

MINUTES REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

7:09 p.m.

October 21, 2025

Pursuant to Codified Ordinance Chapter 107 and ORC Section 121.22, notice of the following meeting was given on October 17, 2025.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Garry, Kary, Merhar, Sievers, Tomaselli, Anderson and Carr

Others Present: Mayor Fiala, Law Director Lucas, Service Director Palmisano, City Engineer Lannon, Fire Chief Ungar, Police Captain Davis, Chief Building & Zoning Inspector Keller, Parks & Recreation Director Keller, Clerk Novak

The meeting was led in Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilman Kary.

PUBLIC HEARING

Clerk Novak read the legal notice for the public hearing on the proposed Codified Ordinance text amendments (see attached).

Those Speaking in Favor-

Jeff Malecki, 1249 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio – Mr. Malecki expressed concerns regarding the ongoing issue of short-term rental properties in the community. He voiced frustration over investors purchasing homes for rental purposes. Mr. Malecki stated he does not oppose individuals earning income but thinks such practices diminish the sense of community. He thinks the City is at risk of losing its character and becoming overly commercialized, akin to a bed-and-breakfast destination, which he believes is inappropriate given the town's charm and appeal.

(Mr. Carr informed Mr. Malecki that he was speaking in favor of the proposal).

Those Speaking in Opposition-

No one spoke.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Merhar to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2025.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

STANDING AND REGULAR COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of Full, Mr. Carr – No report.

Economic Development Committee, Mr. Anderson – No report.

Environmental Planning Committee, Mr. Kary – No report.

Finance and Audit Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – No report.

Parks & Recreation Committee, Ms. Sievers – No report.

Personnel Committee, Mr. Merhar – No report.

Safety Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – No report.

Service Committee, Mr. Anderson – No report.

WPCC Committee, Mr. Garry – No report.

Planning Commission, Mr. Kary – No report.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Mr. Carr read into record an e-mail from Gia Raffaele regarding short term rentals (see attached Exhibit A).

PUBLIC PORTION:

Jeff Malecki, 1249 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio –

Regarding two town ditch, Mr. Malecki asked whether any progress had been made regarding cleanup and restoration efforts. He pointed out that the creek is used by the City for stormwater discharge, which he claims is causing environmental damage downstream. He stated that if water discharge harms neighboring properties, the City could be held liable. Mr. Palmisano stated that a meeting with Lake County officials was scheduled for the following week. Mr. Malecki expressed disappointment that he had not been informed of the meeting.

Mr. Malecki stated his grandchildren helped to clean up the creek area by collecting bags of trash. He stated that since the waste was not his, it should be the City's responsibility to remove it. Mr. Palmisano stated that the City would arrange for pickup.

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli that all ordinances and resolutions be read by caption only and that as to legislation not containing an emergency clause, the rules requiring that ordinances and resolutions be read on three separate days be waived.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-127

A resolution approving EAS #14-6-25(b) for the construction of four (4) townhomes consisting of two (2) duplexes located at 4317 Center Street (The Enclave at Literary Pointe Phase 2).

Motion made by Mr. Merhar and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli to adopt Resolution No. 2025-127.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-128

A resolution authorizing the Director of Parks and Recreation to prepare specifications and to advertise for bids for playground equipment and park amenities necessary to the Daniels Park Playground, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Garry that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-128 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Garry to adopt Resolution No. 2025-128.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-129

An ordinance amending Chapters 1103, 1131, 1141, and 1155 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Willoughby, Ohio titled, "Definitions", "One Family Residential Districts", "Business Districts", and "Use Specific Regulations", respectively, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Merhar to table Resolution No. 2025-129.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Fiala stated that the Lake County Commissioners will have a property tax meeting on October 27th at the Willoughby Hills Community Center from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. He stated that Lake County Auditor Chris Galloway has been very proactive in addressing property tax reform. He's working closely with a group of auditors from across Ohio who are advocating for solutions to this issue. The Lake County Commissioners are now actively participating as well.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Law Director Lucas – No report.

Service Director Palmisano – Mr. Palmisano stated that one leaf pick-up truck is out currently; there will be more trucks out after the next weekend.

City Engineer Lannon – No report.

Fire Chief Ungar – No report.

Police Captain Davis – No report.

Chief Building and Zoning Inspector Keller – No report.

Parks & Recreation Director Keller – Ms. Keller thanked Council for the passage of Resolution No. 2025-128. Mr. Carr asked about the permit for Osborne Park. Ms. Keller stated she has not received anything yet other than an e-mail stating that it's ready. She mentioned that the agency is shutdown (due to the government shutdown).

Finance Director Hoffman – Absent.

COUNCILMEN REPORTS

Ms. Sievers – No report.

Mr. Kary – No report.

Mr. Tomaselli – No report.

Mr. Merhar – No report.

Mr. Garry – No report.

Mr. Anderson – No report.

Mr. Carr – Mr. Carr mentioned the next Council meeting will be on November 18th.

The Regular Council Meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Date approved 11/14/2025



Robert E. Carr, President


Clerk of Council

Robert A. Fiala, Mayor

LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to Chapter 1115.03(f) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Willoughby, Ohio notice is hereby given of a Public Hearing to be held by the Council on Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 7:05 p.m. in the Municipal Building, One Public Square, Willoughby, Ohio.

Said hearing will be held on the following proposed text changes to the Planning and Zoning Code:

Amend Chapter 1103 titled "Definitions", specifically Section 1103.03 titled "Definitions of General Terms" adding definitions for "Hosting Platform", "Short Term Rental", and "Transient Guest"; Chapter 1131 titled "One Family Residential Districts", specifically Section 1131.03 titled "Schedule of Permitted Uses" adding schedule of permitted uses for Short Term Rental; Chapter 1141 titled "Business Districts", specifically Section 1141.03 titled "Schedule of Permitted Uses" adding schedule of permitted uses for Short Term Rental; Chapter 1155 titled "Use Specific Regulations", specifically Section 1155.04 titled "Use-Specific Regulations" adding standards and requirements for Short Term Rental.

BY ORDER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY

Alisa Novak
Clerk of Council

Publish: October 3, 2025

Exhibit A

From: Raff <raff2@prodigy.net>
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2025 4:57 PM
To: Merhar, Mike <MMerhar@WilloughbyOhio.com>; Carr, Robert <rcarr@willoughbyohio.com>; Anderson, Daniel J <djanderson@WilloughbyOhio.com>
Subject: Airbnb rentals in Willoughby

Good afternoon,

It has been rumored that discussions and voting may take place at the October 21, 2025 council meeting regarding short term rentals, a.k.a. Airbnbs in our city.

This topic hasn't been widely communicated from what I understand. After speaking to many neighbors, they reported they are not aware that this potentially could be approved for our city.

As we all struggle to keep our neighborhoods safe, keep them cohesive by knowing our neighbors and keeping an eye out for each other, I feel many property owners will be put in jeopardy due to the potential for increased crime and noise due to transient occupants.

Research has indicated Airbnbs can lessen the value of a community with fewer permanent residents and has the potential for an increase in crime. The cost of protecting our community comes from all property owners, but the permanent residents are the ones that will bear the burden since they may be negatively affected. This may lessen the attraction for families to move here if short term rentals are on streets they are interested in.

Neighbors with young children are at risk, they have no idea who is renting a nearby property. Who vets the renters, do they know if they are registered offenders, are they felons, etc.?

Will there be a restriction capping the number of days to rent an Airbnb?

Will these be zoned differently?

Will they be inspected regularly?

Will there be a cap on the number of complaints on the property before they are removed from the register to be an Airbnb?

There are many properties that are currently being used as VRBO or Airbnb locations in Willoughby, which supposedly is not permitted. A simple search online produced several. These aren't being monitored, managed, or assessed by any city ordinances or rules. The owners haven't been fined (to the best of my knowledge), so there is a lot of concern raised if these are allowed, who is managing the process, since the current state isn't being addressed?

Many of our neighboring cities have ordinances against this, why would we want to invite trouble to our city?

As taxpayers, we should have a voice and a vote regarding our peace, our health and our property. We expect our elected officials to provide and support fiduciary services for their constituents' best interests and safety.

Thank you for your consideration to perhaps table this for the time being, or to reconsider allowing short term rentals.

Gia Raffaele