

CITY OF ROCKY RIVER

May 19, 2025

The Special Meeting of Council was called to order by Mr. Furry, President of Council, at 7:00 p.m. in the David J. Cook Council Chambers.

Council Members Present: Mr. Hunt, Mrs. Gallagher, Mr. O’Boyle (arrived at 7:07 p.m.), Mr. Shipp, Mrs. Morris, Mr. Sindelar, Mr. Furry

Administration: Mayor Bobst, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Snyder

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOTION:

Moved by President Furry seconded by Mrs. Morris that the reading of the minutes of the Legislative Meeting of May 12th be waived and that the minutes be accepted.

Vote: Hunt – aye	Gallagher – aye	Shipp – aye
Morris – aye	Sindelar – aye	Furry – aye
6 – ayes	0 - nays	PASSED

PUBLIC COMMENT: Tim Furey, 19605 Beachcliff Blvd., a Green Team Member and a Bike Rocky River Member and expressed hope that tonight the City of Rocky River steps forward toward positive change in terms of multi-modal transportation in the city. This legislation, if passed, will benefit all Rocky River citizens, not just bike riders. It is a protective lane that will protect walkers, runners, skaters and cyclists. We are here to encourage Council to pass this legislation. It is a positive step to keep up with our neighbors, Westlake, Bay Village and Lakewood.

Andrea Mediate, 21246 Maplewood Drive, a Green Team and Bike Rocky River member said the first time they heard about this proposal has been over two years now. A few of them attended the Town Hall meeting in Lakewood at the Cove and she thinks a few of Council were also there. Over two years they have been attending Town Halls and City Council Meetings. They have reviewed plans and walked the plans. They have surveyed residents and shared the results on the great need for safer streets in our city. This week alone, hundreds of students have ridden their bikes to school, praying for their safety as they get to and from school. She hopes in future generations they will be riding many longer distances throughout Greater Cleveland. City Council, Mayor Bobst, this project will literally pave the way for multi-modal transportation in Rocky River and beyond. Our community will reap the benefits of this decision for generations. It seems like a small price to pay for such a long-term reward.

Paul Gallagher, 2159 Wooster Road, said he attended last week and unfortunately he is one of the people who is in opposition to this project. Mr. Gallagher requested that this be tabled until after the August Recess. He thinks there is time because many residents were not aware of this

project. It could be looked at as their fault as they don't attend the Council Meetings or read the notes, but most of this was a surprise to a lot of people he has spoken with. He is not saying no to it, he is saying a little more time is needed to examine what this will entail and he thinks \$540,000 is a big expense. He knows bicycles are very important to people but there are a lot of people who play golf but it doesn't mean there will be a nine-hole golf course on Lake Road. The Green Team and Bike Rocky River are a percentage of the people in Rocky River. He wants this project to be for the residents of Rocky River and not for a pathway from one city to another. How does this serve Rocky River people. President Furry said he had received Mr. Gallagher's letter and forwarded it to Council and the Council Clerk. He also forwarded a correspondence that is in favor of this ordinance.

- Mr. Sindelar asked if Mr. Gallagher would be for a bike lane if he has input. Mr. Sindelar said there are 22,000 residents in the city, what is the agreement we could come to where there is a good firm line. Mr. Gallagher asked if Mr. Sindelar would prefer to have it in two small groups that are determining \$540,000 for the taxpayers of Rocky River. There are many ways to ask the 22,000 by surveys and email. The Mayor said there were two surveys sent out to residents.

Emily Lyman, 21831 Addington Blvd., wanted to reiterate what Paul said. She totally agrees with him. She has lived in Rocky River since 1968 and has seen a lot of changes in the city, some good and some not so good. She is not convinced that this is what the city should do to Lake Road. If it were up on Hilliard she might not feel the same way about it. There is more room there and it would be safer. She was in Lakewood last week at the intersection of Madison and Hilliard where there is a bike lane. It is treacherous not to know where to drive, what to look at, what to look for. It is a traffic pattern that to her does not make a lot of sense. She gets that people are trying to do a good thing for people on bicycles. She has sons that ride bicycles all over and one that rides trails that are now in Cleveland thanks to the MetroParks. She would like Council to take this under consideration and perhaps reach out to more citizens because until lately she did not know about this project.

Chris Clymer, 19300 Frazier Blvd., has been following this for the last couple of years. He is a cyclist, a runner and moved to Rocky River for the MetroParks, the access to the lake and the multi-purpose trails. He lives next to where this is going in. He rides east all the time going into Cleveland and the only part of the ride he is uncomfortable with is crossing Clifton Bridge where it is one lane on both sides. It becomes a highway there. It is not safe for anybody. He thinks the calming of the traffic is a good idea. He thinks a resource is being misused. The sun setting over the river and lake is beautiful from the bridge. He is really excited about this project going in. He understands the cost; he participated in the surveys and followed the traffic studies. It seems like an easy decision to him but as somebody who lives right next to where this is going in and rides on it often, he is very strongly in favor of this.

Elizabeth Chojs, 19300 Frazier Blvd., spoke on the fact that if we are focusing on Rocky River residents specifically, she can speak to that. A primary reason she lives in Rocky River is the MetroParks, the lake and the community aspect of Rocky River. She grew up on the east side

and she loves Rocky River and loves everything it has to offer especially the community spirit. She lives by Old Rocky River for a reason. She loves the active friends she has in Rocky River. They are an active group, not all cyclists but walkers, MetroPark and lake lovers. She has never understood that interchange and she loves the aspect of the plan making that look better, but also the use for the community, the multi-purpose of it. If she is training for something, she is not riding 8 mph, she is riding 16 or 17 mph and there are strollers and all kinds of things on the multi-purpose trail. The multi-purpose lane is not a bike lane. The bridge is for everybody and this will make that a better place. She is surprised that this has not been more embraced, but also the sense that a community that is for people that want the beauty of the MetroParks and the beauty of the lake and an active engaging environment for everyone, should be embraced.

Molly Adams (Kenney), 19066 Old Detroit Rd., grew up in Rocky River and represents the Cleveland Running Community. The Running Community in Cleveland is booming. Just this last weekend was the Cleveland Marathon and record numbers, 11,000 runners this year and she can attest to the connection to the MetroParks. Runners in Cleveland are meeting downtown and connecting through the MetroParks great infrastructure that is expanding east and south all the way through to Akron on the towpath. It would be wonderful to see the connections come through with Second Sole Running Club which do routes between here and south to Tyler Barn and to Berea. This would be an extension through the investments already made to BradStreet's Landing, to Huntington Beach and further west. The runners in the community also notice that there is a little bit of a segmentation. Once you move to the suburbs and head west, it is very hard to stay connected in this community. Extending this path and making this a true fluid connection, she thinks would be a good presence for connecting to the great work already going on and Rocky River contributing to those contributions. Another highlight is walkability. She would love to mention the great events going on, fundraisers on Old Detroit Road and residents that want to fluidly walk throughout the neighborhood. People are very excited to see the expansion of the new buildings on Lake Road for corporations and restaurants and bars. They are excited to see new places like Gather, The Market expanding and Tommy's. Things are going great there and this would help with safety. Public safety is the number one concern as a resident. This is a great connection from the north end of town through the other areas folks typically want to see. There are investments on Hilliard and Detroit, why not Lake Road. Why aren't we connecting more with Lakewood. She thinks the foot traffic across these bridges is something very important to note from a safety perspective. We see bikes and walkers but maybe not as much as we think we should be between Rocky River and Lakewood. This is a way to build the community from the inside out and connect with other places.

Steve Kershner, 3344 Wooster Rd., wonders about spending money for this. He does not know the finances of the city. He knows there is money going out for the Senior Center. He has lived his whole life in River and has ridden his bike for years and does not recall any problems. If he wanted to ride down Detroit Road or Hilliard, he didn't have any worries. If people are scared for their safety to ride their bike on the street he still feels that \$540,000 is a lot for something that has worked for his 57 years here. He does not see the validity of spending money on something we never needed in the past.

Ivan Kassovic, 21591 Kenwood, works for the National Parks Service. He deals with

communities that are developing trail plans much like this one. He relayed an interesting meeting he was at in a city which is the gateway to the National Park where a housing development was going in. There was some concern from the Planning Commission about some aspects of this development going in next to the National Park. During the process of question and answer, the developer was asked what about swimming pools, are they allowed on these lots. The builder said people do not want swimming pools, they want trails. People all over the place want trail connections and mostly they want trail connections to the MetroParks and to the National Park. He would say that while the city could get along without the trail project being proposed, that truly from the standpoint of an economic development project and for giving the next generation of people what they really want which is connectivity to open space and all of the great benefits that we know come with getting out in nature, that this is a worthwhile endeavor. It really is increasingly popular especially with the next generation of Rocky Riverites. Thank you for the opportunity.

PENDING BUSINESS:

Mr. Sindelar asked Director Snyder to explain how long discussion has taken place regarding this project. Director Snyder reached out to OHM Advisors who worked on the design for this project with Cuyahoga County to ask for input on timing on surveys. The initial Public Meeting took place in the City of Lakewood on October 12, 2021 followed by a Public Meeting in Rocky River on June 13, 2022. There were 30 documented attendees not including the presenters at that meeting which was followed up by an additional Public Meeting in the City of Lakewood on May 9, 2023 with 95 documented attendees and an additional Public Meeting on June 27, 2023 in Rocky River with 65 documented attendees. In addition to that, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission had a survey with signboards placed throughout the community that you could scan a QR code and there was a survey included in that. These Public Meetings were advertised on the city website with meeting notices and yard signs around the city. Most recently there was a survey with Cuyahoga County and OHM Advisors that the City of Rocky River shared on the Public Works Website.

The Mayor said that everyone was invited to all the Public Meetings with some held in Lakewood and some held in Rocky River. This came out of the Greenways Project and a Community Confluence Study and this was selected as a segment where we could achieve some connections and there were other infrastructure reasons as to why we would want to do it. There were surveys and the summary of the public comments were made public from all of the meetings. The survey results from a local organization that did their own survey and the city did their own survey in which OHM presented the results and provided guidance to City Council. There has been a thorough public process. During those meetings there were introductory remarks but there was an opportunity to go to each of the boards and talk in depth about all aspects of this project.

Mr. Sindelar said that personally he understands the aversion to change. He is a creature of habit. He is a proponent of not spending money; however, the city has money. The city spends on projects based upon not just the initial investment but what it brings to the city. We could be a city with potholes all over, high crime, dilapidated buildings, no city services or we can pick

and choose amenities that keep all 22,000 residents happy and wanting to live here. Personally, he was never a big bike lane person, but many residents have asked him about bike lanes. At some point the council must decide and you have to trust the people that were voted for into office. Director Thomas is an award-winning finance director that has never done the city wrong. He guides us and instructs us in how these things work. Residents put us in office to make them feel comfortable and Director Thomas makes Council feel comfortable for the residents. Ninety percent of the money that is spent is on infrastructure projects that no one realizes they benefit from. The Senior Center is an amenity for the seniors because they deserve it. This will beautify the area. He respects everyone's opinion. It is all public record and there is no hiding anything.

ORDINANCE NO. 23-25

BY: BRIAN J. SINDELAR

**AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND HER
DESIGNEE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY
FOR THE LAKE/CLIFTON CONNECTOR PROJECT, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO
EXCEED \$540,000.00, AS FURTHER DESCRIBED IN THE ATTACHED EXHIBIT "A"
3rd READING**

Mr. Sindelar opened this up for any comments from Council before he seeks passage.

- Mrs. Gallagher said she has been involved since October 20, 2021.
- Mrs. Morris has also been involved since October 20, 2021 and she feels this is a great investment in our future. She thinks it will attract people and connecting Rocky River with other cities on the west side, will turn the city into more of a jeweled area.
- Mr. Furry has not always been rainbows and unicorns on this project but he thinks all the pros outweigh the cons of this. He is not totally comfortable where the needs of the few outweigh the needs of the many but he thinks this is a good project to go forward with.
- The Mayor said that Councilman Sindelar mentioned that this is a beautification project. There are some aspects of it that will beautify that section of the city, but really this is about safety and infrastructure investment for storm water management. The other safety component is the north marginal, the ramp that is north to Lake Road and the bridge, that is at an angle with a merge lane and it is very difficult due to the curvature of the road and the abutments of the bridge. There are many more aspects. The Mayor has had her own hesitation with this project because she wanted a greater vision. What is going to happen with the rest of Lake Road and what makes sense and what can the city afford. Above all, her concern was the protection of \$540,000. There are a lot of things changing coming out of Washington D.C. and is this money going to make its way to this project. It is a reimbursement grant that went to ODOT. ODOT has given the administration of this project to the County and the County will commence and they will be reimbursed. If they are not reimbursed, the city now has protections thanks to Law Director O'Shea and the Law Department of Cuyahoga County that the scope of this

project will remain the scope that the city has been promised and the city will not spend one more dime. Those are the protections when it comes to dollars. Bikes have been talked about for decades. One of the important things to the Mayor was the deck of the bridge which is owned by ODOT. The original plans potentially could damage the bridge or the long-term maintenance that would have been on our backs. The Mayor said that at the initial part of this project, the city cannot do that. She wanted to see ODOT weighing in on that and signing off. The final analysis is that it will be painted with no infrastructure on it. That is an important win because in the long term it is not just \$540,000 it is what did you create that you now must maintain with taxpayer dollars. The Mayor has been very concerned about the funding of it and now has the protection that we need.

Mr. Sindelar moved for passage of Ordinance No. 23-25, seconded by Mrs. Gallagher.

Vote: Hunt – aye Gallagher – aye O’Boyle – abstain Shipp – aye
Morris – aye Sindelar – aye Furry – aye
6 – ayes 0 – nays 1 - abstain **PASSED**

President Furry asked Councilman O’Boyle to elaborate on why he abstained. Mr. O’Boyle declined further comment.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-25 **BY: DAVID W. FURRY**
AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AMENDING AMENDED ORDINANCE 20-25, FOR POSITIONS AND FIXING OR ESTABLISHING THE ANNUAL SALARIES AND HOURLY RATES COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2025 FOR THE APPOINTED EMPLOYEES IN THE SEVERAL DIVISIONS AND DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY RIVER
2nd READING

Mr. Furry will defer discussion on this to the Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting following the Special Meeting.

Mr. Furry moved to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:45 p.m.

David W. Furry
President of Council

Susan G. Pease
Clerk of Council