CITY OF ROCKY RIVER

Safety Committee Meeting
November 2, 2026

The Safety Committee Meeting was opened by Mr. Hunt at 6:00 p.m. in the David J. Cook Council Chambers.

Safety Committee Members Present: Mr. Hunt, President Shipp, Ms. Gallagher, Ms. Havemann

Council Members Present: Mr. Furry, Ms. Morris, Mr. Moran

Administration: Mayor Bobst, Chief Lichman

Councilman Hunt opened the meeting by thanking Chief Lichman for being here to go through Ordinance 72-26 which overhauls the Chapter 373 regarding bicycles and amends definitions. He suggested they get through what they can this evening and go through how the Chief laid it out in his memo. He forwarded a few emails that he received from residents regarding this issue which shows how prevalent this issue of eBikes and E-scooters are on the streets and sidewalks and interactions with residents and pedestrians. The proposed revisions are intended to modernize our regulations and incorporate applicable provisions of Ohio Law. There are some parallel processes going on in Columbus to codify statewide regulations. Public safety is the principal reason they are here tonight. These devices have become a nuisance for some and imperative necessary modes of transportation for others, but there has been some reckless and fast operation of these devices which has become such a danger that it needs to be addressed.

Mr. Hunt advised that Chapter 373, which governs motorcycles, motorized bikes, bicycles, electric bikes, low speed micromobility devices, electric personal assistive mobility devices, will be repealed and restated. Beyond that, they have a proposed amendment to 301.04 which are definitions of the various apparatus and the three classes. Exhibit C is a proposed amendment with the definition of vehicles to have some consistency with the Ohio Revised Code and the definitions contained therein. The change includes an electric bicycle but excludes an electric personal assistive mobility device and low speed micromobility device – those are distinguished. And finally, the last component of the ordinance set forth in Exhibit D is an amendment to section 331.37 addressing the operations of the bikes and electric bicycles on sidewalks including the prohibition against operating an electric bike on a sidewalk while the motor is engaged. He believes that is consistent with most of the other communities' legislation which includes the prohibition of operating an electric bike on the sidewalk while the motor is engaged

- Mayor Bobst shared that there is a taskforce formed from the Mayors and Managers Association led by Mayor Bain who did a tremendous job going through passed or pending legislation in municipalities. He organized the highlights in a spreadsheet that she'll share. Their goal is to put together a model ordinance that can be shared among communities in an effort to standardize and unify their laws. That model can then be used to the state legislature and by those who are sponsoring legislation, specifically Eric Synenberg who doesn't expect his to be considered until after the new year. She doesn't feel this means Rocky River has to tap the brakes. She doesn't feel that they should wait for state legislation to be passed and get in the way of doing some very important work locally to keep everyone safe. If they must modify their ordinance once the state passes something it won't be hard to do. Lastly, she shared an article from the Los Angeles Times, that she received from Sandy Stiassni, with the headline 'Five more O.C. parents are charged in e-motorcycle crackdown'. The parents were charged for allowing their children to operate these micromobility devices.

- Chief Lichman advised that he's not heard of parents being charged, but Bay Village was talking about that as a next step.
- Mr. Hunt advised that no matter what they do, as a body, it's incumbent upon the public and the schools to educate. A discussion followed regarding the importance of education both for students and parents. Multiple council members expressed the need to proceed with local legislation and not wait for the state.
- Councilmembers shared their own experiences with eBikes both positive and negative. They expressed sentiments about wanting to use this legislation as a tool to educate and create a safe environment for residents. Naturally police will need to enforce the laws, but they do not want them to be chasing down children on bikes.

Mr. Hunt expressed a desire to use the term electric scooter in addition to the term low speed micromobility devices. He shared that he believes this ordinance would be easier as a tool to educate if they actually used the term electric scooter. Council concurred that the vocabulary is a bit confusing to the layperson reading the ordinance.

- Chief Lichman confirmed that an electric scooter is a low speed micromobility device and that a Segway is an electric personal mobility device. He had no objection to including that language but did note that a Segway is a name brand.
- Council discussed the various classification of devices and the need for clarity.

President Shipp advised that there is another classification of devices - electric motorcycles. He remarked that e-moto is a gray area between a class 3 bike and motorcycle, but it doesn't look all that different than a motorcycle. He shared that it's often hard to tell when looking at a device on the street what class the device falls into. Legally you would need to have a license to operate, but they are not sold the same way as motorcycles are.

- Chief Lichman also shared that many devices are altered or custom made as well. He does believe that e-motos will be captured under this legislation and the same rules will apply, but to be Class 1, 2, or 3 are specific requirements and it's supposed to be labeled when sold.
- President Shipp and Chief Lichman discussed how police would differentiate between classes and determine speed of these devices.
- Chief Lichman advised that if it's on the roadway, they could be cited for speed, but if it's not on the roadway, regardless of speed if it's unsafe, they could be cited for reckless operation on private property or public property. There are tools available. This proposed ordinance did not set speed on the sidewalks, but on the roadway it's the same as any other vehicle. On sidewalks, their ordinance states 'comparable to a walking speed' whereas the states proposed a 5-mph speed on sidewalks. The state has some provisions that are stricter than what 373 proposes and they have other sections that are less strict. The state is stricter with speeds and stricter with helmets. The state is also going to have a registration requirement. If the device is going to be on a public street or highway it must be registered through the state with a sticker. If it's a class 1,2,3 eBike they are going to require, not only a driver's license if you're 16 or more, but also a safety course before you can operate. If the state passes their legislation, as written, there are other things in our legislation we may have to change because we cannot be stricter than the state. At that time, council may want to decide if they want to mimic state code.

Ms. Havemann shared that they may want to clarify the definition of an 'ordinary walking speed' suggesting perhaps 5 mph on the sidewalks, when passing someone, or if they were going over 10 mph making them ride in the street. She worries about putting children, who aren't ready, in the street. She also advised that she doesn't quite understand the difference between class 1,2,3 noting that she believes they should all require helmets under the age of 18.

- Chief Lichman advised that 5 mph is a fast walk and that the classifications they used in the ordinance mimic the state guidelines.
- Council discussed the fact that there are many, old and young, that may be nervous about going into the street. Deviating the classifications, from state law, may be problematic.
- Chief Lichman underlined the fact that regardless of classification in the proposed legislation all eBike riders are not permitted to use the motor on the sidewalk.

Chief Lichman shared that in the state's proposed legislation will require a helmet for everyone on a class 3 bike and require a helmet on class 1 and 2 bikes for those under 18.

- Mr. Moran pointed out that it's interesting that the state would require helmets for everyone on a class 3 bike, but motorcycles do not have the same requirement, even though both would be ridden in the street. With all these rules, what is the message they want to send to the youth? How do they make it consistent for the police officers to enforce.

Chief Lichman advised that ultimately, it's up to Council to determine the law for Rocky River. His thoughts are that these are difficult decisions and to err on the side of personal freedom and erring on the side of public safety and the safety of those people on those devices. Clearly the public wants some action taken so they want to do something rather than leaving it unregulated or waiting on the state to do something. If they decide to mimic what the state does, if it passes, it's reasonably comprehensive. However, if public safety was his only concern he'd want to make everyone wear a helmet, set a strict speed limit, keep them out of the roadway if under 14, no motors whatsoever on sidewalk, but they also have consider enforceability and the fact that kids are going to be kids. He doesn't know what the happy medium is, but he also knows he doesn't want residents calling and siccing the police on kids who are out playing and making noise. It's up to Council to make these decisions. Bay Village has seized some devices from kids and made the parents pick them up and their next step is to start citing parents. He advised that much of what he's written for 373 mimics the Bay ordinance.

- Council discussed helmet enforcement and potential solutions, considering both positive and negative reinforcements. They also discussed areas around town that are dangerous locations for eBike incidents mentioning Lake Rd by Lake Road Market and Gather.

Chief Lichman advised that this ordinance does not prohibit E-scooters on sidewalk only class 1,2,3 eBikes with motors engaged. The logic being they didn't want to push the E-scooters to the roadways or kids not being able to use them at all. Some kids are using these as transportation to school and other activities and they don't want their youngest riders in the street.

- Council discussed potential age restrictions for E-scooters. Chief pointed out that the state does plan to have 14 as the age for the micromobility device age which may be an issue for Rocky River.
- Chief Lichman clarified that with the proposed legislation eBikes can be on sidewalks without the motor engaged and E-scooters can be on sidewalks according to the ordinance as proposed. He shared that on school property riders are not permitted to engage the motor for any devices. He advised that the schools check in often to see where the legislation on this issue stands.

Council and Chief discussed whether riders should be required to dismount or stop at a street crossing noting that often intersections are where accidents occur. Chief Lichman clarified that the law now is that if you're a pedestrian the car only must give you the right-of-way when you are in the lane of the crosswalk that the car is in. Council discussed the fact that many pedestrians and bikers do not know these rules and the additional dangers that the flashing rapid light beacons present.

Council discussed helmet requirements, and limitations, both for regular bikes and these electric devices. Noting that often accidents are more severe with these devices as opposed to a classic standard bicycle. They also discussed the age restriction of 16 for renting segway devices, but not an age restriction on ownership. The number and nature of complaint calls about eBikes received by all departments were considered.

Mr. Moran stated that the main age group they will be legislating for is likely grades 6,7, and 8. It's unlikely they're having a major issue with elementary or high school kids. The education will need to focus on middle school.

- Chief Lichman reiterated that if the state law passes that E-scooters will have a minimum age of 14 and Rocky River won't be able to lower it. They can only change how they can enforce it.
- President Shipp and Ms. Havemann agreed that they feel the 14-age restriction is a good idea.
- The group noted that many parents consider E-scooters a toy as opposed to a device that can go 20 mph.
- Mayor Bobst noted that she's also noticed multiple kids on E-scooters which is concerning.

President Shipp inquired if anyone has any concerns about the specifics of the ordinance. He noted that on page 5 there were sections for consideration including whether they require riders to dismount or stop before crossing the street. The most common issue they see seems to be when overtaking pedestrians, which is addressed in the ordinance by making an audible signal and slowing of the speed, and what riders are doing when crossing. Another issue he doesn't know how to address is in parking lots - they are zigzagging through and it's hard to see them when pulling out. He inquired if anyone has strong feelings that aren't addressed in the ordinance.

- Mr. Moran shared that he thinks that the point of overtaking pedestrians is the most important component.
- Council discussed the importance of lighting on these devices and for safety.

Mr. Hunt advised that his main concern is when residents are coming out of businesses and are caught off-guard by kids flying by on these devices.

- Chief Lichman shared that he believes that the ordinance will help with this issue as riders should be using these devices at walking speed. He believes it's unrealistic to expect kids to get off their devices to walk down commercial streets.

As there was no further business by the Safety Committee, Chairman Hunt thanked Chief Lichman for attending this evening's meeting and then moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Gallagher.

Vote:	Moran– aye	Gallagher – aye	Hunt- aye	Shipp-aye
	Havemann – aye	Furry- aye	Morris - aye	
	7– ayes	0 – abstain	0 - nays	**PASSED**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Thomas J. Hunt
Safety Committee Chair

Lauren Oley
Clerk of Council