

Safety Committee Minutes

Honorable Council
City of Newark, Ohio
March 21, 2022

The Safety Committee met in Council Chambers on Monday March 21, 2022 following the Service Committee meeting with these members present:

Mark Labutis, Chair
Spencer Barker
Beth Bline
Michael Houser
Jeff Harris sitting in for Jeff Rath

We wish to report:

1. **Ordinance No. 22-14** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 475 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO RELATIVE TO BICYCLES WITHIN PORTIONS OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Tim Hickman, Safety Director – What we’re presenting tonight is legislation to regulate the operation of bicycles, skateboard and other toy vehicles on the sidewalks throughout the City, but specifically in the Downtown District. Over the years, the Police Department has had a lot of complaints from both business owners and citizens about people riding bicycles recklessly on the sidewalks in the downtown area and we’ve never really had a means to enforce anything. So, with the advent of the DORA we thought this was a perfect time to address this issue so, we approached our Honorable Law Director and with her help and as a collaborative effort between her office, my office and the Police Department we’ve come up with this legislation for your consideration.

Ms. Bline – So, this is for bicycles, skateboards, how about motorized vehicles like go carts, mini bikes, anything like that?

Director Hickman – This wouldn’t address those specific items, they would be addressed under other Ordinances in the City.

Mr. Houser – Similar question. I have an electric bike, would that fall under this?

Director Hickman – I would consider that it does.

Ms. Bline – And motorized bicycles the same?

Director Hickman – Correct.

Mr. Barker – This would only pertain to reckless, or all of it?

Director Hickman – This prohibits any operation within the DORA specifically, it kind of carves things out as you go farther out in the City, so like in some areas, anybody 12 and under is exempt from that requirement because we don't want kids riding their bicycles out in the street. So, this is mainly focused within the DORA, the Downtown District.

Mr. Barker – My follow up to that would be, if the City were at any time to institute the electric scooters for transportation, if at any point the City were to enter into an arrangement with some of those, how would that be handled?

Director Hickman – That would probably be a question best directed to our Law Director.

Tricia Moore, Law Director – That would be something we would have to carve out on that agreement, that they are allowed. One of the problems that they've been having is when people are out walking on the sidewalks that's encouraged during DORA is these people zooming in between and causing incidents with the people walking around. So, is that going to be a problem because of scooters. We would have to address that, do we want to put an exemption in the legislation because of our contract, or should they also be required, because there's a section in here that says that if you're not allowed on the street for safety purposes that you have to give the right of way to pedestrians and give them warning when passing, so that would apply to scooters as well.

Mr. Harris – Is this year round or just in warmer weather.

Director Hickman – Year round.

Ms. Bline – Just asking again, how far out does it go?

Director Hickman – The Ordinance encompasses the whole City, but the exclusive prohibition is for the DORA District Downtown, which is Locust Street to the north, Walnut Street to the south, First and Fourth Streets to the east and west.

Steven Smith, 237 Violet Ct. – I've just seen this and looked at it and basically agree with what's being presented here. I am a little leery and disturbed about appraising bicycles as toy vehicles. I have not been active in the organization, but am a past president of Licking County Bicycle Club and was very active in that capacity for promoting the use of bicycles in a vehicular manner following the rules of traffic. My opinion is referring to them as toy vehicles, opens the door to restricting them from use on the roads as well. I would not like

to see that. Bicycles are a valid means of transportation and can be ridden with traffic with proper safety training and following the Ordinances of other traffic rules. I don't have a big problem with the intent of this regulation, but I do wonder about some unintended consequences. I would not like to see bicycles people are riding on the streets be classified as toy vehicles.

Director Hickman – The Ordinance doesn't define a bicycle as a toy vehicle, it lists bicycles and toy vehicles, so it's not trying to redefine what a bicycle is. I believe it says bicycles, skateboards and toy vehicles.

Law Director Moore – It's referencing, there are several other childrens toys that are small, bikes, power wheels and things like that, we were trying to think of every possible scenario that might come up and that's where we're at with that.

Mr. Marmie – I would just like to see in the Ordinance the definition of a sidewalk and the purpose of that is, we have pedestrian bridges, we have bike paths, we have all that which we do not want to prohibit bicycles from, so I think we need a pretty clear definition of a sidewalk, to make sure that we do not include those as prohibitive locations. Especially the cross bridges, they are sidewalks, basically, so if we could just clearly define that so we do not include those I'd appreciate it.

There was no motion or second, so Ordinance No. 22-14 will be on the Safety Committee Agenda for 4-4-22 for a motion, a second and a vote to send to full council

Meeting was adjourned

Mark Labutis, Chair