

CITY OF MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS, OHIO

REGULAR MEETING

SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

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The Council of the City of Middleburg Heights, Ohio met in Council Chambers at City Hall on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 for the purpose of conducting a REGULAR MEETING. President of Council David Bortolotto called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:	Matthew Castelli	Mayor
	David Bortolotto	President of Council
	Dan Sage	Councilman At Large
	Bill Meany	Councilman Ward 1
	Matthew McGregor	Councilman Ward 2
	Michael Ference	Councilman Ward 3
	John Zakel	Councilman Ward 4
	Mary Ann Meola	Clerk of Council

STAFF

ATTENDING:	Myra Staresina Severyn	Assistant Law Director
	Jason Stewart	Finance Director
	Jim Herron	Service Director
	Chuck Bichara	Econ. Development Director
	Rob Swanson	Police Chief
	Mike Urban	Recreation Director

ABSENT: Councilman Tim Ali

MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Meany to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 23, 2026, minutes of the caucus meeting of June 23, 2026 and minutes of the executive session of June 23, 2026. Seconded by Mr. McGregor.

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, MINUTES APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS

Memorandum from Planning Commission dated July 9, 2026 requesting expiration date be extended for Ordinance No. 2026-31, Zoning Code edits, until October 30, 2026.

MOTION 2026-19

PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY GRANTED TO CITY COUNCIL IN SECTION 10.02(d) OF THE MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS CHARTER, MR. BORTOLOTTA MADE A MOTION TO GRANT PLANNING COMMISSION ADDITIONAL TIME, THROUGH OCTOBER 30, 2026 FOR PLANNING COMMISSION TO TAKE FINAL ACTION ON ITS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING ORDINANCE 2026-31 "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS ZONING CODE." Seconded by Mr. Ference.

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, MOTION APPROVED

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Mr. Brad Landa, 6619 Big Creek Parkway, Parma Heights, said he is disappointed in Middleburg Heights. He said for seven years he has been trying to get sidewalks installed on Pearl Road. Mr. Landa said he had mentioned this to the service department many times, and was always told there isn't funding, etc. He said he is here tonight to address the issue before everybody now, so everyone is on the same page. Mr. Landa thanked the mayor and members of council for reviewing his email this morning. He said he is here to address a severe public safety hazard along

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1 the Pearl Road corridor connecting Middleburg Heights to Strongsville, specifically
2 from Lucerne Drive past MetroHealth down to West Sprague Road. Mr. Landa
3 said there is an isolated stretch of sidewalk in front of MetroHealth, but it leads
4 directly into dirt and an unpaved shoulder on either side. He said pedestrians,
5 cyclists and transit riders trying to travel between our city and Strongsville's retail
6 hub are forced to walk or ride in heavy, high-speed traffic right through the
7 Interstate 71 interchange ramps. Mr. Landa said this corridor carries dense
8 vehicular traffic from I-71 and medical commuters visiting MetroHealth. He said
9 expecting pedestrians to navigate highway on-ramps in dirt or on active roadways
10 is a major safety risk. Mr. Landa said he appreciates the city's investment in local
11 quality of life, such as the new park near the library and infrastructure around the
12 Meijer development, but complete pedestrian safety along our primary commercial
13 arteries must be prioritized. He said a gap in the sidewalk network creates an unsafe
14 environment for anyone without a vehicle. Mr. Landa said he respectfully is asking
15 city council to review this missing segment, explore NOACA active transportation
16 grants or safe routes funding, and coordinate with ODOT regarding the highway
17 right-of-way to complete this critical sidewalk connection.

18 Mayor Castelli said his assistant, Judi, spoke to Brad earlier today as well. He
19 clarified the location, Lucerne over to Sprague Road. Mayor Castelli said they
20 have been looking at the area across from MetroHealth. He said he does agree, that
21 is an area that does not have sidewalks and does also have a stop for the RTA, where
22 you have to cross over to get to MetroHealth. Mayor Castelli said they have been
23 looking at a portion of that, adding that Mr. Landa's request is to look at the broader
24 area. He said to let city council know, this is being looked at and said it certainly
25 would be a very expensive project. Mayor Castelli said he did reach out to NOACA
26 to see if this is something that could be considered for funding. He said he will
27 explore this, and said he will connect with Mr. Landa to provide an update as to
28 where this is at and if it will move forward. Mayor Castelli said this will take time,
29 adding that this isn't an overnight project.

30 Mr. Bortolotto thanked Mr. Landa for coming forward, and said the mayor and his
31 staff will be looking into this.

32 Mr. Alan Bartuccio, 20478 Brookstone Trail, said he is present this evening with
33 other residents from Brookstone Trail. He said they have had an adjoining wooded
34 property that recently sold, with the sale pending he said they have concerns as to
35 how that is going to impact their property values and their value of life. Mr.
36 Bartuccio said one of the issues is that this property is right next to their
37 development and it is zoned general industrial, not residential. He said he has had
38 discussions with members of council over the years regarding this. Mr. Bartuccio
39 said they do not know who is purchasing this land, or what is planned to be done
40 with it. He submitted a list of their concerns, which will be attached to these
41 minutes. Mr. Bartuccio reviewed each of these items, and said they have concerns
42 being right next to general industrial. Mr. Bartuccio spoke to the mayor, Mr. Meany
43 and Mr. Ali over the years. He said this council has always been cooperative and
44 supportive of associations. Mr. Bartuccio said he is not worried about that from
45 that perspective, but he is as far as again the whole general industrial thing. He said
46 there is a lot of hush hush behind this right now because a sale is in process. Mr.
47 Bartuccio said they are looking to the city to help them with this and asked for
48 consideration to be taken.

49 Mayor Castelli thanked Mr. Bartuccio and all of the residents of Brookstone that
50 have come up. He said we have talked and are still waiting for some finality from
51 the city's perspective of exactly who is purchasing the property. Mayor Castelli
52 said he too has heard some of the rumors that are out there. He said no one has
53 formally come to us at this point to say that they own the property. Mayor Castelli
54 said his understanding is, that there is some due diligence that is taking place right
55 now in order to ultimately complete the sale of the property. He said it is possible

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1 that the sale may not be finalized, but he doesn't want to comment on that because
2 he does not know either way. Mayor Castelli said once we know for sure who owns
3 the property, it would be important for us to meet with you. He said he does feel
4 that the city should participate in any future redevelopment of that parcel. Mayor
5 Castelli said we will participate because there would need to be approvals through
6 our planning commission, board of zoning appeals etc. He said it has to come
7 through the city once they decide that they are going to build something. Mayor
8 Castelli said at that time, adjacent properties would be notified if there was variance
9 request. He said he thinks you should be kept in the loop on anything that comes
10 through our building department, making sure there is communication with the
11 future owner on what they are going to do. Mayor Castelli said as an adjacent
12 property owner, you have an interest on what is going on in the area and he wants
13 to make sure that you are kept informed and knows that Councilman Meany will
14 feel the same way about this too. He said if you are familiar with where the Silver
15 Oaks Development is, off of Hepburn/Jefferson Parkway area, and said that
16 particular development is next to general industrial. Mayor Castelli said that is a
17 development that's had potentially a similar situation. He said sometimes there are
18 challenges that come up with noise and things like that. Mayor Castelli said over
19 the years, himself as well as Councilman Meany have been involved with
20 conversations. He said the vast majority of times there aren't many issues, and said
21 his mom and sister both live in that development. Mayor Castelli said if there was
22 an issue he would usually hear about that right away. He said he knows this is a
23 serious thing and you want to make sure that you protect your property and property
24 values. Mayor Castelli said since we can't really speak to specifics tonight, the
25 communication needs to be kept open. He said he would reiterate this publically,
26 once we know for sure who owns, the sale is complete and what the proposal is, he
27 would be happy to sit down with you and have meetings either here or at your
28 association to talk through everything.

29 Mr. Meany said he spoke with Mr. Ali, who was the agent on this and said there
30 was a number of contingencies that had to be met and that could be financing,
31 insurance, licensing, etc. He said we don't know, and Mr. Ali didn't elaborate
32 because he is under a nondisclosure agreement. Mr. Meany said every rumor that
33 we hear, we try to track it down. He said he has been in touch with the mayor
34 through this whole process to see if he knew what was going on, which he did not.
35 Mr. Meany said as soon as we hear something concrete, we will be in touch.

36 Mayor Castelli said there are somethings that have been put in place recently with
37 some of our zoning updates over the years in regards to setbacks, potential barriers
38 and things that would need to be part of any future redevelopments when we have
39 these kinds of parcels that are next to each other.

40 Dr. Conrad Lindes, 13375 Old Pleasant Valley Road, had three questions and
41 referred to the legislation repairing/replacing bridges, specifically CUY-IR-71-6,
42 111 and asked where that was located. His second question was which building the
43 city was applying for a Brownfield Grant for, and thirdly, referred to the pending
44 legislation to have utilities underground on the south side of Smith Road, and asked
45 why the utilities won't be underground on the west side of Smith by the donut place
46 and all of that stuff.

47 Mayor Castelli referred to the bridge legislation said Mr. Meany and Service
48 Director Herron will talk about that in a little more detail.

49 Mr. Herron said they call it a bridge, but it is a culvert that goes under Abrams
50 Creek. He said if you know where Woodvale Cemetery is, it is the northern part of
51 their property right where they did that recent expansion project. Mr. Herron said
52 ODOT actually has to have an agreement with Woodvale to get back there to fix
53 that culvert.

54 Mayor Castelli said the Brownfield Remediation Program is that state program that
55 we used to demolish Sears and the old Burlington building, that legislation is to

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demo the old police station. He said we will talk in more detail when that legislation is introduced. Mayor Castelli said as far as the agreement with The Illuminating Company, there will be some wires that will be put underground. He said there are some poles that we did ultimately remove and even on the other side there were some wires that were put underground, but again over by Krispy Kreme we did leave a few of those up. Mayor Castelli said candidly, it was an enormous expense. He said it was well over a million dollars to get a lot of that stuff down. Mayor Castelli said the city actually paid for a decent portion to make sure that we could do that. He said that would have to be another added amount to the project. Mr. Herron said it is not just the power lines, there is Breezeline, Spectrum, AT&T, etc. and other communication providers. He said if your notice your poles now, they have multiple wires. Mr. Herron said you really would have to pay for everybody to come off that pole, it quite frankly almost made it unaffordable.

APPOINTMENTS AND CONFIRMATIONS

None.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS

CITY PARKS, RECREATION & SERVICES COMMITTEE – MR. ALL CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

FINANCE, TAXATION & ASSESSMENTS COMMITTEE – MR. BORTOLOTTI, CHAIRMAN

MOTION NO. 2026-20

MR. BORTOLOTTI MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL TO CONTINUE ALL INCENTIVES AS IDENTIFIED IN ORC 5709.85 THAT ARE CURRENTLY ACTIVE AND OFFERED IN SUBURBAN CUYAHOGA COUNTY. Seconded by Mr. Sage.

Mr. Bortolotto said this is done annually, and has to do with the Sapphire building on Engle Road and asked Mr. Bichara to explain.

Mr. Bichara said that the city reviews any type of incentive program, with respect to meeting criteria for jobs, payroll and investments. He said the city and the county do this annually, with things that affect property taxes. Mr. Bichara said this is accepting the fact that the County Tax Incentive Review Council has found that the agreement should be continued. He said this year this has to do with the Sapphire building, which is the 300,000 square foot building on Engle Road that was constructed. Mr. Bichara said they are indeed exceeding expectations as far as investment, payroll and jobs.

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, MOTION APPROVED

LEGISLATION & RULES COMMITTEE – MR. ZAKEL, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & RELIEF COMMITTEE – MR. MCGREGOR, CHAIRMAN

No legislation

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE – MR. SAGE, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

STREETS, UTILITIES & RAILROAD COMMITTEE – MR. MEANY, CHAIRMAN

Mr. Meany introduced RESOLUTION NO. 2026-48, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT (LPA-ODOT LET PROJECT AGREEMENT) TO REPAIR/REPLACE THREE

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BRIDGES ON VARIOUS ROUTES IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY, INCLUDING CUY-IR-71-6, 111 IN THE CITY OF MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND MOVED TO ADOPT. Seconded by Mr. McGregor.

Mr. Meany said this is a grant between ODOT (Ohio Department of Transportation) and the LPA (Local Public Agency), which is Middleburg Heights. He said ODOT will be restoring a culvert at the rear of Woodvale Cemetery, where it intersects I-71. Mr. Meany said federal government and/or ODOT will assume their one hundred percent of the cost of this improvement. He urged his fellow councilmen to vote for this legislation.

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, RESOLUTION NO. 2026-48 ADOPTED

ZONING & BUILDING CODE COMMITTEE – MR. FERENCE, CHAIRMAN
No legislation.

Mayor Castelli introduced RESOLUTION NO. 2026-49, A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION FOR OHIO BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND MOVED TO ADOPT. On behalf of the mayor, Mr. Bortolotto moved to adopt. Seconded by Mr. Meany.

Mayor Castelli said as was stated earlier, this is an application for a Brownfield Remediation/Demo Fund through the State of Ohio for the demolition of our old police station. He said the application deadline is September 12th, and the cost of the demolition is approximately \$400,000-\$500,000, based on some of the information that Mr. Herron has gathered. Mayor Castelli said we hope to be successful in receiving a grant to help the city with the demo. He said in addition to that, the city may also be looking at another source as well to see if there are some demo funds available through the land bank. Mayor Castelli said the city is looking at two different options for potential grant funding for the demo of the police station.

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, RESOLUTION NO. 2026-49 ADOPTED

Mayor Castelli introduced RESOLUTION NO. 2026-50, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A SUBORDINATION AGREEMENT WITH THE ILLUMINATING COMPANY FOR THE RELOCATION OF ELECTRIC FACILITIES UNDERGROUND WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AND MOVED TO ADOPT. On behalf of the mayor, Mr. Bortolotto moved to adopt. Seconded by Mr. Zakel.

Mayor Castelli said this is not new to the project, it was always part of the project. He said as we are getting towards the end of the project for some of the work that needs to be done by The Illuminating Company, they have asked for some of these agreements. Mayor Castelli said bottom line, what they are saying is we will take on this cost and put the wires/lines under the ground, but if for some reason in the future the city wants to move those wires again then it would be done at the city's cost.

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, ORDINANCE NO. 2026-50 ADOPTED

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

City Parks, Recreation & Services Committee – Mr. Ali, Chairman
No report.

Finance, Taxation & Assessments Committee – Mr. Bortolotto, Chairman
No report.

Legislation & Rules Committee – Mr. Zakel, Chairman
No report.

Public Health, Safety & Relief Committee – Mr. McGregor, Chairman
No report.

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Public Improvements Committee – Mr. Sage, Chairman

No report.

Streets, Utilities & Railroad Committee – Mr. Meany, Chairman

Mr. Meany said there will be a committee meeting on Monday, September 14th.

Zoning & Building Code Committee – Mr. Ference, Chairman

No report.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Castelli said it has been a busy summer, as you can tell around the community that there are a lot of projects that are moving forward from infrastructure projects on Indian Creek, the new Central Project Phase 1 Project, finalizing the streetscape on Smith Road, Meijer's and you are also going to see redevelopment taking place at the old Burlington site. He said in addition to these, you are also going to see some façade updates of the stores in the Brick Oven area. Mayor Castelli said he has been working with Mr. Bichara to bring better uses to that location. He said there has been nearly \$100 million dollars of redevelopment, which is historic in our community. Mayor Castelli said we are also now starting to see more and more interested parties that want to come to the area. He said he is excited about all of the work that is taking place and look forward to where we are maybe spring of next year. Mayor Castelli said by then you are going to see a lot of finished projects, or projects well underway creating a great benefit to the community.

LAW DIRECTOR

No report.

FINANCE DIRECTOR

No report.

RECREATION DIRECTOR

No report.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Mr. Bichara said that he previously reported to council that we concluded with getting the reimbursements on the demolition of both the Sears building and the former Halle building. He said with the support of council and Mayor Castelli, the city received \$6.5 million dollars in grant money between those two projects. Mr. Bichara said everything was used except for \$70,000 to pay for everything associated with those demolition projects. He said leaving that on the table, we asked the state if we could somehow use that \$70,000 to go toward the purchase price when we purchased the Sears property. Mr. Bichara said the state agreed that we would be allowed to do that. He said we have submitted to the land bank and they in turn submitted to the state, and we will be receiving from the land bank that final \$70,000 to say that we used all of the \$6.5 million dollars and that did not cost the city anything to demolish those buildings. Mr. Bichara said when we were able to get those grant funds, at the time the maximum amount did cover the costs. He said right now with the program, we wouldn't be able to cover the costs of demolition under the current program guidelines. Mr. Bichara said with council's support and the help of the mayor and the administration, we did get that project done in time so we were able to receive the maximum benefit.

Mr. Sage asked if there has been any movement on the new India Grocers buildings.

Mr. Bichara said yes, a clothing store recently opened in that plaza.

Mayor Castelli said the city talks to the owners if not monthly, every other month. He said they have made it clear that they are looking for certain lease rates, that they are looking to partner with individuals that are looking to spend a certain

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amount. Mayor Castelli said over the years, there have been dozens of interested businesses, but unfortunately they haven't been able to agree on terms. He said the city doesn't have any control over tenant rates, agreements and things like that. Mayor Castelli said we are happy to see that there is a new clothing store that has opened up there. He said his last conversation with the owners was that their store is doing very well and they continue to speak with multiple potential tenants. Mayor Castelli said the city continues to send tenants over to them, but ultimately they have to agree to the terms.

Mr. Sage inquired about the former CVS building.

Mr. Bichara said that property did sell, it is our understanding that the city has not received anything formal yet from the new owner. He said the new owner did purchase the CVS building and the abutting little strip center that goes along with it next to it. Mr. Bichara said they plan opening an International type of market there.

Mr. Ference referred to the six million dollars in grant funding, and said that was a huge win for the city, and said it was an important component in the completion and moving forward with that project. He said he looks at that as an historic project going on there on Smith Road and the residents should know that the city did their best to cover the costs of that demolition. Mr. Ference extended congratulations to everyone involved in securing that funding.

SERVICE DIRECTOR

No report.

Mr. McGregor asked if Mr. Herron had a deadline on when the second detention basin would be completed.

Mr. Herron said he would say probably October. He said they are doing topsoil right now and trees need to be planted yet. Mr. Herron said they have been progressing really well.

Mayor Castelli said this question comes up every once in a while, and said detention basins today have water quality requirements that they didn't have years ago. He said in years past, you may have seen a detention basin that was completely mowed all the way down to the ground. Mayor Castelli said today, because of water quality requirements, you have to allow certain specific growth that needs to be in there. He said all of that continues to take place with both detention basins, and then the same with any other detention basins that we do. Mayor Castelli said he has had questions regarding that, so he wanted to make sure it was known as to why the basins are not completely mowed. He said part of that is what cleans the water as it enters the creek.

Mr. Zakel asked if the project on Indian Creek going as planned.

Mr. Herron said it is going as planned, but it is a long 18-month plan. He said they are working their way up from Baldwin Creek now. Mr. Herron said there is a large tank under the cul-de-sac area near the Baldwin Creek Preserve Park. He said the boring pit is up by Mr. Zakel.

Mr. Herron said people don't realize this is four stories deep, the second pit is 46'. Mayor Castelli said this may be the largest utility infrastructure project that has ever been done, certainly in the last 30-40 years. He said this is a big project, and we said during the meeting that we had with everyone that we are not going to sugar coat this, this is going to be one of those projects that you are going to feel as it goes along. Mayor Castelli said when this is done, it will make a huge difference for the area. He said we are obviously responding to the concerns of the residents in the area.

POLICE CHIEF

Chief Swanson said they have been working on a way for residents to report traffic complaints, parking complaints, etc. online. He said there will be an option on the city website on the police page, to click a link which will take you to a form that can be filled out anonymously or you can provide your information if you want to

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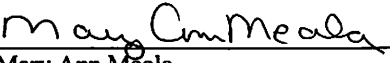
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be contacted. Chief Swanson said this will automatically go to our traffic officer for review. He said he hoped to have that out this week or next at the latest.

There being no further business, Mr. Bortolotto made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Meany. Mr. Bortolotto adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.



David Bortolotto
President of Council



Mary Ann Meola
Clerk of Council

Middleburg Heights City Council Meeting

September 8, 2026

Discussion: Concerns Regarding Sale of Adjoining Property

It has come to our attention that the adjoining property 6852 Eastland Road has a sale pending. We do not know who the buyer is and are concerned as to what impact that sale is going to have on our property values and quality of life at Brookstone Trail.

Concerns:

Property Zoning - General Industrial?

Who owns the property now?

Is the sale imminent? Can the City or Brookstone do anything to select the owners?

What other Residential properties are next to General Industrial in the city?

Concerns About General Industrial:

1. Property Values / Living Conditions
2. Barriers – Mounds, Fences, Maintenance of such.
3. Noise
4. Smell/Pollutions
5. Drainage – Not our basin
6. Wildlife/Rodents
7. Hazards
8. Security of Brookstone Residents
9. Utilities – Power Outages
10. 3-5 Years Out
11. Our recourse if the above is not met.