

## **Council Work Session Minutes January 26, 2026**

The Council Work Session meeting of Monday, January 26, 2026 was called to order by Council President Rounds at 6:30 p.m.

Clerk Allen: Roll Call: Maruschak, Vanek, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Durichko and Rounds.

PRESENT: Council President Rounds, Councilmen Vanek, Kolezynski, Maruschak, Palmisano, DeSouza, Durichko and Clerk of Council Allen.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Mayor Gallo, Director Satow, Service Director Sepik, Safety Director Bova

Council President Rounds began by explaining that we are here this evening to get an information from our Utilities and Streets Committee regarding section 1193.01. The committee has done a lot of good work with updating some language around fences and barriers, back in November the committee recommended three pieces of legislation to us. This item needed to go to the Planning Commission for further review. Chapters 618 and 660 have already been passed by Council. After being reviewed by the Planning Commission, I noticed that the way it reads with the alterations, residents would not be permitted to have an invisible fence in the front yard. This is why we are here discussing this further. Any thoughts from anyone else?

Councilwoman Palmisano added that she is for allowing an invisible fence in the front yards of residents. I think the reason we don't allow wooden fences or shrubbery is because it blocks the line of sight. I think it should be allowed.

Councilwoman DeSouza states that she doesn't see an issue with having an invisible fence in the front yard, but there should be a length of space between the sidewalk and the fence. We should require markers on the property. The dog should stop before the fence line, but at minimum the marker could give someone a warning that the dog should be contained.

Council President Rounds responded that in one of the other chapters, 618 or 660 does reference 6 ft. as a placement that an invisible fence would be placed before a public way. That's where we are trying to be consistent with all three pieces of legislation. I agree a fence line that is marked does provide some reassurance that the animal should stop at the invisible fence.

Councilwoman Durichko, Chairman of the Utilities and Streets Committee, shared a summary review of the work that we did and maybe some of the rationale behind why we were discouraging or not allowing invisible fences in the front yard. First point was physical limited containment; invisible fences rely on training, equipment and signals. Often times dogs can ignore these signals and then you have run-through, they would be further from the street if they were contained in a back yard. Front yards have more distractions, UPS or Amazon drivers, vehicles, people walking, another animal in the area, etc. Our number one concern was the safety for our community. Public Perception Risk; passersby can't see the barrier, even a sign might not be visible. It can cause tripping or startled behavior. Because they are placed underground, monitoring and compliance can be extremely difficult. Esthetic and Neighborhood Character: There is no structure, if you have three houses in row that all have invisible fence in the front yards and the animals are all outside barking at each other, it could cause a loss of esthetic for the community. We also talked about the shock system increasing anxiety in many dogs. It can encourage territorial behavior. Also, other animals can come into that area which can cause issues. We can't see the fence like we can in the back yards, so maybe the homeowner isn't as conscientious about picking up droppings as they should be, now the neighbors can see that and taking away from the neighborhood. We did consider the Board of Zoning Appeals being an opportunity if there's a hardship perceived or realized, that they can go and ask for a variance to our ordinance if it's approved to be a valid need by that board. Director Schneider attended our conversation and we did discuss the liability if a dog injures someone from a front yard invisible fence, which would be treated differently than other physical fences. We

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also did comparables to neighboring communities and Parma, Parma Heights, Middleburg Heights, Brook Park they don't allow fencing in the front yard but Berea, North Royalton, Strongsville will allow a certain amount of ornamental fencing but nothing for containment.

Councilman Kolezynski added that the argument for allowing fencing in the front yard relates to visual esthetics, I think as a council we'll put safety before visual esthetics. Given that there is a variance procedure built into the Board of Zoning Appeals and that other municipalities do not allow containment fencing in the front yards, I think it would be in the city's best interest to follow suit.

Councilwoman Maruschak stated that I reviewed 618.10 which was just revised with our Animal Control Officer. This item in 1193 would go against what we have in 618.10 which states that they can have an invisible fence but no less than 6 ft from the public property. I can't see not allowing people to have an invisible fence. I think 1193 should remain as it was written. Ohio Revised Code, which I know we can strengthen, 955.22C1 states that we are to "Keep the dog physically confined or restrained upon the premises of the owner, keeper, or harbinger by a leash, tether, adequate fence, supervision, or secure enclosure to prevent escape". Any other barriers that a homeowner wants to put on their property would be their liability and not the city/s, I think that should be in their hands.

Councilwoman Palmisano added that she agrees with Councilwoman Durichkos' points, but I think the intent is to manage the obstructions for line of sight or visual and if we disallow it, I think it changes the intent to manage pet ownership.

Councilman Kolezynski pointed out that we are not saying that you can't have invisible fences in the back yard, so we're not trying to tell people what they can or can't do with their pets. You can still have invisible fences in the back yard.

Councilwoman Palmisano stated that on my street there are a few homes that are set all the way back to their property line, their front yard has the space like a back yard would.

Councilman Kolezynski added that's a good point but I'd like to highlight that the Board of Zoning Appeals has procedures for someone to seek a variance if they feel it necessary.

Council President Rounds added that it's on our agenda this evening, for it's third reading. I think there is more conversation that we could have, we're just starting and not able to finish tonight. I would like to put in place Council Rule 30, 31 or 32, which gives us the opportunity to either lay on the table, postpone to a date certain, or postpone indefinitely. I would like to make a motion during the Council meeting that we postpone to a date certain. Since we have Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> saved as a Council Work Session, I'd like to add this to that agenda and have it come back March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026 to the Council Agenda for a vote at that time. I'm looking for a motion for adjournment. So moved by Councilwoman DeSouza; seconded by Councilwoman Maruschak.

Clerk Allen: Roll Call: Vanek, Palmisano, DeSouza, Kolezynski, Durichko, Maruschak, Rounds

**Meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.**



Barbara Allen  
Council Clerk



Tom Rounds  
Council President