

Executive Summary :Village Council Regular Meeting — August 27, 2026 7:19 p.m.

1.In Attendance: Councilpersons Pinter, Grant, Koss, Martin and Paessun

Motion to approve the absence of Council President Camara made by Grant, 2nd by Koss; approved with unanimous aye vote

Also in attendance: Mayor Southard, Chief Delp, Planner Fischer, and Alex Sauer-Smith of Columbus Recreation and Parks

2. Opening Business and Approval of Prior Minutes

Council began with the Pledge of Allegiance after roll call.

Motion to approve 8/13/26 Committee as a Whole Minutes made by Paessun; 2nd by Grant

Motion to approve 8/13/26 Council Meeting Minutes made by Pinter; 2nd by Grant

Both sets of minutes approved with unanimous aye vote

Motion to amend the agenda to include the swearing in of Officer Hayden Walpole made by Grant; 2nd by Koss-approves with unanimous aye vote

3. Swearing-In of Officer Hayden Walpole

Council conducted the formal swearing-in of **Hayden Walpole** as a full-time police officer.

Later in the meeting, Council formally approved **Resolution 2026-17**, confirming the mayor's appointment of Walpole as a full-time police officer.

4. Major Presentation: Columbus Parks and Recreation — Green Line Park Project Project Overview

Alex Sauer-Smith of Columbus Recreation and Parks presented an early-stage overview of the **Living Green Line / Green Line Park Project**.

The project is described as a major linear park and trail system approximately:

- **58 acres**
- **Seven miles long**
- Connecting the Linden area around **17th Avenue/Lodi Park/St. Stephens** northward toward **Cooper Park and Cooper Road**
- Connecting with the **Allen Creek Trail**, which in turn connects with the broader regional trail system
- Providing improved access to **Kilbourne Run Park**
- Intended to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, access to nature, neighborhood connections, and multimodal transportation.

Columbus reported that substantial public outreach had already occurred, including multiple open houses, several hundred attendees, and **more than 300 survey responses**. The project was approaching approximately **30% design**, meaning significant elements remained open for discussion.

Project Phasing and Schedule

The project is being developed in phases because of the complexity of the bridges and other infrastructure.

The presentation identified:

- **Phase 1 construction target: 2028**
- One portion extending from Cooper Park toward Kilbourne Run Park
- Another approximately 3½-mile portion extending from 17th Avenue toward Linden STEM Academy
- **Phase 2:** anticipated to address bridges and associated infrastructure

Columbus emphasized that funding deadlines make the schedule particularly important, although the presenters acknowledged that project schedules can change.

Minerva Park / State Route 161 Area

A significant portion of the presentation focused on the section affecting Minerva Park, particularly the **State Route 161/Minerva Park/Lake Road** area.

The proposal includes:

- Trail infrastructure
- Improved crossings
- Lighting
- Traffic-calming measures
- Potential raised crosswalk/speed-table treatment
- Bollards to prevent vehicles from entering the trail
- Wayfinding signage
- Landscaping and retention of existing trees where feasible
- Improvements beneath the State Route 161 bridge

Columbus indicated that it would work with ODOT on portions of the project and with local schools concerning trail access and design around school property.

Skateable/Bouldering Features

The presentation included a concept for a small-scale skateable recreation area beneath/near the State Route 161 bridge.

Columbus clarified that it would **not be a destination skate park** intended to attract regional visitors by automobile. Rather, it would be a smaller neighborhood-oriented facility featuring skateable and potentially bouldering elements, with no dedicated parking proposed for the skate area.

The design remains preliminary. Columbus expects to engage a specialized skate-park design/build consultant after the surrounding project elements are further developed. Public art is also contemplated.

Crossing and Traffic-Calming Discussion

The most significant Council discussion concerned the proposed treatment of **Minerva Lake Road**.

One concept presented would narrow traffic to a **single lane** through a portion of the crossing using bump-outs/channelization. A raised crosswalk or speed table was presented as a likely component.

Council members raised concerns about:

- Potential traffic congestion
- Emergency vehicle access
- School bus operations
- Cut-through traffic
- Existing traffic volumes
- Whether one-lane operation is justified by data
- Potential effects on nearby residents and driveways

Columbus stated that the design was preliminary and that the community would have an opportunity to influence the final approach. The presenter specifically characterized the raised crosswalk as likely to remain, while saying that the bump-outs and other traffic-control features were still open for discussion.

Council specifically requested additional **traffic data and examples of comparable one-lane treatments** elsewhere along the Green Line or in comparable jurisdictions. Columbus agreed to bring those examples and data back.

Trail Safety and E-Bikes

Council members also raised concerns about electric bicycles and scooters, particularly high-speed use by young riders.

The discussion noted that motorized vehicles are technically not permitted on the trail, but enforcement may be difficult because of the length and isolated nature of portions of the corridor.

Columbus acknowledged that enforcement is an issue being considered and that the subject has also been raised during public outreach. State-level legislation was also mentioned as being under consideration.

Planning and Zoning Follow-Up

The presentation was explicitly described as **informational rather than a request for immediate approval**.

Columbus intends to return to:

1. The Planning and Zoning Committee in September; and
2. Council thereafter with more concrete design information and potentially a request for action.

Council leadership stated that Planning and Zoning had additional questions, particularly regarding the proposed one-lane treatment and lighting, and that the matter would return to Planning and Zoning for further consideration.

5. Citizen Comments

Tony Benedetti of Berry Lane Court questioned the Village's approach to planning and specifically criticized the proposed sidewalk/trail-related engineering expenditures and possible routing through the Village.

His comments included concerns about:

- The role of Planning and Zoning in strategic planning
- Approximately \$300,000 referenced for sidewalk engineering
- Potential routing along Minerva Lake Road
- Potential impacts on Village trees
- Potential sidewalk connections from Cleveland Avenue
- The need to determine the desired route before proceeding further with engineering

He urged Council to have a broader planning discussion before proceeding.

Sheena Richardson of Farview Rd. expressed strong support for the Green Line.

She explained that her family bikes regularly but currently finds portions of the route, particularly around State Route 161 and Cooper Road, unsafe for children.

Her principal requests were:

- Convenient neighborhood access to the trail
- Consideration of access through or near school property
- Avoidance of unnecessary fencing that would prevent residents from reaching the trail conveniently

Columbus responded that fencing would not be installed along the entire project and that some fencing decisions could ultimately be made by adjacent property owners, including schools.

Todd Isler of Minerva Lake Rd. asked a series of questions concerning:

- Safe connections between Cooper Road and the Allen Creek Trail
- Possible improvements near the Cooper/Westerville Road area
- Connections between the school and trail/bridge area
- Potential tree selections
- Availability of trail traffic/use data
- Coordination among police departments and communities along the trail regarding recurring safety or enforcement issues

Columbus explained that the proposed Cooper-area crossing would be a **surface crossing**, rather than a bridge, because a bridge would require substantial distance and cost.

Linda Fairchild, also of Minerva Lake Rd. raised concerns about:

- Her driveway and the proposed crossing
- Privacy
- Screening adjacent to her property
- Fencing
- Monitoring and security around the proposed skate area
- Visibility from her residence
- Existing problems in the area beneath the bridge

She requested direct communication regarding screening and property-specific treatment. The discussion acknowledged that the existing corridor has significant problems and that the proposed project is intended to create a substantially improved, lit, and actively used environment.

Overall Public Input

Public comments reflected **both strong support for improved trail access and significant concerns about traffic, privacy, security, fencing, and the effect of the project on adjacent properties.**

Council emphasized that the Green Line discussion was an early-stage conversation and that additional opportunities for residents and Planning and Zoning to provide input would follow.

6. Legislation and Voting

Motion to suspend rules requiring 3 readings for ORD 2026-12 made by Grant, 2nd by Koss

Voting Aye: Grant, Koss, Martin, Paessun, Pinter

Motion to approve ORD 2026-12 made by Grant, 2nd by Koss

Voting Aye: Koss, Martin, Paessun, Pinter, Grant

Ordinance 2026-12 AN ORDINANCE TO REALLOCATE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE VILLAGE OF MINERVA PARK FOR THE YEAR 2026

Motion to suspend rules requiring 3 readings for RES 2026-17 made by Paessun, , 2nd by Koss

Voting Aye: Martin, Paessun, Pinter, Grant, Koss

Motion to approve ORD 2026-12 made by Grant, 2nd by Koss

Voting Aye: Paessun, Pinter, Grant, Koss, Martin

Resolution 2026-17 A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF HAYDEN WALPOLE AS A FULL-TIME POLICE OFFICER FOR THE VILLAGE OF MINERVA PARK, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

7. Old and New Business

Legislation Numbering

Council discussed a change in the numbering convention for ordinances and resolutions, specifically whether the year should precede or follow the item number.

The discussion concluded that the numbering format had apparently been changed administratively following an earlier discussion/instruction, and members emphasized the importance of using a consistent format.

Traffic and Safety

Council discussed continuing concerns about traffic and stop-sign compliance.

The Village reported:

- A flashing stop sign is in place.
- A second flashing sign has been ordered/repared.
- Officers have issued tickets in problem areas.
- The Village continues to research traffic conditions and potential improvements.
- The Mayor is communicating with relevant parties regarding striping, painting, and traffic conditions.

Council acknowledged that enforcement cannot eliminate every violation and emphasized continued efforts to improve safety.

Trick-or-Treat

The meeting referenced a previously established trick-or-treat schedule of:

October 29, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

The discussion stated that there would be **no rain date**, consistent with the MORPC recommendation as described in the transcript.

First Responders Night

Council announced **First Responders Night** for:

September 8, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

The event is expected to include police and fire personnel, food trucks, children's activities and other family-oriented programming. Council members and residents were encouraged to attend.

Resident Communication

Council encouraged residents to communicate local concerns, including street or drainage issues, directly to Village officials. Social media was acknowledged as useful for reaching residents but not sufficient as the formal means of communication with the entire community.

Motion to adjourn made by Martin; 2nd by Koss; approved with unanimous aye vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM

Executive Takeaway

The August 27 meeting was dominated by the **early-stage presentation and community discussion of the Green Line Park Project**, with Council deliberately avoiding a final design decision while requesting additional technical and traffic information. The most consequential unresolved issue for Minerva Park is the proposed treatment of the **Minerva Lake Road crossing**, particularly whether a one-lane traffic configuration is appropriate given emergency access, school buses, congestion, driveways, and resident concerns.

The meeting also resulted in two substantive legislative approvals: **Ordinance 2026-12**, concerning the reallocation of 2026 appropriations, and **Resolution 2026-17**, formally

confirming Hayden Walpole's appointment as a full-time police officer. Both measures passed.

The transcript demonstrates a Council continuing to balance the potential connectivity, recreational, safety and mobility benefits of the Green Line with concerns regarding traffic operations, enforcement, privacy, fencing, neighborhood impacts and long-term maintenance/safety.

Jeffrey Wilcheck, Fiscal Officer

Tiffany Southard, Mayor