

**Council Work Session Minutes  
April 10, 2023**

PRESENT: Council President Rounds, Councilmen Haase, Stavole, Councilwomen Maruschak, Durichko and Walsh; Clerk of Council Allen.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Mayor Gallo, Safety Director Heffernan, Service Director Sepik, Recreation Director Bacci

The meeting was called to order by Council President Rounds at 6:01 p.m.

Council President Rounds began the discussion with an overview of why the work session was called. This work session is for discussion on the parking of commercial vehicles amendment (attached). For those of you that are in attendance tonight, I would like to give you some parameters on how this works for us tonight. This is a Council Work Session, this is an opportunity for us as council members to have a conversation about the proposed language in front of us, if you have a copy, it does say draft, so we are nowhere near where we think we're going to land. I've been advised that during a Council Work Session there is not an opportunity for public comment, again because it's our opportunity to talk amongst ourselves to decide where we're going to go with this. If you'd like to stay afterwards for the City Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. there is an opportunity during that agenda for public comment, you could stay and then share your thoughts and comments at that time. I thought I would ask Mayor Gallo for a brief overview on how or why we are where we're at with this of legislation. Mayor....

Mayor Gallo first thanked everyone that came tonight, I think this is a good opportunity for you to get clarification of what's before city council. This originated from our Building Department. Right now, we have very little regulations in place in regards to commercial vehicles in our single-family residential district. The point of this legislation is not to prohibit all commercial vehicles. The point is to enact restrictions, and it clearly states in here that this legislation is to prohibit the parking of certain commercial vehicles. We started with measurements that are in the legislation for city council to discuss. What happens when you don't have legislation in place with parameters in our single-family residential districts, semi's start showing up and as we know we have a semi now parked in a single-family residential district and other vehicles like dump trucks, that don't belong in our single-family residential districts. We looked at other surrounding cities, cities like Middleburg and Strongsville prohibits them completely, we're not here to do that. We're not here to tell you, you can't have a truck with your company name on the side, we're not getting that picky. We do want to work with people, we understand this is your livelihood, but we do have to set certain parameters. We are getting a lot of complaints from people that live in the neighborhoods about these large vehicles. When you don't have restrictions on them, it becomes a cancer. People see oh, this person has this, I'm going to bring one in and it starts to spread. We have to preserve the integrity of our neighborhoods. With that Mr. President, I turn it over to council to discuss.

Council President Rounds thanked the mayor. I'd like to do what we did with the noise ordinance we recently discussed. We gave everyone an opportunity to weigh in, what their thoughts are, where their comfort is, where they're not comfortable with, hoping that we might move ourselves along and that we might come to consensus on what our proposed language might be. I want to say this again. This is in draft form; we are not ready to vote on something for final motion but I will point out that this is an already

existing ordinance. It is 351.13 and a, b, d and e are not having any proposed changes at all. Ordinance 2021-10 was passed on February 22, 2021 sitting on council at that time was Councilmen Haase, Rounds, Stavole, Councilwomen Walsh and Gallo. The current language in “c” talks about weight of vehicles more than size and it came from the Building and Service Department that we need to look at letter “c” and see what we could do to clean that up in such a way for our departments to inspect. We’re not going to pull a truck up on a weight scale to find out if it weighs a certain amount of weight or not. Having said that we are looking specifically at letter “c” and the proposed language reads: No person, business or corporation shall park or leave standing any commercial truck, trailer or semitrailer exceeding twenty feet in length, seven feet in width and/or six feet six inches in height on any residential property within the city for any purpose or length of time other than for the expeditious unloading and delivery; pickup; and/or loading of materials. Before I open the floor to the council to weigh in on their thoughts, I do want to say to those of you that are in attendance tonight, as the mayor stated, I also appreciate you being here. This is how democracy works, this is how we hear from you and understand what your thoughts are, what your concerns are along the way, but I worry that you heard and are concerned about something that we’re not concerned about yet. So, it’s an opportunity for you to hear our conversation and then once we come to those terms then I would absolutely would expect to hear from you and you can contact any of us at any time. Councilwoman Walsh....

Councilwoman Walsh began by thanking everyone in the audience for coming. I believe I spoke to Mike, and I said you’d be able to voice your concerns, I do apologize for that.

Mike Prall responded we should be able to voice our concerns.

Councilwoman Walsh responded to the resident stating that you don’t have our packet, but there’s a couple pictures in here and .....

Council President Rounds asked Councilwoman Walsh to please have the conversation between the six of us, okay.

Councilwoman Walsh responded okay; I realize the audience doesn’t have the pictures that were provided to us. There are two trucks included that are on my street, one is of the semi and I don’t think the family knows they cannot park that there when he’s not working. I did go over and try to talk with them but no one answered. They just need to be informed. It’s brand new and it’s been there about two weeks. I’m sure there will be no problem once they are told. So that is not a good example of what is in the city and there’s another picture in here that’s also on Blossom. That house was not in good shape before these people bought it, it’s a younger couple with I believe 3 young sons, they take care of the yard, they put money into the house, they are friendly, they are the nicest neighbors and this is what he does for a living. That truck does not sit there all the time he puts it in the back on the weekend after he cleans everything out, it’s behind the setback line. I don’t have a problem with some of these vehicles, if possible, to get them behind the front of the house but to actually say you can’t have a van such as what’s in these pictures minus the semi, I really think we need to talk about it. I’m not in favor of limiting these too much. Some limitations such as the semi, but that’s already in our ordinance. I’m not interested in telling people that, this is their livelihood and they can’t park their truck here. Mike, I’m not talking about a trailer with a lawnmower on it, that’s different, but an actual van like the one in this picture, that van probably costs \$60 – 70 thousand dollars and it’s well taken care of, looks brand new. I just don’t want to do that to our residents.

Council President Rounds continued to say that this might be an opportunity for us to make some opening comments, just about our feelings as Councilwoman Walsh has done, because as I've listened to you, I think I've also heard you say but you are open to some restrictions but we don't want to over restrict. Once we have some opening comments, if anyone would like to make them, then I think we need to hone down into what are we comfortable with, what are we not comfortable with. As you stated from the pictures there are quite a few that I, myself would have a concern with and there are quite a few I do not. Just an opportunity to find a starting spot.

Councilwoman Walsh added that I would not have a problem with having vehicles parked past the setback line, you have to get your car out of view.

Council President Rounds: Anyone else? Councilman Stavole...

Councilman Stavole began with the proposed language in section "c" no person, business or corporation shall park or leave standing any commercial truck, I think that needs to be stricken because my truck is a commercial truck, but it doesn't meet all these other parameters so I think that's one of the first things that has to be fixed. To Councilwoman Walsh's point about the pounds, that depends on the vehicle. I know that the vehicle that you pointed out in this picture of that Sprinter van, I have neighbors that have that weight as their personal van because they have 12 children. Would they not be able to have their personal vehicle based on the weight? I think we need to look at weight as it affects a particular vehicle.

Council President Rounds added that in the current language there's talk of weight, in the proposed language there is no weight mentioned.

Councilman Stavole stated that maybe that's part of it, fixing some of the current language with some of the other sections. That's what I'm thinking as we go forward on this.

Councilwoman Durichko added some clarification to the discussion. As Councilman Stavole reads it there is a period after commercial truck, but the sentence continues on and there is some really important details. So, it's commercial trucks that are twenty feet in length, 7 feet in width, and 6 feet 6 inches in height. It doesn't begin and end with commercial truck, you have to include those. I just wanted to clarify that because it sounds different if you put the period in the wrong place than what the spirit of the proposed legislation is. My general thoughts on it are that of Middleburg and Strongsville's legislation maybe the most strict in the area and it's great as far as the aesthetics of the community and keeping the community looking beautiful and not like an industrial parkway, however we have a lot of things and in the spirit of being fair to the laborers that make up part of our population. How do we transition from here to there or even get close to there without impeding someone's ability to make their money? Not to sound ambiguous about it, but I'm glad that it's in committee so that we could talk through it and look forward to hearing some of the public comment in council to get an idea of the concerns lay and help us to appreciate what people's needs are. I never want to get in the way of someone's ability to make money. I don't want to discourage people from staying here or coming here but also on the other hand, part of what draws people in is a beautiful, neat community. I walk all the time, I had to go into the streets when needed but there are people with extended cabs on there pick up trucks that extend out into the sidewalk. Do they get sited for that? There's a huge safety piece to that too because I'm not a mom pushing a baby carriage, I'm not a senior citizen with compromised potentially hearing and seeing. I'm safe in doing it, but I think there's people that make up the city that aren't safe doing that. When the staff goes out, they don't have a basis to site people. There are no standards. I'm for creating standards, I would have loved the vision and spirit of

having so nice and neat like Middleburg but it's not fair to some of the folks in which they are accustomed. How do we get from here to there?

Council President Rounds: Councilwoman Maruschak....

Councilwoman Maruschak began by agreeing with Councilman Stavole maybe ANY needs to be pulled out and we need to redefine. I also agree about the working residents. I think the language is a little ambiguous I think it needs more clarity. When I looked at Parma's it kind of spells out in the bullet points of which vehicles would be allowed or no allowed in the city also including the parameters of the feet and length as well. I think that would help make a clearer ordinance and redefine it. Parma states clearly tow-trucks, dump-trucks, flat bed trucks, tractor trailer, semitrailer, stake bed trucks, box trucks buses and any vehicle transporting hazardous and flammable materials. I think something like that were there are bullet points might be good. So, if someone had a box truck but a smaller one and it was under the parameters, they could have it. And when you stated about people with their vans, that's not a commercial vehicle that's a family vehicle so that would be brought into effect as well. I really like how Parma laid theirs out and didn't leave a whole bunch of what could we have and what we could not have.

Council President Rounds turned to Councilman Haase.

Councilman Haase recapped the conversation thus far. There is a lot of work to do in terms of the language that is before us and also before we come to any conclusion. I think it's incumbent of all of us to really hammer all that out and make it as clear and concise and specific as possible. I also agree to an extent with Councilwoman Durichko on two points. I do not want to do anything to restrict someone else's ability to make a living, we're not here to do that. In my opinion that is not what we should be doing as a body. I also have concerns of the aesthetic values of the community. We have a lot of issues that are being worked on, we have a lot of people that don't necessarily maintain their homes they way that they should be, whether it's mowing their lawns or taking care of their property or whatever it happens to be and this could if not done properly add further to that concern. We don't want our community becoming blighted. I think we have a lot of work to do. I also applaud everybody for being here tonight, I appreciate that you took the time out of your busy schedules and your days to be here. That speaks volumes to me about how important a decision is to you. I've had a number of calls from residents in my Ward and they are very concerned that we're going to do something that's going to impede their ability to make a living and I'm not in favor of that at all. The power of words is a plus but it can also be a minus if we do not write this the right way and I will say that as someone who was a profession journalist for 35 years in this community. I understand the power of words and how they can hurt people, I also understand the power of words and how they can help people. It's our job to make sure this is written in such a way that it accomplishes what needs to be accomplish without being detrimental.

Council President Rounds added that he hears his colleagues all saying the same thing. We want to but we don't want to. We have to but we have to be careful about what we. I appreciate that because I feel consensus in the sense that none of us are trying to over restrict, we're not just trying to make rules because we get to, we want to be fair, and we are balancing two sides to this coin, the value of our property and what our residential neighborhoods look like with the ability to allow people who do work with vehicles such as this to be able to park them at home in the evening after a days work. Councilman Stavole, if you don't mind, you have your own business and you have a big truck that you said you were concerned it would be too big. That's not where all your equipment is, right?

Councilman Stavole replied no. That's in a different facility. Would I like to put all my equipment in my home? If that's the question, then the answers yes but it's not feasible, there's too much of it. I can't put everything in one location because then at that point I'm buying more storage and now we're getting in to the point where there's my mortgage and storage together. At some point it's not good business sense.

Council President Rounds added that's understandable. Makes sense, yeah and I know our neighborhoods or the size of our lots are, we are next to each other. In my neighborhood we are very much next to each other. Neighbors could probably reach across windows and touch hands if they needed to. But in Brunswick where I group up, the yards are bigger, the driveways are longer, the opportunity for garages are greater. That isn't our situation. Well, as Councilman Haase said we do have a lot of work to do on this and this is only our preliminary opportunity to get it out and talk about it. For our next work session if we could come ready to be more specific so that we see how quickly we might be able to work to consensus and only when we have consensus among the majority of us will we be able to move this forward for legislation to be voted on and such. Councilman Haase.....

Councilman Haase asked to reiterate from his perspective, I understand why things are set up the way they are running this particular meeting. I know that many of you wanted to have the opportunity to voice your concerns please stay for the regular meeting. From my viewpoint as somebody who is trying to work through this and figure it out to come up with the best possible solution, it's going to help me to hear what your concerns are and what this means to you if we should act in a certain way and create language that might be detrimental. It's really important that we get to hear that from you. Although I certainly respect the process, in this particular case I think we kind of put the cart before the horse. It prohibits us a little bit not being able to hear what the people are saying.

Council President Rounds responded understood. I think to the point of public comment during a Council Work Session, we wouldn't have had the opportunity to speak at all but that opportunity is provided in a few short minutes to anybody who would like to stay and share their thoughts. Having said that, can I have a motion to adjourn please. Moved by Councilman Stavole; seconded by Councilwoman Maruschak.

Clerk Allen; Roll Call: Aye: Maruschak, Durichko, Walsh, Stavole, Haase, Rounds.

Our Work Session comes to a close at 6:30 p.m.



Barbara Allen  
Clerk of Council



Tom Rounds  
Council President

