CITY OF FAIRBORN
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
October 6, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
Fire Training Room

COUNCIL MEMBERS	Present	Absent
Dan Kirkpatrick, Mayor	☒	☐
Clint Allen, Councilman	☒	☐
Sylvia Chess, Councilwoman	☒	☐
Adam Fritzsche, Councilman	☒	☐
Rodney McCubbins, Councilman	☒	☐
Mary Reaster, Deputy Mayor	☒	☐
Tana Stanton, Councilwoman	☐	☒

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

E. Gay, Gebhart, Kerry, McClure, McNamee, Schell, and Taylor

TREE CITY USA

Mike Gebhart, City Manager, explained that tonight would be the first reading of the Ordinance about Tree City, USA. There are certain things that have to be changed in Chapter 547, which is Trees in the codified Ordinances so that it mirrors the language from the Arbor Day Foundation who gives the City the designation of Tree City, USA. The designation highlights communities that meet consistent standards based on four criteria, which he reviewed. The Mayor along with Linda Riffle and two members of the faculty of Fairborn High School went for three sessions over a two-year period that were put on by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in Sidney, Ohio to learn all the things that needed to happen to qualify also to be part of the Tree City USA Program. They are the ones who sat down with a model Ordinance and sent it over to legal counsel to make sure it would be adequate for our codified Ordinances. So, what you have on the Council agenda tonight is that. It is a voluntary participation. It updates Chapter 547 of the Codified Ordinances about Trees. It clarifies terminology, tree management standards, creates definitions, responsibilities for lawn maintenance and clearances, and aligns with industry best practices. This is all on City property. Your individual property, unless you want to plant something in the right-of-way which they would normally not allow, that is the only time it affects your property rights is if it is in the right of way. There is a simple process for removing trees in the public right of way. Public safety hazards involving trees in easements and the goal is to have a clear and consistent policy.

Councilwoman Chess asked if there is a timeframe to get all of this done. Mr. Gebhart explained it would go for a first reading this week. In two weeks, you will have the second reading and public hearing. If they waive the third reading, 30 days after it will take effect then we will move forward from there. Then we have to talk about creating the Tree City, USA Board, to help with this, which is the next step. Councilwoman Chess asked who

would be on that Board. Mayor Kirkpatrick replied citizens can be on the Board. The four people that went for training will be on the Board also.

Mayor Kirkpatrick explained when they get to the Ordinance tonight, he will turn the meeting over to Deputy Mayor Reaster and step out of the room because according to the Rules of Council if someone is affiliated with an issue they cannot vote. Councilman Allen asked if there is a discussion during the first reading. Mr. Gebhart, responded no, but since he is on the committee and he sets the first reading it would be better that he recuse himself long enough to have the first reading and the second reading set. Mayor Kirkpatrick stated when they vote on it in two weeks he will also step out.

Mike Gebhart, City Manager, explained there are neighboring communities such as Beavercreek, Kettering, Centerville, Oakwood, Vandalia, Moraine, West Carrollton, Troy, Miamisburg, Piqua, and Tipp City are participants which may fall off and then come back on due to budgetary issues.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ZONING CODE

Kathleen Riggs, City Planner, stated they wanted to share with council about lighting and native plants. They did a major update back in May. These conversations came after that after the steering committee meetings ended. It got a little bit more in depth about the lighting as well as more recently just having some Ohio Native Plant conversations regarding commercial development and residential development. Are there any guidelines that may be incorporated into the code. They think they have put together a pretty good overview. She stated she would let Brad Kerry share the details of it.

Mr. Kerry began with the lighting code. This is an extension of the Proclamation for the Dark Sky. A couple of things led them to move this forward quicker than what was originally planned. They also have the native plant Ordinance. In that they are also working a Tree Ordinance that goes in line with the Tree City, USA program which gives more concrete guidance to the developers as they build in the City.

He explained with the improved lighting code the reason why they are improving this is it provides uniformity, enforceability, and clarity to the current lighting standards. This is just taking what exists and giving more definition to it. The hopes and thought process behind this is reducing the incidents of nuisance lighting complaints. They also hope to reduce expenditure on the City's side in waste reduction. Using these techniques to make sure that we are illuminating well and not wasting our energy. They also have economic viability through tourism and through defense study. The Air Force came out to all their bases and said they have noticed that light pollution is becoming such an issue for our pilots that we need the local communities to do something about this or consider moving flight operations to different bases. The last standard is improving the safety and security within the City.

The information included in the code is built off of the recommendations of Dark Sky International and CEPTA. The inclusion includes fully cut off light fixture requirements on all exterior lighting, shifting our colors temperatures to 2700K ensuring light is only where it is needed, using motion sensors where appropriate, lowering the fixture heights and intensity. They have talked to Engineering about that, and they are agreeable to that.

This also creates lighting zones that correspond to existing planning zones. They have also spoken with Fairborn Police Department and they like what has been designed. He displayed the acceptable light fixtures providing lighting but also limiting light pollution. Our code will call for the fully cut off fixtures and will call for the ban on the sale, installation, or production of non-cutoff fixtures in the City. This will be included during the zoning review. There will be a clause for emergency or navigation signals. They are calling for exterior lighting capping at 2700K. That will be a non-conforming standard for 10 years. He reviewed the different lighting color spectrums. They are encouraging the use of motion sensing. He discussed the safety of using motion sensory lighting. The updates would include safety zone lighting where the light curfew is exempt. He discussed the lighting zone scale and their timings. They are going to ask that new signs meet external illumination guidelines. They will encourage people to get away from LED electronic signs.

He explained other cities such as Springboro, Yellow Springs and Beavercreek are doing this. Beavercreek there bid struggle right now is enforcement. They are treating it the zoning level. He does not know how they are treating replacement structures. In northeast Ohio in Akron area near the Cuyahoga National Park they are looking at the entire group doing it. There is movement in the Miami Valley to get the entire Miami Valley to do this. We would be the first City in the Miami Valley to do this, and we would be the leaders in doing this. Pittsburg, PA is doing because they like it.

Councilman Fritzsche asked about Fairborn Cement that is generating white light would they be required to go to 2700K as well. Mr. Kerry explained it would not reduce effectiveness.

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated that when you turn off Dayton Yellow Springs onto Commerce Center at night and you start to come up to TCN on the right, their parking lot lights look like two sets of headlights. He has had numerous people comment on those. Is there anything that can be done about it? Ms. Riggs stated if this code is approved those lights would eventually have to come into conformity. They would have to address that at that time. It sounds like some more shielding could be added to those to get them directed downward. Mike Gebhart, City Manager, asked that Mr. Kerry provide Council with an executive summary and have it to them by Friday as they were running close on time.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Chess moved to adjourn the meeting. Deputy Mayor Reaster seconded. Yeas, six: Chess, Reaster, Alen, Fritzsche, McCubbins and Kirkpatrick. Nays, none. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

MAYOR

CLERK, CITY OF FAIRBORN