

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 1, 2026

Audio recording of full meeting will be available online on the city's website

Nolan Nicaise from ZoneCo presented via Zoom at 5:15 p.m. giving a brief overview of the comprehensive amendments to the zoning code presented in Draft 67-26 of tonight's legislation. The Zoom meeting was recorded for those unable to attend.

The presentation was called to order by Council President, Doug Sollitto.

The Clerk, Abbey Lavelle called the roll:

Weddell- P, Johnstone-P, Sheely-P, Leskovec-P, Julian-NP, Lastic- P, Stredney-P, Sollitto- P

It was moved by Weddell and seconded by Stredney to excuse Julian from the ZoneCo presentation.

ZoneCo is a consultant company contracted with the City of Niles to review and recommend zoning changes based on trends and economic opportunities. Nolan Nicaise addressed the goals of the project in alignment with the 2024 Niles Comprehensive Plan. Nolan presented the proposed zoning map and the new districts that may be implemented through their recommendations. He described what each district would permit as far as zoning is concerned and the opportunities it would present for both residential and commercial uses.

Additionally, Nolan described the process for the implementation of these proposed changes. First, the proposed changes are presented to the Law Director and then a public hearing is held by the Planning Commission, which has already been completed. Next, the legislation of the proposed changes is presented to council as a first reading and a public hearing is set where a more detailed presentation is given. Nolan added that residents will be able to fill out a survey regarding the proposed changes that will be able to provide ZoneCo with feedback.

Doug Sollitto thanked Nolan for taking the time to present tonight.

Matthew Durno and Bianca Rozenblad from the Housing & Zoning Department added that all of this information will be posted to the website. Bianca showed the councilmembers where this information could be found on the Niles City website and how residents can submit their zoning code survey. Additional discussions were held amongst Matt, Bianca, the Mayor and Councilmembers regarding how the proposed changes would affect rentals in Niles and opportunities alongside the CRA for development.

Niles City Council held its regular meeting on April 1, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Niles Senior Center in Niles, Ohio.

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Doug Sollitto.

The Clerk, Abbey Lavelle called the roll:

Weddell- P, Johnstone-P, Sheely-P, Leskovec-P, Julian-P, Lastic- P, Stredney-P, Sollitto- P

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Weddell to accept and place on file the General Consent Agenda.

Motion carried.

The Clerk Abbey Lavelle presented the recommendation by the Planning Commission to update Niles Local Zoning Code.

It was moved by Julian to set a public hearing on May 6th @ 5:00 P.M. to address the proposed recommendations in more detail and other concerns related to the proposed changes. It was seconded by Stredney and the motion carried.

PUBLIC REMARKS

(Public comments began at 2:53 into recording)

Dee Saben addressed her concern for her recent electric bill that was only 22 days, but her water and sewer bill is 29 bills. The Mayor responded to the discrepancy in days stating that the electric bill is catching up to the prior reading dates that exceed 30 days by issuing bills with lower reading dates. The Mayor added that the electric meters are read manually and are determinative on staffing and weather whereas the water meters are smart readers and are set to read a specific time period each charging period. Dee added if she is receiving a 7-day credit for the discrepancy between the electric and water bills, but the Mayor answered that for each bill she is only charged for her usage during that period. Doug Solitto addressed the prior concern from council to bring electric meter reads closer to the 30-day mark. The Mayor reiterated the result of that discussion – the discrepancy on meter reads for the electric bills won't be resolved until the switch to smart meters which is set to commence at the end of this year. The City's billing software does not allow adjustment of meter read dates since the reads are done manually. Aaron Johnstone added that a meeting was held with himself, Sheely, the Mayor and the Service Director, to discuss what could be done in the meantime to assist residents who incur larger electric bills due to a longer meter read period. Johnstone added that the resolution for bills longer than 30 days and residents experiencing hardships paying the full amount, the City will only require payment of the amount due for just the 30-day cycle with no late fees applied to the remaining balance. The balance owed would apply to the next billing cycle.

Sabrina Putnam lives at 440 Mahoning Avenue on the corner of Wood Street. She is experiencing intense flooding in her front yard/driveway when it rains because the City's sewer system is not able to handle the rainwater. She is scared for her safety as well as her family

members as the water has come up to her knee's multiple times in the past when it has rained. Sheely added that this street has consistently had a flooding problem when it rains. The Mayor asked Sabrina to stay after the meeting to discuss this more with the Service Director to make sure this problem is addressed and resolved by the right department. Doug Sollitto added that he would like her to follow up with Council to give an update on the resolution to ensure it has been handled.

Lisa Cricks who lives on Shaw Avenue behind the new Hyundai dealership on Youngstown Warren Road reminded Council of the promises they made at the October 1, 2025, meeting. Lisa is angered that the City did not hold up their end of the promise that the tree line would be maintained. Her understanding after the October 1 meeting was that the dealership would include a mound and keep the natural tree line that is home to many animals. Just a few days ago, she noticed more and more trees being cut down, essentially destroying the natural tree line. Lisa approached the tree cutters who told her that the trees are coming down whether she likes it or not, claiming that one of the workers waived a chainsaw in her face. She feels failed by the City and does not trust any other promises the City wants to make. President Doug Sollitto stated that it is not acceptable for anyone to waive a chainsaw in her face and he hopes the Law Director will take the right steps to address it. Doug added that, from what he remembers regarding this development, the berm will include planted trees the help dilute the noise and light pollution. Doug would like to look into whether taller trees could be planted. Aaron Johnstone stated that Michael Cricks reached out to him about this issue and they set up a meeting with the Mayor and Housing & Zoning to ensure that the total height is closer to 21 feet. Aaron added that he has the site plans with him and if the residents on Shaw would like to stay after to review them, they are more than welcome to. Aaron echoed Sollitto's sentiments regarding the threats by the tree cutters, adding that they are not City employees. Doug added that 21 feet is a height that could better accommodate their requests, stating that the residents were initially deceived about the trees and berm. Aaron added that the residents were promised a 50 feet buffer of natural tree line and they are no longer getting that and their feelings are justified. Aaron wants to also address that the evergreen planted trees will be placed on top of the berm not the side that will satisfy the height requested by the residents, but he proposes the issue of the ground settling and reducing that height in the long term. He wants to make sure that the end result is what is promised. Doug added that the residents should have been given notice of this change – whether that was private contacts or a public meeting. The Mayor added that the drawings that Aaron has were professionally engineered and should take into consideration the settling of the ground. The Mayor added that at the onset of the tree clearing Hyundai maintained the 50 feet tree buffer but since then there was a change to site plans for a water retention pond. Regardless, Hyundai is subject to Niles Zoning Code that they have to follow and the zoning inspector is keeping a close eye on this development. Mrs. Cricks closed out by saying that this could have all been resolved if she was given clearer communication from the City on the changes to the site plans and tree line.

Michael Cricks who also lives on Shaw Avenue wanted to add to his wife's public remarks regarding the Hyundai dealership development that a 20-foot berm was promised with trees added to that height not 20 feet in total height with the berm and trees. Michael is concerned about the noise and light pollution and how it will affect their privacy. He is frustrated that their input was even a consideration when it wasn't going to be listened to anyways. He understands

that plans change but communication should have been much clearer and hopes that it will be going forward. Aaron Johnstone acknowledged the affect and impact this will have on the residents and doesn't downplay their concerns but wants to also spotlight the positives this development will bring to the area despite starting off on the wrong foot. Aaron wants to work with the residents of Shaw to help mitigate any further breaches from Hyundais promises. Michael would like Council/City to push back on the issue of the berm for a taller tree fence to block the dealership and main road. Doug Sollitto stated that Michael has a good argument for a true 20-foot berm plus trees and addressed the discussion about placing the wall fence too. Michael stated the neighborhood does not want the wall they wanted the 50-foot natural tree line enforced. Aaron added that Hyundai is going above and beyond with the 20 feet berm and trees considering Niles Zoning code only requires 15 feet. Michael just wishes that some agreement to maintain a taller tree line can be made.

Terry Holbrook who also lives on Shaw Avenue, stated that he is affected the most by this dealership development and the tree cutting considering his property directly butts up against the dealership and now he can clearly see straight to Niles Vienna Road. Terry added that the workers potentially crossed his property line to cut down the trees but he couldn't get back there because of the recent heavy rainfall. He believes this will cause more problems with the water run-off that he faces now on that area of his property. The Mayor added that their new site plans to include a water retention pond should not cause any further problems with Terry's water build up in the back of his property. The Mayor encourages the residents to talk with the building inspector and set up meetings to discuss further developments and plans of this project. Doug Sollitto asked Terry to follow up by the next council meeting to make sure some resolution was worked toward.

David DeCristefaro, Trumbull County Engineer, addressed council on behalf of Michelle Cicero stating that he was sent videos of water run offs near the condominiums on Shaw Avenue and water build up from the Hyundai development project that are not up to Trumbull County regulations. David addressed Council that the City should be following Trumbull County regulations and requests that a representative from the Niles building inspectors office take immediate action to ensure the soil and erosion control measures are in place in the site plans submitted by Hyundai. From what David could see in the videos the right measures were not in place and notated the damage that this could cause. Doug Sollitto inquired what the regulations should be according to Trumbull County. David responded that the regulations include sediment basins and diversion ditches but without reviewing the site plans he would not know what is required for this project. Michael Lastic questioned David on the effect the retention pond will have on the condominiums. David is unsure the effect without looking at the site plans. He encourages the City to stay aware of the regulations that must be followed for this project. The Mayor responded that they do follow Trumbull County regulations for projects like this and he is notating this issue for his meeting with Duke tomorrow.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

(Legislation began at 45:08 into recording)

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 58-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF UNUSED LANDS OWNED BY THE CITY OF NILES TO TRUMBULL NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP ("TNP").

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 66-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NILES TO ENTER INTO A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING ("TIF") AGREEMENT WITH JRD HOLDINGS PARTNERSHIP FOR PHASE II OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TIF INCENTIVE DISTRICT; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 67-26)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE NILES ZONING CODE; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Lastic to give a first reading to Draft No. 58-26; Draft No. 66-26; and Draft No. 67-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 58-26; Draft No. 66-26; and Draft No. 67-26 have received their first reading on the 1st day of April 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 54-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (CIC) TO ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH OPTION TO PURCHASE WITH VON ISLEY ESTATE, LLC; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Johnstone to give a second reading to Draft No. 54-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 54-26 has received its second reading on the 1st day of April 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 38-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TO APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION OF THE BRIGHT MOUNTAIN SOLAR SCHEDULE WITH AMERICAN MUNICIPAL POWER, INC. AND TAKING OF OTHER ACTIONS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Lastic to give a third reading to Draft No. 38-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

It was moved by Johnstone, seconded by Stredney to adopt this Draft No. 38-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 38-26 has received its third reading and was adopted on the 1st day of April 2026.

The following drafts will be part of the consent agenda passed together with suspension of three readings, and adopted as an emergency.

**ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 55-26)
AN ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 39-26; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

**ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 56-26)
A RESOLUTION TEMPORARILY WAIVING THE PERMIT FEE FOR CITY-WIDE RESIDENTIAL GARAGE OR YARD SALE; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

**ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 57-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSAL OF NUMEROUS PARTS AND EQUIPMENT FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO BE SOLD BY INTERNET AUCTION ON GOV DEALS AS THEY ARE NO LONGER NEEDED FOR ANY MUNICIPAL PURPOSE BY THE CITY; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

**ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 59-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED WATER FUND FOR REFUND DUE TO FAILED WATER METER HARDWARE; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

**ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 60-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED PARK FUND FOR TREE REMOVAL; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

**ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 61-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED PARK FUND FOR PAVING OF PARKING SPACES ON SHARKEY DRIVE; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

**ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 62-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF MDT REPLACEMENTS FOR THE NILES POLICE DEPARTMENT THROUGH STATE PURCHASING; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 63-26)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR FY 2026/2027 GRANTS UNDER THE CDBG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION PROGRAM; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 64-26)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OR SERVICE DIRECTOR TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AND ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS WITH THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION TO BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR A WATER LINE REPLACEMENT; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 65-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED SEWER FUND TO CONTRACT WITH Z TECH BUILDERS FOR EMERGENCY STORM WATER SEWER REPAIR; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Johnstone, seconded by Stredney to suspend the rule requiring three readings and adopt this consent agenda.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Rules are suspended and the consent agenda has been adopted on the 1st day of April 2026.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 52:40 into recording)

Mayor Mientkiewicz congratulated long-time City employee Dave Liste Sr. on a happy retirement following his 40+ years at the City.

Aaron Johnstone discussed his recent attendance to the Local Government Conference in Columbus with other council members and administrative employees of the City. He stated it was a great learning experience and mentioned the opportunity it provides to connect with other local governments and the challenges they face. He looks forward to attending again next year.

James Sheely wanted to spotlight the CRA recently passed and the opportunity it provides for both residents and businesses for upgrades and redevelopment. Mr. Sheely mentioned that his current employer, Jet Stream International, has worked closely with the City and has applied through the CRA and is excited for this opportunity for redevelopment. Mr. Sheely encourages more residents and businesses to apply through the CRA.

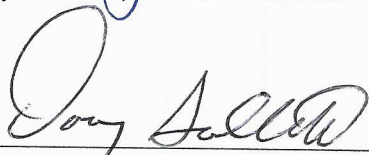
Ed Stredney wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Doug Sollitto wants to make sure there is follow up to the issues presented by the residents of Shaw Avenue and he asked the Mayor to address these issues with Hyundai. Mr. Sollitto also raised the issue of flooding over on St. Johns area off of North Road and clearing the open ditches to alleviate the heavy flooding. The Mayor stated that homeowners with open ditches must follow local ordinances that require the clearing of ditches of debris to allow proper water flow during heavy rainfall. The Mayor reiterated that these ordinances must be followed and will be enforced by the City. Doug added that if the ditches are cleared and the water is still not draining to contact the City.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Lastic to adjourn the meeting.


Abbey Lavelle, Clerk of Council


Doug Sollitto, President of Council