

Safety Committee
May 22, 2017

Present: Committee Members Clausen, Scott and Larmore; Council Members Buxton, Fleck, LeJeune, and Sovinski; Safety-Service Director Hitchcock; Mayor Hazel; Auditor Strawn, Law Director Moore; Citizens; Kevin Sandler, WCSM Radio; and William Kincaid, The Daily Standard.

Committee Chair Clausen called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm for discussion of use of under speed vehicles on City streets where speed limit is 35 mph or less and providing an inspection program.

Mayor Hazel reported a resident contacted him stating he is legally permitted to drive his licensed golf cart in New Bremen, and he believes Celina should allow this also. Certain safety equipment is required by the state for licensing.

CM Sovinski asked if there is any specific language that prohibits these vehicles on City streets. Law Director Moore reported there is a provision in the ORC that states municipalities need to authorize the use of these vehicles on City streets.

CM LeJeune stated his concern of safety on main streets. On residential streets he could understand, but not on the busier streets.

CM Sovinski stated if we prohibit golf carts on the street, should there also be a concern of mopeds and bicycles on the streets. Director Hitchcock stated administration gets complaints of slow moving tractors driving in town. CM Scott stated there are golf carts driven on the streets during festivals and asked if permission is granted for these. Mayor Hazel responded the Lake Festival Committee, the police and fire departments use these for safety measures. Most committee members are asked to keep these in the alleys, and not roam freely on the streets.

CM Clausen asked if the driver needs to hold a valid state driver's license. Law Director Moore replied he would think they would need to have a valid license.

CM Larmore stated his concern of the slow speed of the vehicles. Mayor Hazel stated the City's speed limits do not have a minimum, only a maximum speed. Even if it is restricted to a neighborhood, they might go further with crossing a major street. He does not see an issue of having golf carts on the street, but believes there is a safety issue.

CM Buxton asked if the golf carts should have seat belts. Mayor Hazel stated this will depend on the requirement of the state.

CM Scott asked what the reason is to have them in Celina. Resident Fred Heckathorn stated he has a golf cart. It has a car title, is state inspected, and has a state license. He would not drive it on highways nor Main Street and downtown where there are a lot of cars. He runs it on the side streets and West Bank Road. The dealer he purchased it from informed him they sell street legal golf carts, which comes with a seat belt system. He suggested maybe towards Walmart, you inform them to drive on the bike path. He got it as a fun thing to drive around.

CM Scott stated there are kids on mopeds and guys on tractors, and wonders if car drivers will respect these as vehicles or see them as something they need to get around. CM Sovinski stated once they are road certified, we cannot stop them unless we write a law prohibiting them.

Law Director Moore reported ORC 4511.214 restricts the operation of low speed and under speed vehicles to be driven on any street or highway with a speed limit higher than 35 mph. It also states nothing shall prevent the local authority from authoring more stringent local regulations governing the operation of low speed vehicles.

CM LeJeune highly recommended a seat belt system for the driver and each passenger be included in Section Five of the legislation.

CM Buxton asked if licensed out of state golf carts would be allowed. CM Sovinski stated most likely the reason they would be here is for an event or festival. CM Clausen stated as long as they meet all the City requirements, there should be no problem.

CM Larmore made a motion to have administration put legislation together for use of under speed vehicles on City streets, seconded by CM Scott. Motion passed with voice acclamation vote 3-0 aye.

Committee Chair Clausen adjourned the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Submitted by Joan S. Wurster, Clerk of Council