



Public Involvement Committee of Council Agenda
August 19, 2026 - 5:30 PM
233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio

1. Approval of the Public Involvement Committee Minutes of May 1, 2026
2. July 4th Event Review
3. Upcoming 2026 Events
4. Discussion, questions, and requests for future meetings
5. Adjournment



Public Involvement Committee Minutes May 1, 2026

The Public Involvement Committee of Council met at 4:05 p.m. on May 1, 2026 in the Council Library located at 233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio.

Present: Michael Graves, Council Member; Christina McElfresh, Vice Mayor; Molly Cloyd, Council Member; Beth Combs, Clerk of Council; David Bond, Lions Club; and Larry Lester, City Manager.

Mr. Lester opened discussion regarding the City's July 4th event. Due to this year's event honoring America250, Mr. Lester shared that a sponsorship program was launched at the beginning of the year. He stated that the fundraising goal is \$20,000, and the City has currently received \$16,500 in sponsorships. Mr. Lester noted that City staff and representatives from the Lions Club have held planning meetings to discuss enhancements to the fireworks display, entertainment, and event amenities.

Mrs. Combs shared that the July 4th celebration has historically been organized by the Lions Club, however, the City is taking on a larger role this year in recognition of America250. She stated that most aspects of the event will remain the same, including the 10:00 a.m. parade start time, which has received favorable feedback. Mrs. Combs explained that the City is exploring additional elements, such as a parade float competition, special guests, or alternate musical entertainment, to help fill the gap created by the high school band's inability to participate this year. She also noted that a Parade Grand Marshal is still needed. In response to a question from Ms. Cloyd regarding parade organization, Mrs. Combs stated that Taylor Wright is coordinating the parade on behalf of the Boy Scouts.

Ms. Cloyd, as a former parade organizer, shared that previous feedback identified a loss of momentum caused by the time gap between the conclusion of the parade and the start of activities at Community Park. Mrs. Combs explained that residents who support the earlier parade start time appreciate avoiding the hottest part of the day. Ms. Cloyd referenced the community of Upper Arlington, which segments neighborhoods and holds a themed decoration competition in conjunction with its parade. Mrs. McElfresh noted that Centerville also utilizes a similar approach and allows businesses to participate. She expressed concern that it may be too late to implement such an idea for 2026, but suggested it could be considered for future years.

Ms. Cloyd suggested maintaining energy between events by directing parade floats to Community Park, where visitors could view the floats up close, vote on winners, and enjoy food vendors operating earlier in the day. Mrs. McElfresh explained that this approach had been attempted previously, with the parade ending at Community Park and festivities already underway, however, significant resources were expended despite low attendance. Mr. Bond stated that many families appear to prefer spending the afternoon on personal activities and avoiding the hottest part of the day before returning to the park around 5:00 p.m. Ms. Cloyd noted that effective messaging could help address this issue by encouraging families to enjoy personal activities after the parade, then returning for the evening festivities.



Mrs. McElfresh explained that the long-term goal is to host the evening festivities at Bicentennial Commons. This has not yet been possible due to water and other issues at the park. Ms. Cloyd stated that she had only recently become aware of this long-term plan and suggested that staff seek community feedback regarding the proposed location change. She expressed concern about parking and the possibility that the new location could limit attendance for some residents. Mrs. Combs asked the Committee for suggestions for a Parade Grand Marshal. The Committee suggested Anna Hale, the Hendrickses, or Reed Musgrove. The Committee also discussed allowing residents to submit nominations and vote for a Grand Marshal in future years.

The Committee discussed the fireworks start time and the City's new fireworks vendor, Yokum Fireworks. Mrs. Combs stated that Yokum Fireworks has received positive reviews from other municipalities and will provide a pyro-musical show with an associated soundtrack. The vendor also plans to change the launch location to allow for closer-proximity effects for attendees in the park. The Committee discussed making the soundtrack available to residents who may watch the fireworks from home.

Mrs. Combs also shared that the City is using a new attractions vendor, A&S, which will provide balloon artists, face painters, inflatables, and carnival or yard-style games. The Committee suggested community organizations and groups that may be able to provide volunteers to operate the games and distribute prizes. Mr. Bond stated that the Lions Club will provide children's sight tests at the gazebo. He asked about the stop time for beer sales and children's attractions, which is directly related to the fireworks start time. A 9:45 p.m. stop time was suggested. Mr. Bond stated that hot air balloon rides will again be provided by Mary Rawlins and that the Lions Club is not seeking sponsors. Mrs. Combs explained that the staff planning group had discussed having two bands this year, however, this is not logistically feasible. Instead, the current plan is to have a DJ from 4:00–6:00 p.m., followed by the headlining band, DV8, from 6:30–9:30 p.m.

Mrs. Combs noted that she has reached out to community groups by email and provided suggestions for ways they can participate in the evening event. Mrs. McElfresh asked how non-food vendors may participate, and Mrs. Combs advised that interested vendors may contact her directly. Mrs. Combs also shared information regarding America250 promotional materials available through the Butler County Visitors Bureau, including glow bracelets, stickers, temporary tattoos, and hand fans. She reviewed promotional efforts, including social media, word of mouth, park display boards, and a Main Street banner. Ms. Cloyd suggested the City of Mason as an example, noting its use of LED construction signs at major entry points to remind residents of road closures and provide event times.

Mrs. Combs asked the Committee for additional ideas to incorporate the America250 theme. Members suggested that vendors could offer America250-themed merchandise or food items. Ms. Cloyd suggested encouraging residents to participate by decorating their homes and displaying American flags. She also noted that a flag disposal box is available at the City Building. Mrs. McElfresh shared that a local community group conducts a flag placement fundraiser and suggested exploring the possibility of incorporating the fundraiser along the parade route.



Mrs. Combs provided an update on the Memorial Day Ceremony, scheduled for May 25 at 10:00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Park. She noted that, historically, Council has participated in the Roll Call of Veterans. The names will be distributed to Mrs. McElfresh, as Council representative, and City staff, to be read during the ceremony. Mr. Lester explained that he is working to collect audio files and phonetic spellings to help ensure that veterans' names are pronounced correctly. Mrs. Combs reviewed the ceremony agenda and noted that the Boy Scouts will distribute refreshments to attendees. Ms. Cloyd requested that any memorial highway signs be cleaned and maintained in good condition and that worn flags be replaced.

The Public Involvement Committee adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Combs
Clerk of Council