

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
POLICE DEPARTMENT TRAINING ROOM – 6:00 p.m.
Monday, February 21, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairwoman Holly Swenk called the Safety Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Members present were Chairwoman Holly Swenk, Councilman Bruce Abens, and Councilman Martin DeVries.

Also present: Mayor Kevin Corcoran, Law Director Brian Moriarty, President Jason Jacobs, Councilman Dennis Boose, Councilwoman Georgia Awig, Councilman Clifford Winkel, and Assistant Clerk of Council Fijabi Gallam.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilman Holly Swenk asked if there were any corrections to the Safety Committee Meeting Minutes dated July 11, 2022. No discussion was offered. The meeting minutes stand approved as submitted.

New Business:

Councilwoman Swenk asked if anyone from the public would like to give comments or concerns regarding T4-2023. No discussion was offered.

T 4-2023 AN ORDINANCE CREATING N.R.C.O. CHAPTER 478, REGULATING THE OPERATION OF LOW-SPEED AND UNDER-SPEED VEHICLES.
(Introduced by Councilwoman Swenk and Resident Kim Nakoff)

Councilwoman Swenk provided an overview and purpose of the legislation. Chair Swenk described that the vehicle is a modified golf car and would like to find the best way to allow low-speed and under-speed vehicles on city roads. Low-speed and under-speed vehicles are not allowed on residential streets. A resident requested there should be something in the City's Ordinance that regulates low-speed and under-speed vehicles.

Chair Swenk added that the low-speed vehicle has brake lights, rearview mirrors, and turn signals. A picture was presented to the Committee.

Chair Swenk asked if anybody on the committee had any questions or concerns regarding T 4-2023.

Councilman Abens wanted to know if the State of Ohio regulates these types of vehicles.

Law Director Brian Moriarty noted that the Ohio Revised Code Section 4511.214 talks about the operation of low-speed, under-speed, or utility vehicles. There's another provision in the revised code that gives local municipalities the ability to adopt their resolutions or ordinances to add modifications to the State regulations.

Councilman Abens wanted to know if the City is making any modifications to the Ohio Revised Code at the local level.

Mr. Moriarty suggested that the City could limit the vehicles in question to not cross streets that are 35 mph or more. This way the vehicles are always restricted to 25 mph areas.

Councilman DeVries believed the most important part of the section is that a person has to be 16 years old to have a driver's license. He added that in the southern United States, even in Florida, low-speed and under-speed vehicles are becoming more and more prominent in new Developments.

Chair Swenk asked for any other comments or questions from the committee and the administration.

Mayor Corcoran remarked that he spoke to Chief Freeman about T 4-2023. He explained that golf carts are not the only vehicles that are permitted by this ordinance. Other vehicles could be used under T 4-2023 that the City is currently receiving complaints about people driving fast in neighborhoods where it is 25 mph.

Mayor Corcoran listed the following concerns from Chief Freeman:

- Concerned about the vehicles lacking certain safety protections that regular vehicles have. For example, there's nothing on the side to prevent people from injuries in a T-bone accident. These types of cars lack a lot of safety provisions and the vehicles are not crash-rated.
- Concerned with the vehicle being on 25 mph streets.
- Concerned about the idea that the vehicles could be a danger to 16-year-olds and younger.

Chair Swenk remarked that the City could extend the age on the legislation for who is allowed to use these types of vehicles.

Councilman Boose remarked that he used to work with a dealer that sold and serviced these types of vehicles. The use of the vehicles was for lake communities, campgrounds, large factories, and places where they didn't use city streets. He added that he has some of the same concerns as the Police Chief. He expressed his concerns the police officers have to review the ownership and registration of the golf cars. Councilman Boose suggested the City to require all low-speed vehicles to get a speedometer.

Councilman Jacobs wanted to know what constitutes low speed.

Resident Kim Nakoff remarked that her vehicle can't go over 25mph and has a speedometer.

Chair Swenk wanted to add a requirement for the speedometer.

Mayor Corcoran asked if Resident Kim Nakoff had a governor on her vehicle to limit the top speed.

Resident Kim Nakoff explained that her vehicle has a governor.

Mayor Corcoran added that a governor could always be taken off. He expressed that it is always dangerous to create legislation for one person because there is a lot to consider when regulating something for about 36,000 people. He continued to caution the City Council.

Resident Kim Nakoff wanted to know the difference between a low-speed and a motorcycle that has no seat belts.

Discussion ensued on how low-speed and under-speed vehicles are not safe or is safe. Safety is the primary goal.

Chair Swenk wanted to know if the vehicles in question could ride on the Homeowners Association walking paths and sidewalks.

The answer was that it is not allowed.

Councilman Boose added that there is a difference in license qualification between a motorcycle and a low-speed vehicle.

Councilman Abens expressed that he is concerned with the residents adventuring out of their neighborhood once the vehicles become popular; however, he understands residents wanting to use them in their neighborhoods.

Councilman Boose explained that the vehicle that is owned by Resident Kim Nakoff meets all of the criteria, but he is concerned about the others that wouldn't.

Councilman Winkel noted that the ORC mentioned infants and kids in car seats and suggested that the City Council should consider regulations regarding car seats.

Councilman DeVries is concerned with policing the regulations.

Resident Kim Nakoff noted that there are several golf cars in her neighborhood. The Lorain County Sheriff would inspect the vehicles and give the resident a sticker.

Other council members expressed that there are golf cars in their communities and being used illegally.

Councilwoman Awig expressed that her concerns are regarding the safety of the vehicles.

The vehicles run on battery and not gas.

Discussions ensued regarding the safety of low-speed and under-speed vehicles.

Chair Swenk asked if anybody from the public had any comments or questions regarding T 4-2023.

Kimberley Nakoff at 37445 Tail Feather Drive, explained that the vehicle in question has more safety features than a motorcycle or anything like it. The vehicle has three-point safety belts and they are street-legal.

Chair Swenk believed more discussion is needed for T 4-2023 to talk about the suggestions Mr. Moriarty recommended.

Moved by Swenk and seconded by Abens to table T 4-2023 to a future meeting.

A voice vote was taken and the motion carried.


Yes - 3 No - 0

No further business.

Adjournment:

Chairwoman Swenk adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Date Approved:



Fijabi Gallam, MMC
Assistant Clerk of Council