

# MINUTES REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

7:14 p.m.

April 21, 2026

Pursuant to Codified Ordinance Chapter 107 and ORC Section 121.22, notice of the following meeting was given on April 17, 2026.

## ROLL CALL

**Council Members Present:** Anderson, Carr, Garry, Kary, Luciano and Sievers

**Absent:** Mr. Tomaselli

**Others Present:** Mayor Fiala, Law Director Lucas, Service Director Knecht, City Engineer Lannon, Fire Chief Ungar, Police Chief Schultz, Chief Building & Zoning Inspector Keller, Parks & Recreation Director Keller, Finance Director Hoffman, Clerk Novak

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry to excuse Councilman Tomaselli from tonight's meeting.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

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

## Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Garry and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of April 7, 2026.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 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 – Absent. Mr. Carr stated there is a meeting scheduled next week to discuss capital items.

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

**Personnel Committee, Ms. Sievers** – No report.

**Safety Committee, Mr. Tomaselli** – Absent.

**Service Committee, Mr. Anderson** – Mr. Anderson reported that members of Council recently toured stormwater sites to get an update. A follow up stormwater update was given this evening.

**WPCC Committee, Mr. Garry** – No report.

**Planning Commission, Mr. Kary** – No report.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence.

**PUBLIC PORTION:**

**Jeffrey Malecki, 1249 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio –**

Mr. Malecki stated he wanted to address the major subdivision primary plat application for the McKinley Outreach Center at 1200 Lost Nation Road. He stated this process is governed by Section 1109.07 of the City's codified ordinances, which clearly outlines the responsibilities of both the developer and the City. Notably, the electronic signature on the application is dated one year prior to the official filing date. Based on his review, several required provisions do not appear to have been followed. Under Section 1109.07(H)(3), owners of adjoining unsubdivided property must be notified at least ten days before the Planning Commission meeting; there is no evidence this occurred. He stated that in addition, Sections 1109.07(H)(4) and 1109.07(H)(5) require further review and action by the Planning Commission in accordance with the conditional use procedures outlined in Section 1109.05(C) through (H). Furthermore, Section 1109.05(E) mandates a public hearing with proper notice, including notification to property owners within 300 feet, publication in a newspaper of general circulation at least ten days in advance, and clear communication of the time, place, and nature of the proposed use. These requirements are not optional; they are essential to ensuring transparency and public participation.

**Michael Prah, 1193 South Beachview, Willoughby, Ohio -**

Mr. Prah stated he reviewed the updated zoning and it shows that the Lost Nation corridor, including the McKinley site, is within the Lakeshore Gateway District. However, because the zoning extends only 230 feet from the roadway, he stated the proposed McKinley development exceeds this limit by roughly 10 percent and intrudes into the adjacent R-50 district. Under the City's ordinances, this creates an unusual circumstance that warrants conditional use review. He stated that community support would likely be stronger if residents had meaningful input through such a process. He stated that despite references to community outreach, the surrounding neighborhood doesn't have the opportunity to benefit from it as it could in the past. Significant concerns also remain regarding density. He stated that lower-density, campus-style development with appropriate setbacks, garage parking, fewer units, and direct community engagement would be more compatible with the neighborhood.

He stated that the proposed project has generated an unprecedented level of division in his 50 years as a resident. Alternative concepts, such as age-restricted or veteran housing, may receive broader support. Comparisons to other developments are misplaced; the issue is not housing type, but neighborhood context, land-use compatibility, and public safety, which vary by location.

**Paul Zawolowycz, 1160 Elmwood Drive, Willoughby, Ohio -**

In reference to the McKinley project, Mr. Zawolowycz stated he wanted to clarify what this situation is not. This is not a case involving property that has been held within a family for multiple generations, nor is it a case where property was lawfully purchased at fair market value. He stated that the situation involves land that was transferred for a nominal fee of one dollar with the understanding that it would be used to operate a community center. Currently, the facility is open only four days per week, which is inadequate by most standards. Additionally, there are ongoing maintenance concerns, including uncut grass and accumulating trash, which are not being properly addressed. Given these issues, it appears that the terms of the original agreement are not being fulfilled, and it may be appropriate to consider terminating the arrangement.

**Michael McLaughlin, 1071 Garden Road, Willoughby, Ohio -**

Mr. McLaughlin stated that McKinley Outreach has been in place for about 13 or 14 years. When it first opened, he stated that he toured it, and at that time it offered meaningful services such as job assistance and language skills. Today, those services no longer exist. The facility is only open about four hours per week; one hour on Monday and an hour and a half on both Wednesday and Thursday. That does not allow for meaningful outreach. At this point, it functions solely as a food pantry, and even then, the limited hours make it difficult to serve many people. The building was transferred to the organization for one dollar 13 years ago, and little has been done with it since. Meanwhile, the City has successfully sold small parcels of land to fund major projects like Osborne; investing \$10–15 million to encourage growth and activity. He stated he has lived in Willoughby for 57 years and has seen that area decline. Police are frequently called to Lost Nation Road, and there was a recent homicide. This is especially concerning when nearby businesses such as Jeff's Candy Shop and Lakeshore Lounge are investing and trying to succeed.

**James Luskin, 1187 Elmwood, Willoughby, Ohio -**

Mr. Luskin stated that his property directly abuts the ravine with the proposed McKinley project. He asked what would be implemented to prevent residents or visitors from accessing the ravine. An individual could become disoriented, enter the ravine, and pass away. Mr. Luskin addressed Law Director Lucas asking if he was liable if someone died on his property. Mr. Lucas stated he would not be liable. Mr. Luskin asked if there would be preventative measures put in place. Mr. Luskin asked for written confirmation that he would not be held liable.

**Kim Dolan, 921 Windermere Drive, Willoughby, Ohio –**

Ms. Dolan stated she had a couple of questions that she still can't seem to get clear answers to. She asked how much money is the developer making especially since it was

supposed to belong to the City? Ms. Dolan stated that it feels like the north end keeps being targeted for projects that the residents have made clear they don't want. The residents have said no multiple times, yet these proposals keep coming back. She stated the facility is only open a few hours a week, it's hard to believe there's much real engagement with the neighborhood.

**Hope Raynard, 561 Tioga Trail, Willoughby, Ohio -**

Ms. Raynard stated she purchased her home eight years ago because she had heard so many positive things about Willoughby; the parks, the river, downtown, the restaurants, the sense of community. She stated she has truly enjoyed living here and has always spoken highly of the City. Downtown Willoughby feels like a classic hometown Americana at its best with the lights, flags, flowers, and the energy on Saturday mornings. She stated that over the past year and a half or two years, she's attended many of these meetings, and it has been discouraging. It often feels like residents are speaking, but not being heard. Anyone in a leadership role should listen to their constituents. Year after year, residents have clearly said they do not want this and do not believe it is good for Willoughby. She asked what is motivating Council to continue allowing these discussions when it is so clear that residents, the taxpayers and long-time members of this community feel ignored.

**Jeffrey Coreman, 38397 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio-**

Mr. Coreman stated valid concerns have already been raised, and this is now the third time this issue has come before us. He stated that citywide, low-income housing accounts for roughly 3% to 5%, yet the north end alone already approaches 9% to 10%. If the applicant wishes to pursue this type of development, there is available property behind the church that could be rezoned rather than continuing to impact adjacent residents. If this is truly meant to be a community center, it should benefit the community; not serve personal financial interests.

Mr. McLaughlin asked where in this process is the project. Mr. Carr stated Council hears the residents loud and clear. Council previously rejected the plan based on compliance with City and state laws. The applicant challenged that decision in court, dismissed the case, made revisions, and refiled the application. Mr. Lucas stated the applicants filed a notice to dismiss. The application was modified to address concerns raised during the original review and has now been refiled. It is again under consideration by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Carr stated that the Planning Commission will review the revised Environmental Assessment Statement on Thursday. If approved, the matter is expected to return to Council in approximately two weeks. He stated that Council can only act within the law. If the application complies with all ordinances, Council cannot deny it solely based on opposition, as that would likely result in further legal action. He stated that Council understands the community's frustration and will continue to ensure that all procedures are followed correctly.

**Patricia Weiss, 586 Tioga Trail, Willoughby, Ohio -**

Ms. Weiss stated she's lived in Willoughby for 51 years. Ms. Weiss stated that Section 1109.05, subsection (1), states that a conditional use must provide for the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the City's residents. Subsection (2) further requires that the use be consistent with the intent and objectives of the zoning district in which it is located. She asked if someone explain how this project aligns with the intent and objectives of the district where it is proposed. She doesn't see that connection, and she believes she is not alone. She stated that homeowners are the ones paying for decisions like this through property taxes. She understands that investment is part of community living, she doesn't see how the proposal aligns with her interests or objectives as a citizen of Willoughby. She asked whose interests it does align with because she feels there is a significant gap.

**Russell Poe, 1137 Elmwood Drive, Willoughby, Ohio -**

Mr. Poe stated that it's his understanding is that this area is zoned for single-family homes. The applicant is requesting multiple conditions to allow multifamily duplexes, with units under 800 square feet, which in his view are very small. The property could be developed as a single-family home, or even several, under the current zoning. However, duplexes are not permitted unless Council agrees to these conditions. He stated he believes those conditions should be denied.

**Bill Collins, 3849 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio -**

Mr. Collins stated that he understands Council must have valid legal reasons to deny a proposal, and that if the ordinances are met, options may be limited for Council. That said, residents have raised many concerns from zoning issues to stormwater drainage feeding into Lost Nation Road and Two Town Creek; he stated he was hoping Council might be more creative in examining those concerns to see if there is a legitimate way to stop this project. Mr. Collins stated that the area is zoned R-50, and under that zoning, two-family homes are not permitted. He doesn't understand why residents weren't consulted or asked for approval, especially when something as minor as a shed down the street required neighborhood sign-off. He stated that he is frustrated because the residents have offered many ideas without any answers.

Mr. Carr stated that when questions are raised during public comment, there usually isn't a practical way to follow up with detailed responses in this setting. He stated the best way to get a clear answer is to submit questions by email, with specific references. Mr. Carr stated that Council has taken issues raised to the Law Director for clarification when needed. For example, the R-50 conditional use for duplexes has been reviewed and addressed in writing several times. If you submit specific questions, Council can look into them and respond accordingly. Mr. Collins stated he would like to see more conversation during the public portion. Mr. Carr stated that the public comment portion of the meeting, with its three-minute time limit, is intended to allow residents to raise issues for consideration; not to facilitate extended back-and-forth discussion or lengthy dialogue. Ward meetings are a better approach.

**Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry 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      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-39**

**A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ohio Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, as successor to the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Local 1657, and Ohio Council 8 (AFSCME), necessary to modify Article 33 Wages, and declaring an emergency.**

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Sievers that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-39 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Sievers to adopt Resolution No. 2026-39.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-40**

**A resolution authorizing the Mayor to amend the contract with NRG Business Marketing LLC to furnish natural gas and related services for the City of Willoughby’s Public Buildings by the addition of a new service location under the same terms and conditions as the current agreement, and declaring an emergency.**

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Ms. Sievers that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-40 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Ms. Sievers to adopt Resolution No. 2026-40.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-41**

**A resolution authorizing the Mayor on behalf of the City of Willoughby to participate in the ODOT Road Salt Contract awarded in 2026, and declaring an emergency.**

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-41 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry to adopt Resolution No. 2026-41.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-42**

**A resolution approving Change Order No. 1 in the SR-84 Slope Stabilization Project with Great Lakes Construction Co., and declaring an emergency.**

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Mr. Anderson that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-42 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Mr. Anderson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-42.

Roll Call      6 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

**MAYOR'S REPORT –**

Mayor Fiala asked the Council Clerk to forward him the comments submitted by Mr. Malecki. He will have the Law Department review each of those comments individually and provide a written response addressing them for the record, as well as for Councilwoman Seivers to share with her constituents. Additionally, he reminded everyone of two events taking place this Saturday. The Arbor Day celebration will begin at 11:00 a.m. At the same time, Jeff's Candies will be holding its grand opening. He encouraged Council to support Jeff's Candies first and then attend Arbor Day, as the Arbor Day celebration will continue until after 1:00 p.m.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORTS**

**Law Director Lucas** – No report. Mr. Lucas stated he wanted to acknowledge that the administration is aware of the concerns raised about R-50 zoning. Under the current zoning code, both single-family and two-family homes are permitted uses, and that provision has been in place since 1997. The City is reviewing these concerns and considering resident input as part of a broader review of the zoning code.

Ms. Sievers asked how soon can Council expect changes to the R-50 zoning language, since that seems to be a major concern? Mayor Fiala stated the full zoning review will likely take the rest of the year. However, changes specific to R-50 such as removing two-family dwellings could move forward more quickly; that process can start right away.

Mr. Lucas stated that for clarity, any changes to the zoning code would not affect applications that are already submitted. Mr. Lucas stated the process includes a public hearing before the Planning Commission, followed by a recommendation to Council. Council would then hold its own public hearing and vote. The process could take about 60 days in total. Mr. Luciano asked about changes to the code. Mayor Fiala stated that if it's urgent, the City can consider moving it forward separately, however, other zoning updates are being tracked and will be reviewed together when possible. Council will have an opportunity to review them in a work session.

**Service Director Knecht** – Mr. Knecht thanked Council for the passage of Resolution Nos. 2026-39 through 2026-42.

**City Engineer Lannon** – No report.

**Fire Chief Ungar** – No report.

**Police Chief Schultz** – No report.

**Chief Building and Zoning Inspector Keller** – Mr. Keller stated that the City has a new Zoning Inspector, Stacey Rentz, who joined the City from Willoughby Hills. She has already implemented new property-maintenance software that will improve enforcement and tracking. Letters are continuing to be sent for violations; however, Council members will no longer receive daily e-mail notifications as before. He stated they are evaluating a different notification schedule, such as periodic summaries by ward. In the meantime, if there are specific concerns, Council may contact him or Ms. Rentz directly.

Mr. Carr asked about an update on the residence along State Route 84 near the Wickliffe border where work appeared to be ongoing without permits. Mr. Keller stated work was occurring without permits, and a notice of violation has been issued and posted. The property is owned by an LLC, and compliance is required. Work activity has since stopped, and he believes the owner may be preparing to obtain proper permits. This matter is proceeding through the standard enforcement process.

Ms. Sievers asked what steps can be taken to ensure maintenance issues at the McKinley Outreach Building are addressed, including drainage concerns and a sidewalk that appears to be a tripping hazard. Mr. Keller stated that some of those items fall under the Service Department or right-of-way responsibilities. He requested the details be sent by e-mail so they can be directed appropriately. Sidewalk hazards are typically reviewed and, if they meet the required criteria, addressed. Mr. Kary stated there are also large trees down on the property that appear to have been there for a long time. He asked if they could be addressed. Mr. Keller stated, yes, those conditions can be addressed through property maintenance enforcement. He will conduct a walkthrough of that area and surrounding properties.

**Parks & Recreation Director Keller** – No report.

**Finance Director Hoffman** – No report.

**COUNCILMEN REPORTS**

**Ms. Sievers** – Ms. Sievers thanked the residents for coming to the meeting tonight.

**Mr. Kary** – No report.

**Mr. Tomaselli** – Absent.

**Mr. Luciano** – No report.

**Mr. Garry** – No report.

**Mr. Anderson** – No report.

**Mr. Carr** – No report.

*The Regular Council Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.*

Date approved 5/5/26  
  
Robert E. Carr, President

  
Clerk of Council  
  
Robert A. Fiala, Mayor