Mrs. Wilkerson added that she had recently received a W-9 from Isomer Group to set up North Ridgeville Schools as a vendor in their system. The School District has completed the document and returned it to Isomer Group. She noted that the agreement started in 2022.

School District Superintendent Roxann Ramsey-Caserio noted that Mr. Ferris contacted Wendy Fanta via email on the morning of April 9, 2025, to complete the W-9 form, which was subsequently submitted. The School District has not received a response from Isomer Group.

Mayor Corcoran explained that during his conversation with Mr. Ferris, he mentioned that if the school donation is not made by the time the CRA Housing Council Meeting concludes, the abatement could be terminated. Mayor Corcoran noted that Isomer Group is not meeting the employee requirement and has failed to pay the school donation for two consecutive years.

Ms. Swallow added that Isomer Group has not met its required headcount for two consecutive years.

Mayor Corcoran explained that the Isomer Group could provide a $80,000 check to the School District, but that has not occurred.

Ms. Swallow wanted to know if this issue was brought up in 2024.

Finance Director Wilkerson noted that discussions with Mr. Ferris regarding this issue have been ongoing since last year. However, she was not aware until February 2025 that Isomer Group had not made any payments to the School District. The City has encouraged Isomer Group to make its school donation, which would be a good-faith effort.

Mayor Corcoran remarked that Mr. Ferris argues there is confusion about what was agreed upon with the previous mayor, Gillock, and what the signed agreement states. There have been numerous conversations with the Isomer Group, and the Isomer Group is aware of the consequences if it fails to fulfill its obligations under the terms of the agreement. Mayor Corcoran recommended that the Isomer Group agreement be terminated.

> Moved by Chairman Swallow and seconded by Smolik to approve the recommendation to terminate Isomer Group's (Drug Mart) abatement, pending final approval by City Council.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 6 No – 0

Councilman Abens wanted to know if there were any late fees for the school donation payment.

Ms. Caserio remarked that there are no late fees for submitting the school donation payment.

Continued discussion for Avenue at North Ridgeville (Avenue):

Finance Director Wilkerson explained that she does not know what reduced their staffing.

Mayor Corcoran noted that Avenue falls under the Class 3 tier—the abatement is for 100% for 15 years, which includes 100 jobs within the three years. In 2023, the requirement was met, but in 2024, they fell below the number. Typically, businesses are allowed another year of abatement before a final decision is made, as changes can occur. Currently, Avenue is 32 jobs short of the requirement, but it is making its school donation.

Mr. Smolik wanted to know if there were any discussions with Avenue regarding the decrease in employees.

Finance Director Wilkerson noted that the finance department had reached out to Avenue, and it was stated that they had misunderstood the ordinance in the 2023 reporting period. Director Wilkerson indicated that she would contact Avenue to inquire about their plans to increase employees, as Avenue is close to the $4.5 million requirement. In the previous reporting, Avenue reported significantly more employees, but the payroll was at $2.8 million.

Councilman Abens wanted to know if the change was due to an unsuccessful hiring effort or a shortage. He added that he thinks they should not penalize Avenue at North Ridgeville if they are actively trying to hire.

Ms. Swallow recommended that they give more weight to the payroll than to the number of employees.

> Moved by Chairman Mayor Corcoran and seconded by Swallow to approve the continuance of the abatement for another year, with a recommendation to follow up on discrepancies and hiring efforts.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 6 No – 0

> Moved by Mayor Corcoran and seconded by Swallow to approve Rhenium Alloys, Inc., Arc Terra, Bright Path Kid's/Previously Young Explorer's Montesorri, and Rudolph Libbe Group to continue their tax abatement agreement.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 6 No – 0

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to address, the meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Date Approved: May 19, 2026

Fijabi Gallam, MMC
Assistant Clerk of Council

City of North Ridgeville
Tax Incentive Agreements
As of December 31, 2023

Active Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)	School Donation	Last Tax Effective Year	Agreement Term	Notes
Rhenium Alloys, Inc	-	2026	2012 / 15 yrs	100% abatement through 2021 / 20% reduction anuually beginning 2022 / 2026 0%
Arc Terra	$2,500 thru 2024	2029	2020 / 10 yrs	100% abatement through 2024 / 20% reduction anuually beginning 2025 / 2029 0%
Bright Path Kid's / Previously Young Explorer's Montesorri	$10,000 thru 2026 / $5,000 2027	2031	2022 / 10 yrs	100% abatement through 2026 / 20% reduction anuually beginning 2027 to 80% / 2031 0%
Rudolph Libbe Group	-	2033	2019 / 15 yrs	100% abatement through 2028 / 20% reduction anuually beginning 2029 / 2033 0%
Lemmon & Lemmon - Danbury Senior Living	50% of school tax	2034	2020 / 15 yrs	100% abatement through 2029 / 20% reduction anuually beginning 2030 / 2034 0%
Progressive N. Ridgeville/Avenue at North Ridgeville	50% of school tax	2034	2020 / 15 yrs	Abatement 100% through 2034
Isomer Group / Discount Drug Mart	$40,000 thru 2031 / $25,000 thru 2033	2036	2022 / 15 yrs	Abatement 100% through 2036

Upcoming Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)	School Donation	Last Tax Effective Year	Agreement Term	Notes
RUF US Inc. - Anticipated project completion 12/31/2025	$10,000	2036	2026 / 10 yrs	75% abatement through 2036

Active Increment Financing Agreement (TIF)	School Donation	Last Tax Effective Year	Final Debt Service	Notes
Riddell, Inc.	50% Income Tax Share	2034	2034	25 year tax exemption

City of North Ridgeville
Tax Incentive Agreement Performance Update
As of December 31, 2023

	Per Agreement	As Reported for 12/31/2023	
Active Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)	Number of Employees	Number of Employees	Meeting Expectations
Rhenium Alloys, Inc	50	54	Yes
Arc Terra	10	20	Yes
Bright Path Kids (Previously Young Explorer's)	26	16/12	Yes
Rudolph Libbe Group	50	64	Yes
Lemmon & Lemmon - Danbury Senior Living	50	47/17	Yes
Progressive N. Ridgeville/Avenue at North Ridgeville	100	217/84	Yes
Isomer Group / Discount Drug Mart	53/8	12/38	No