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RTA service changes coming to CH and UH

Vince Reddy

On June 13, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) will introduce its NEXT GEN service revisions, which will bring major changes to Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

In 2019, RTA hired Jarrett Walker and Associates to assist with re-designing its route network to improve service frequency and connectivity within the constraints of its financial resources. This type of streamlining has become common in the transit industry, with complete network redesigns in Houston and Columbus among the most notable.

NEXT GEN will bring some improvements to transit service in the Heights, but there will also be cuts. Service frequency will be increased on some lines, while service to some parts of Cleveland Heights will be



The stretches of RTA's bus network shown in yellow will lose service on June 13.

eliminated altogether.

The Mayfield Road bus (line 9) exemplifies NEXT GEN's positive and negative effects. For the first time in years, Heights cities will have direct service to downtown Cleveland—on lines 9 and 11—but the routes to downtown will be circuitous. Making a transfer will often still be quicker. The current

line 9 ends its westbound trips in the center of the Cleveland Clinic campus, at East 93rd Street and Euclid Avenue, while the NEXT GEN line 9 will serve the Clinic only from stops along East 105th Street and Hough Avenue.

Rush-hour trips on line 9 now skip Severance Circle and travel between Richmond Road and the Mayfield Red Line station in 22 minutes. Under NEXT GEN, rush-hour trips all will enter Severance, increasing trip time to 28 minutes. The change is necessary because line 37, which now serves Severance during rush hour, will no longer enter Cleveland Heights. Weekday frequency on the 9 will improve, with 41 weekday runs in each direction, compared to the current 34.

Similar changes will come to Cedar Road. The current line 32 will be discontinued and replaced with a rerouted line 11, and the number

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CH Green Team springs to action



CHGT's founders (from left) Catalina Wagers, Natalie Elwell and Alex Sitarik at Forest Hill Park doing a cleanup on Earth Day.

Catalina Wagers

Have you ever wondered if you are recycling correctly? Have you ever felt compelled to learn about, and promote, more environmentally sustainable practices in the Heights, but do not know where to start? You are not alone. The newly formed Cleveland Heights Green Team (CHGT) is a community volunteer organization focused on working with residents and local advocacy groups to identify opportunities and solutions intended to promote healthier and more

sustainable environmental practices.

The group's three founders met while attending a Recycling Ambassador seminar offered by Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District in January.

"As we introduced ourselves to the class, [I] learned that two other participants were also Cleveland Heights residents. We decided to connect and explore ways to work with Heights residents to help improve recycling practices," said Natalie Elwell.

An Ohio native, Elwell chose to

continued on page 2

Forest Hill Church celebrates Juneteenth

Ajah Hales

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Forest Hill Church Presbyterian has continued to press forward with services, programs and traditions. The church's food pantry has tripled its service to families in need. Co-pastors John Lentz and Veronica Goines have delivered sermons digitally to the community and beyond, via YouTube, for more than a year.

Now, the church's Black History Education Committee plans to pres-



Elégie members Caleb A. Wright, Michael Hives, Mist'a Craig and Brian Barron.

ent the church's first public event since the pandemic began. Forest

Hill Church's annual Juneteenth cel-

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Pride flag theft sparks worry, then joy in UH

Maeve Kozak

What looked at first to be a possible hate crime in University Heights turned out to be nothing more than a home-improvement project.

Last month, University Heights neighbors feared the worst when a gay-pride flag disappeared from a house on Edgerton Road. They were concerned the theft was a hate crime, and an attempt to intimidate and silence the LGBTQIA+ community.

Charlie Olivio turned to a Facebook discussion board to ask neighbors if they had any video surveillance of someone stealing the pride flag belonging to him and his husband, Tommy Chesnes. Olivio noted that the neighborhood has many homes that fly pride flags, and expressed concern that others may also have fallen victim to a thief.

Neighbors rallied to the couple's defense, offering encouragement and shared frustration. Elizabeth Wolfson, Melissa Connelly, and Joe Yosef Hochheiser went so far as to offer to purchase new pride flags. Olivio suggested that neighbors instead make donations to the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, or to The Trevor Project.

While neighbors struggled to solve the crime, the caper was no match for the the couple's dog, Daisy.

In an interview with Channel 19 News, Olivio said, "Our dog started barking out the window and directly at the tree [in our front yard]. So, I opened the blinds, looked out the window and saw this little red and orange stripe.

"I said, 'Oh my gosh, I think

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Letters Policy

The *Heights Observer* welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, along with the writer’s name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org/members.

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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About the Observer

The *Heights Observer* is not an ordinary newspaper; it is a nonprofit publication for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

The *Observer* has no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers.

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

Is there something you think should be covered in the *Heights Observer*? If so, please write it on your own, or with friends, neighbors or colleagues. Our volunteer editors will make sure it’s ready to publish and contact you with any questions.

If you’re writing a news article, it should be clear and factual. If you want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it’s about something specific to our two cities.

- To make a submission of any kind, go to www.heightsobserver.org and click on “Member Center” at the left.
- For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions that aren’t answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the July issue must be submitted by June 14. We publish some articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Officials must protect CH’s green assets

To the Editor:

A recent stroll by the Top of the Hill project led me to also check out what has been called the “collegiate edition” of Top of the Hill, on Euclid Heights Boulevard. This is a student-housing project located directly across from Buckingham condominiums, to be marketed to Case Western Reserve University students.

Both the Planning Commission and Architectural Board of Review seem to have mandated the preservation and incorporation of an existing 5,200-square-foot house and adjoining carriage house into the project, due to their historical significance. An excellent decision, which stands in stark contrast to the elimination of virtually every mature tree—literally anything green—between Overlook Park apartments and Margaret Wagner House. It would seem green space holds no historical significance.

With upcoming development projects at the Millikin wetlands, MetroHealth, and Cedar-Lee-Meadowbrook, citizens must stand guard. We need to elect representa-

tives who, when changing the face of Cleveland Heights, will retain its historically significant beauty.

Steven Rowsey
Cleveland Heights

CH resident urges voters to stay informed; endorses Danforth

To the Editor:

After more than four years of waiting for political noise to subside, three major political races come to our backyard. The 11th District U.S. Congressional race to replace Marcia Fudge, the Cleveland mayor’s race to replace 16-year incumbent Frank Jackson and, most significant to Cleveland Heights residents, the first directly elected mayor’s race in the city’s 100-year history.

While federal-level officials can impact issues that affect American lives, city mayors can make executive changes that affect residents’ daily lives. For that reason, the Cleveland Heights mayor’s race is a rare opportunity for residents to have a say in the future of our city.

“The time is just right,” noted Elwell. “As we celebrate our city’s 100th birthday, we reflect on all the things that have made Cleveland Heights a great place to live, and we look forward to a future where a culture of sustainability is part of all of our residents’ lives.”

Poet Alice Walker said, “Look closely at the present you are constructing: it should look like the future you are dreaming.” CHGT is optimistic that its efforts to reach out and work with Heights residents will drive tangible positive results in the community for years to come.

To learn more, and get involved with CHGT, visit www.chgreenteam.org, and follow the group on Instagram (@clevelandheightsgreenteam) and Facebook (@chgreenteam).

Catalina Wagers is an eight-year resident of Cleveland Heights’ Fairfax neighborhood. She is the third co-founder of Cleveland Heights Green Team, and is actively involved with several local organizations, supporting causes and programs focused on the advancement of NEO through better access to education, policy advocacy, and environmental protection.

Do we want someone progressive and inclusive, experienced and competent, thoughtful and decisive, reasonable and collaborative, with proven leadership qualities? Perhaps someone up to the job who can take a fresh look at City Hall?

If we do, I encourage residents to get involved in this race to find out what all the candidates have to say. Join online forums, and as soon as they are available, attend candidates’ debates. If they do, I think they will conclude, as I have, that Barbara Danforth is the best candidate to lead Cleveland Heights into the future.

Joy Roller
Cleveland Heights
[Roller is a volunteer helping to elect Danforth.]

Hart is the leader we need for CH mayor

To the Editor:

I urge my fellow residents to join me in supporting Melody Hart for mayor because she has demonstrated the kind of leadership Cleveland Heights urgently needs, to address a range of challenges and opportunities we face.

As a Cleveland Heights council member, Melody has made it a priority to really listen to residents’ concerns; respond, and actually get things done; and do that by helping bring people together to solve problems we all care about.

Melody sat in on council meetings for four years before deciding to run. She was elected [to council] with the highest number of votes in 2019, and has shown that she has a comprehensive understanding of the many important issues facing our community, and the nuts and bolts of how various aspects of our city government work (or don’t work). We need someone with this kind of experience for our first elected mayor.

Melody will be out and about throughout the community during the upcoming election campaign, so please take the opportunity to meet her and get to know her. I think you’ll be impressed! Her schedule will be posted at <https://melodyjoybart.com/>.

Rachel DeGolia
Cleveland Heights
[DeGolia is a friend of Hart.]

Heights Observer Election Policy

The *Heights Observer* will review election-related submissions with a goal of providing fair and equitable access for those seeking office.

Candidates for office are expected to identify themselves as such when submitting anything for publication.

Candidates’ supporters and campaign representatives, and anyone writing about any candidate or election issue, are expected to disclose any personal or professional relationship they may have with any candidate, or with the subject of

their submission. These disclosures are intended to inform *Heights Observer* review, and will be disclosed to readers when relevant.

The *Heights Observer* will determine whether and when submissions will run in print, online, or both.

Contributions by and about candidates, and any election issue, are limited to a maximum of 400 words.

The *Heights Observer* does not endorse candidates, nor does FutureHeights, the nonprofit community-development corporation that publishes the *Heights Observer*.

Severance should be candidates' top priority

Robert Brown

Severance Town Center is a shell of its former self. Its troubles are obvious to anyone who visits the property and sees the vacant storefronts, the closed Regal Cinema and I-Hop, the massive empty building that once housed a Walmart, and expanses of asphalt that were once filled with the cars of shoppers.

The question now facing Cleveland Heights is this: How can Severance Town Center be redeveloped so that it again becomes a productive asset for Cleveland Heights—providing needed services and generating tax dollars to help relieve the tax burden on residents?

As Cleveland Heights prepares to elect its first mayor, it is my hope that its citizens will demand that all candidates for mayor, and for city council, address this issue.

A new idea—an enclosed shopping mall: Decades after most of Cleveland Heights had been nearly fully developed as a first-ring Cleveland suburb, a large site remained available for development. It was the estate of John L. Severance and his family, one of the wealthiest and most influential families in Cleveland's history.

In 1963, Severance Town Center opened on the grounds of the former estate as the first enclosed shopping mall in Ohio, with multi-story department stores—Higbee's and Halle's—anchoring each end of it,



Large expanses of asphalt paving at Severance Town Center, once filled with the cars of shoppers, are now mostly empty.

connected by a corridor filled with smaller stores.

It was a new shopping experience for Clevelanders, drawing customers to Cleveland Heights from throughout the region during the 1960s and '70s.

At that time, the region's freeway network was not fully in place, so being located on a major road like Mayfield was enough to make Severance a competitive regional destination for shopping.

Expansion and "un-malling": As the region's freeway network grew with the opening of I-271, I-480 and US 422, Severance's location became less competitive; shoppers and businesses were drawn to newer centers closer to freeway interchanges.

Severance's owners reacted by adding a Gold Circle discount department store in 1981, and a large food court in 1986. These changes were not enough to save the interior mall, most of which was demolished by 1998.

Severance then transformed into

what is called an outdoor "power center," anchored by a Home Depot and a Walmart, along with a Marshalls and a Borders bookstore. [Of those, Home Depot and Marshalls remain.]

Decline and foreclosure: Despite the updates, Severance continued to decline and, in December 2014, went into mortgage foreclosure, with management turned over to a court-appointed receiver.

While Severance was in receivership, awaiting auction, FutureHeights hosted a community meeting on Oct. 21, 2015, attended by nearly 200 people, to discuss options for its future.

Ideas generated at the meeting included everything from senior housing and related health-care facilities to light industrial "maker" spaces, and even a Chautauqua-like cultural and educational center.

Hope was expressed at the meeting that city government would be proactive in reaching out to find a new owner who would meet the com-

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What leadership means to me

Melody Hart

A mayoral campaign is all about leadership, this time within the context of the Cleveland Heights community. Effective city leadership involves a three-legged stool, and our city's first elected mayor needs to have strengths in three areas—civic engagement, experience in city government, and executive finance and managerial skills.

Civic engagement: My years of involvement with Greater Cleveland Congregations Cleveland Heights Housing Committee includes direct engagement with the neighborhoods most affected by the housing crisis, and advocacy for housing equity and reform. A longtime supporter of Heights Friends of Immigrants, I have sponsored a Haitian immigrant who is now a working, productive member of our community. Serving as a board member and treasurer for the past three years, I have been a member of Cleveland Heights Democrats since 2005. I am also on the executive committee of the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party.

City government: When I was elected to city council in November 2019, I received the highest number of votes of any candidate. Prior to being elected, I attended Council Committee of the Whole and Council meetings weekly for over four years, with a particular interest in

fiscal responsibility and housing issues. I developed and got legislation passed, putting more teeth in foreclosure bond legislation, out-of-county register, and vacant housing registry. I am well-known to city staff and my council peers for my ability to listen, collaborate and compromise, especially on tough issues.

Managerial skills: I work alongside my team. As mayor, I will get to know the strengths of our staff and maintain responsive communication with our residents. I will work with the council collaboratively, in the same way I have worked with developers, residents, and many others to obtain win-win solutions for our community.

My decision to run for mayor came after months of considering who else might be able to provide all three “legs of the stool” for our city's future. When I didn't see any other candidate who was ready to create that collaborative vision, I made the decision to run.

I am confident that, together, we can set the stage for another hundred years of success and progress—and I welcome the opportunity to talk with you directly about your vision for our city's first mayor. To view my calendar of events and sign up for an in-person chat or phone call, visit melodyjoyhart.com.

Cleveland Heights City Council Member Melody Joy Hart has been active in the community and is running to become Cleveland Heights' first directly elected mayor.

Requiem for city council and a form of government

Garry Kanter

Cleveland Heights City Council has ceased to function in a productive manner. Come Jan. 1, 2022, its duties will be drastically minimized by the change to a mayor-council form of government.

“City council” is both the rules under which it operates, and the people whose duty it is to carry out those rules. It's hard to define the exact date, but some of the people on the current council stopped carrying out the rules in good faith at least six years ago.

The hypocrisy and mendacity of these council members, including Ungar, Dunbar and Stein, is undeniable.

It continues to this day, as evidenced by the travesty that was the “Temporary Standing Rules” ordinance passed as a so-called “emergency” [the first week of May] and the so-called “first reading” of the council vacancy appointment charter change amendment (to put it on the November ballot), at the same council meeting.

Ungar and Dunbar had no problem with their own campaign conduct in 2019, when they worked actively to thwart the will of the voters regarding the elected mayor charter amendment via a secret campaign PAC. They saw nothing wrong with then-council member Yasinow soliciting the firefighters' union's endorsement

against that charter change; or Yasinow going door-to-door to defeat the amendment while prominently wearing her city-logoed name tag.

They saw nothing wrong with failing to disclose to their council colleagues or the public their substantial donations and relationships to the PAC—even as they were discussing the ballot language of the elected mayor amendment, and the language of their own counter-amendment.

Dunbar actually read a statement from their campaign PAC at a council meeting, as she defended their relationship with former council member Jimmy Hicks.

Somehow, this year, some unidentified campaign transgressions require “temporary” legislation, expiring Dec. 31. I've read the ordinance. It's petty, second-grade-level stuff. And it includes no consequences for violations; hence it is unenforceable.

The “first reading” of the council vacancy amendment was equally pointless. They can't vote to put the charter change amendment on the ballot until the first week of July, as per Ohio Revised Code. And the ballot language that was read was so bad it will be re-written before it's voted on.

The council is made up of just seven people, and a couple of them are, quite simply, out to lunch. So, a guy like Ungar—a “very” accomplished professional litigator—can have an outsized negative influence.

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Basic services must remain mayor’s priority

Alan Rapoport

Cleveland Heights soon will elect a mayor for the first time since the 1920s. As former CH City Council president with the official title of mayor, I worked closely with city managers. I understand the wide scope of activities conducted by local government. I know the important role a new mayor will play. An entirely new system of government must be created for our city without guidance from tradition or experience. At stake is nothing less than the health, welfare and safety of all Cleveland Heights residents.

Our community must choose wisely. It must elect the candidate to lead a municipal corporation with a \$50-million budget, and hundreds of employees. That choice should be based on credentials. It should not be based simply on the usual vague political statements about hopes and dreams.

Our new mayor primarily must pay attention to the basics. City resources supply us with police, fire, ambulance, refuse, snow- and leaf-removal services. They maintain streets, water and sewer lines, public buildings, and many vehicles and other equipment. I used to call this the “cake.” Other resources are “frosting” on the cake—such as our fine recreation program, our excellent city parks, our caring Office on

Aging, and our continuing efforts to assure City Hall is open, accessible and accountable.

Frosting on the cake makes our community special. But in the end, the cake is what good government is all about. There is a traditional Cleveland Heights understanding: We pay high taxes, and we expect good, basic services in return. We should expect our new mayor to abide by that understanding.

The new mayor must have sufficient experience, temperament, and leadership ability to identify, hire and supervise a city administrator to manage day-to-day operations. Also, the new mayor must articulate a productive vision for Cleveland Heights, and demonstrate an ability to work with city council.

In the end, it will be that mayor’s most important responsibility to guarantee that public money is spent prudently. For this reason, voters deserve to know in advance of the election how each candidate plans to assure that excellent basic services remain a priority.

I grew up in Cleveland Heights and I still live here. I want our city to succeed; with the right choice for mayor, it can.

Alan Rapoport, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, served on CH City Council (1980–87) and as mayor (1982–87).

Former Cleveland mayor endorses Danforth

Jane Campbell

As a former Ohio state representative (1985–1997) and Cuyahoga County commissioner (1997–2001) I worked with a lot of mayors. Serving as mayor of Cleveland (2001–2005) was the highest honor and hardest and most important work of my life. Soon, Cleveland Heights will directly elect a mayor for the first time in almost 100 years. I appreciate from my own experience how difficult this job will be.

There’s no ducking responsibility when you’re the mayor. Cleveland Heights has an almost \$45-million budget and nearly 400 employees. The new mayor must inspire the existing workforce to serve with excellence, and bring in talented leadership to manage the city.

The buck always stops with the mayor. If garbage pickup is late, or streets aren’t plowed on time, people expect a mayor to fix things. If commercial districts start looking shabby, if the house on the corner is overgrown with weeds, if the water and sewer lines break, if the *Plain Dealer* calls and the television camera truck is in the city hall parking lot, the mayor gets the call.

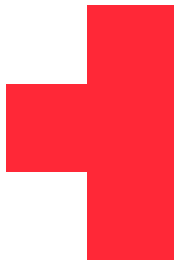
Cleveland Heights is a wonderful place dedicated to creating an intentionally diverse community. I still have family and friends in the Heights, so I’m not a disinterested observer. But Cleveland Heights is not without problems and challenges—aging housing stock, commercial districts in need of improvement, racial tension, to name a few. Basic

city services, such as police, fire, and ambulance, must be maintained at a high level. Can a directly elected mayor solve all problems? Of course not. But the right mayor certainly can move the city toward solutions.

As I told Barbara Danforth’s supporters, it’s important for the mayor to have the mix of experience that Barbara has, to guide the city through this transformational time. Barbara worked in city government as Cleveland’s chief prosecutor. She worked in county government as the chief legal counsel for the Department of Children and Family Services. She handled personnel, payroll, and complex financial challenges with her turnaround of the YWCA [of Greater Cleveland], and she served in the corporate sector, searching and vetting executive talent to fit large organizations. Finding talent is a critical skill for an effective mayor.

Cleveland Heights voters now have the opportunity to hire the right talent to lead the city, Barbara Danforth. Cleveland Heights deserves no less than the best to serve as the first mayor under the new system.

Jane Campbell, former mayor of Cleveland, is president and CEO of the United States Capitol Historical Society in Washington, D.C. She also serves on the steering committee for the Women Mayors’ Network, an international, nonpartisan peer network to support women who are running governments at the urban level and who are #LeadingDifferently. She is a friend of Barbara Danforth.



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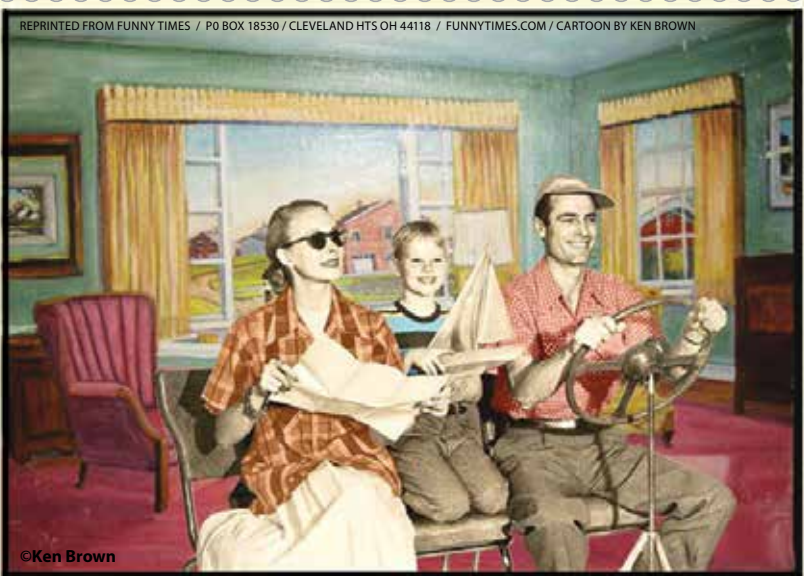
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Heights pilgrims advocate for our community



THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

On May 4, Elizabeth Kirby, CH-UH schools superintendent, made another pilgrimage to Columbus to urge the Ohio Legislature to improve the state's investment in public education, and to directly fund vouchers and charter schools. The current funding of education choice has resulted in deep cuts in programs and personnel in the Heights schools, a steep increase in local taxes, and plenty of tension and anger as state policy puts the future attractiveness of our unique community in doubt.

Heights Coalition for Public Education members Robin Koslen, Toni Thayer and Joan Spoerl, along with Jayne Geneva, a longtime member of the district's lay finance committee, also spoke before the Senate's primary and secondary education committee, during hearings on the state's biennial budget. The Legislature must approve an operating budget by June 30, and fixing school funding is a big-ticket item in the budget.

Eighteen of the 136 people who submitted testimony in writing or in person during the hearings were from our school district. We are in a crisis. It is no time to sit back.

We have an impressive track record of citizens speaking up and stepping up to create the community we want, instead of passively enduring bad policy. That's the reason I moved to Cleveland Heights 40 years ago. There it was on full display again: the citizen voice! I could not be prouder.

Each witness used her five minutes to put a face on the issue and convince lawmakers to support a strong system of public education. They referenced the myriad ways in which existing policy is undermining education quality, devaluing children and educators, and damaging the communities served by the Heights schools.

The funding plan is popular with Ohio school districts. Who can argue with a plan that serves all children and school districts and

gives all students an equal chance to excel, regardless of their needs or the ability of their community to fund its public schools?

School officials from across the state testified in support of the plan. Our district stood out, however, as the one community where 17 other people added their voices to the superintendent's. Voters and levy workers, parents and grandparents, career educators, and school district residents who have a stake in the success of our public schools presented their case. Visit the Heights Coalition for Public Education website (<http://chub.net/coalition/>) to read their testimony.

They spoke for the people who live in our community and are invested in its long-term viability and success as a stable, vibrant and inclusive oasis. No one else brought that perspective, the sense of urgency, and the set of values that people who are looking out for their community can articulate.

Each witness personalized the need for better funding. They made clear that paid lobbyists and think-tank experts are not the only people who should shape policy. They effectively challenged the prevailing narrative that public schools, which serve 90 percent of Ohio students, have failed. They appealed to lawmakers to uphold the Constitution.

Koslen and her two adult children are graduates of the Heights schools. Her four grandchildren attend Canterbury Elementary School. Devoted to her hometown, Koslen said, "I would feel terrible if I didn't do everything I could to get the legislation passed. I have the opportunity and the time; there is no excuse not to speak up."

Spoerl had the luxury of participating and felt compelled to use it. She wanted to participate in democracy and hoped to "open [legislators'] hearts and minds so they would listen to another point of view."

It remains to be seen if the legislature got our message.

Susie Kaeser is a 40-year resident of Cleveland Heights and the former director of Reaching Heights. She is active in the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters.



2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

total sales volume \$18 million

homes sold 72

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We're already living in a 15-minute city



HEIGHTS OF
DEMOCRACY

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

Recently we came across a hot new concept in city planning: the 15-minute city. As longtime Cleveland Heights residents we said, "Wait . . . this describes where we've lived for years!"

Residents of a 15-minute city can work, shop, learn and play within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from their homes, with good transit options for further destinations.

With the rapid expansion of work-from-home during the COVID-19 pandemic, this concept gained international currency. Carlos Modena, a professor at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, championed the idea, and sold it to Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo. Hidalgo made it the centerpiece of her 2020 campaign, winning re-election to a second term.

Cleveland Heights is already a complex of overlapping 15-minute cities. Cedar Fairmount, Coventry Village, Cedar Lee, Noble and Severance each provide some access to groceries, green space, and social hubs, such as restaurants, coffee shops and bars. Three strategically located branches of Heights Libraries supply residents with brain food, entertainment, educational programs and community meeting spaces. MetroHealth Medi-

cal Center and its 24-hour emergency room came to Severance a few years ago, greatly improving health-care access there.

Modena points out, "The 15-minute city is not a silver bullet. Today our neighborhoods are segregated by money—rich, poor, middle class, workers, bars, offices. . . . But what we must do is use 15-minute cities to focus on the common good. With enough funding and support, deployed in the right way, we can guarantee they are for the people."

Clearly, Severance and the Noble corridor need the most support to realize their 15-minute potential. Since the two areas overlap, positive improvements in one will enhance quality of life in the other, and, of course, boost the city as a whole.

Cleveland Heights is a great community for working from home, as we know from experience. But many essential jobs cannot be done from home, and we could certainly use more decent-paying employment for local residents. With all the hand-wringing about Severance over the years, we cannot recall any discussion of redevelopment specifically focused on creating jobs that pay a living wage; for example, light manufacturing of some kind.

Save a Lot provides some groceries in the northernmost part of town, but it is not a full-service supermarket. A service like the CircleLink shuttle, which provides free transport from various stops in University Circle to Coventry Road, could do wonders to draw the Severance

and Noble 15-minute cities closer together, providing easier access to food, health care, and other amenities.

Severance and Noble both lack a sufficient range of social hubs. Noble residents have tried for years to attract a coffee shop. Cleveland Heights-based Phoenix Coffee has become a worker co-op under the Evergreen Cooperatives umbrella. Could it be enticed to expand into Noble? Heights Libraries' purchase of the church property next door to its Noble branch is bound to increase foot and bicycle traffic in that neighborhood. Wouldn't it be great to check out a book and peruse it over a cup of Joe on the patio of a local, worker-owned cafe?

Adding community transit and a cafe would amplify two great efforts already underway in Noble: increased green space in the Delmore Community Orchard, and the Roanoke and Noble mini-park; and the pilot Community Learning Center at Noble Elementary School, which will offer after-school, weekend and summer programs for all ages beginning this fall.

We see synergy starting to work its magic in the Noble 15-minute city. Let's encourage the mayor and council we elect in November to rally our city's economic development staff and new planning director to realize the potential of Noble and Severance.

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.

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GardenWalk CH is July 17 and 18

Paula Darte

As a Cleveland Heights newcomer, Mary Hosier wandered into one of the Heights' favorite bookshops, said she needed to make new friends, and asked about local gardeners. The recommendation was to go find Jan Kious. This launched a decade-long friendship, and Hosier joined the planning committee of GardenWalk Cleveland and, more recently, GardenWalk Cleveland Heights, founded by Kious.

This year's Cleveland Heights event (<https://gardenwalkclevelandheights.com>) will be held on Saturday, July 17, and Sunday, July 18, noon to 5 p.m. each day.

GardenWalk Cleveland (<https://gardenwalkcleveland.org>), which features nine Cleveland neighborhoods, will be held one week earlier, on Saturday, July 10, and Sunday, July 11, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

Both events are free, self-guided tours.

"This is such a great way to get to know your neighbors," said Hosier. "We need ways to connect and calm the stress we've all been through lately."

GardenWalk Cleveland Heights comprises individual and community gardens, and offers an opportunity to meet neighbors, explore unfamiliar corners of Cleveland Heights, and gather gardening advice and encouragement.

Participating gardeners open their yards to share their living works of art, and visitors offer admiration and friendly



Gardens large and small will be featured on GardenWalk Cleveland Heights' self-guided tour.

exchange about making gardens grow.

"It is also a nudge to get your gardens in shape," commented Kious, "so you can share in visits and banter, which we all so greatly need."

The volunteers organizing GardenWalk Cleveland Heights invite gardeners of all sorts to show their gardens, whether they are beginners, seasoned horticulturalists, have postage stamp-sized plots, or maintain secret gardens behind some of the Heights' mansions.

If you would like to add your garden to the Cleveland Heights event, June 7 is the deadline for letting the volunteer organizers know. Submit a request through the website <https://gardenwalkcleveland-heights.com>, or by sending an e-mail to info@gardenwalkch.com.

A list of participating gardens will be included in the July edition of the *Heights Observer*, and featured on GardenWalk Cleveland Heights' website.

Paula Darte recently moved to Cleveland Heights and inherited a pollinator garden that will be part of the tour.

Boulevard Neighbors recaps recent projects

Rachel DeGolia

Boulevard Neighbors is a growing network of residents who live in the neighborhood near Boulevard Elementary School, bounded by Cumberland, Taylor, Mayfield and Berkeley roads. Among the projects the group has undertaken this spring are:

- Identifying a need for more trees in the neighborhood. Members are reaching out to neighbors and collaborating with Heights Tree People to plant trees in front yards, for free. For more information, send an e-mail to heightstreepeople@gmail.com.
- Building and installing a Little Free Pantry in front of Beth El - The Heights Synagogue, on Desota Avenue, where neighbors

can donate non-perishable food items for use by those in need.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in May, followed by a walk to Compton Road to discuss the potential Compton Greenway with Cleveland Heights City Planning Director Eric Zamft.

- Continuing discussions with the city of Cleveland Heights, begun in 2019, to explore possibilities for traffic-calming design, pocket parks, and safer bicycling paths on Compton Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard. The Compton Greenway Study, viewable online at www.clevelandheights.com/1171/Compton-Road-Greenway-Study, outlines some of these ideas.
- In April, 15-20 Boulevard Neigh-

continued on page 12

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Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

APRIL 19, 2021

Council members present were Jason Stein (president), Kahlil Seren (vice president), Craig Cobb, Mary Dunbar, Melody Joy Hart, Davida Russell, and Michael N. Ungar. Also present were City Manager Susanna Niermann O'Neil, Clerk of Council and Finance Director Amy Himmelein, and Law Director William Hanna.

Chief of Police report

Police Chief Annette Mecklenburg reviewed the April 13 town hall forum on recruitment and selection of officers, and vehicle pursuits, attended by 56 community members. Another forum, on April 27, will cover bias-based policing and use of force. The forums have been announced on the city's website, on the police department's Facebook page, and on flyers posted at local businesses.

Cedar/Lee/Meadowbrook

Economic Development Director Tim Boland recommended, and council approved, a proposal from Flaherty & Collins/City Architecture for the Cedar/Lee/Meadowbrook redevelopment project. The proposal is a \$50-million investment in the entire site.

Council approvals

- First extension of the development services agreement and project approval with FutureHeights. The current agreement has expired; this one will be for two years and will not exceed \$140,000.
- A limit of 15 percent of the purchase price on the commission third parties can charge restaurants to deliver orders during dine-in restrictions. Kahlil Seren reported that a local restaurant owner had complained about thin profit margins being cut by up to 30 percent by delivery charges.
- An amendment to the Fair Practices code to include source of income as a prohibited discriminatory rationale in housing rental.

Council member comments

Davida Russell noted that Sen. Sherrod Brown is sending a liaison to the Racial Justice Task Force, the first known senate/city liaison. The task force's work could help the senator's staff craft national legislation.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

MAY 3, 2021

All council members were present, as were the city manager, clerk of council, and law director.

Public comments

Comments, submitted by e-mail, included a request for a public park at Lee Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard; one objection to open fishing at Lower Shaker Lake; a petition signed by 342 residents supporting fishing; and a request for speed bumps and traffic detectors to counter discriminatory policing practices. One resident, noting that bulk trash pickup would take place only one week per month, asked if dumpsters would be available.

Five residents of Buckingham Condominiums, located next to the Top of the Hill (TOH) project under construction, asked for signage, such as "permit parking only," in the parking garage where the city promised them preferential parking.

A resident questioned the use of an emergency vote for two pieces of legislation—



a proposed charter amendment [for filling council vacancies], and the establishment of council standing rules—claiming that the charter amendment wording was unclear and the standing rules were a reaction [by] one council member. A second resident also disagreed with the wording of the proposed charter amendment, and maintained that the amendment should include a 60-day limit for [council's] consideration of an appointment and then, if unfilled, a decision by the mayor or council president.

City manager's report

The city manager said that she and staff will address the garage signage and dog park problems noted by the Buckingham residents. Also, staff will work on signage for the Cedar Hill traffic pattern change [due to TOH construction], to avoid accidents.

Legislation

An ordinance proposing a charter amendment for filling a vacant council seat had a first reading.

Council approved the Temporary Standing Rules for Council ordinance, with Kahlil Seren voting no. He said the rules should not be adopted as written and needed further discussion.

Council amended the budget for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2021. The clerk of council/finance director reported that expenses were up for the TOH bond, but revenues have increased as well. Other expenses increased due to a rise in indigent burials, and the addition of an intern to help the municipal court digitize records.

Council member comments

Referring to the standing rules legislation and the rule requiring the support of two council members for the introduction of proposed legislation, Kahlil Seren said before the vote that if the standing rules passed, he would support any other council member's legislation.

Michael Ungar said that several council members had asked him to write up the Temporary Standing Rules for Council, and that the next council [to be elected November 2021] should decide whether these rules are acceptable.

Melody Hart commented that she has always collaborated with other advisers, staff, and council members when introducing new legislation.

Davida Russell said she appreciated the guidelines within the standing rules as introduced by Ungar.

LWV Observers: Gail Larson and Blanche Valancy.

Meeting packets, legislation, and other information can be found at www.clevelandheights.com/1142/2021-Agendas-and-Minutes.

Videos of council meetings can be viewed on the "City of Cleveland Heights, OH" YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/ClevelandHeightsOH.

Expanded reports are available online at www.heightsobserver.org.

REQUIEM continued from page 4

He was a force behind the "secret retreat" council held regarding Mayor Cheryl Stephens a few years back. He was a force behind that rigged Charter Review Commission (CRC).

We just learned that unless his preferred candidate would be appointed, no one would be appointed to replace Yasinow. And he said he would only vote for the council vacancy amendment change if it was the language recommended by [the] CRC—not because it's good legislation, but because it came

[from] his cherished CRC.

This city council is already a lame duck. Thankfully, it's starting to look like Ungar and Stein won't run for reelection in November. It would be nice if they declared their intentions publicly.

Albert Einstein is said to have said something about insanity and expecting different results for no reason. Well, until January anyway, nothing's going to change.

Garry Kanter resides in Cleveland Heights.

Cleveland Heights Community Development Block Grant applications open June 3

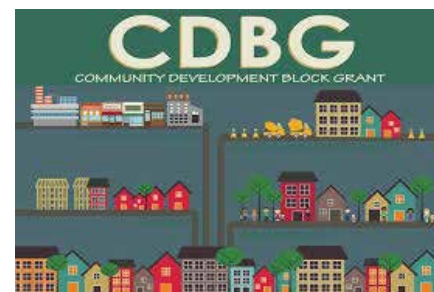
Jessica Schantz

The city of Cleveland Heights encourages eligible residents and organizations to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, available annually. This federal program, run by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, allocates money to eligible municipalities to be used in the areas of economic development, housing rehabilitation, and programming that specifically serves low- to moderate-income persons and neighborhoods.

In Cleveland Heights, CDBG funding has historically supported organizations that serve the aging, the disabled, and at-risk youth; wrap-around services; housing rehabilitation programming and assistance; and business development in eligible districts.

The application period for 2022 CDBG funding will open on June 3 and close on July 15. For more information about the program, and to access the online application, visit www.clevelandheights.com/CDBG.

Special assistance is available for applicants, including translation services. Contact Brian Iorio, Cleveland Heights' city planner and CDBG program manager, to request assistance or learn more about eligibility. He can be reached at biorio@clvhts.com, or



216-291-4845.

The city of Cleveland Heights established its Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) shortly after the formation of CDBG in 1974, to encourage citizen participation in the oversight of the program and its distributions. The newest members of CAC, for the 2021 calendar year, are Lee Barbee, Susan Efroymson, Diane Hallum, Allison Hite, Marc Lefkowitz, Josie Moore, Al Snodgrass, Patti Substelny and Catalina Wagers.

Part of CAC's charge is to work toward demographic and geographic community representation on the committee. To learn more about the CAC, including membership information, visit www.clevelandheights.com/396/Citizens-Advisory-Committee.

Jessica Schantz is the e-news manager at the Heights Observer and a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights. She is the current chair of the CAC.

RTA continued from page 1

of weekday westbound runs will increase from 30 to 39. As with line 9, service to the center of the Cleveland Clinic campus will be discontinued, with the 11 serving the Clinic from stops along East 105th Street and Quincy Avenue. The trip to Tower City from Cedar and Lee roads will take a lengthy 41 minutes.

The most drastic change will be the revisions to what is now the Monticello-Euclid Heights (7) line. The 7 now comes down Monticello Boulevard to Mayfield Road and connects to the center of the Cleveland Clinic campus (East 93rd and Euclid) by way of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard. Beginning June 13, the 7 will not come west of Taylor Road. Westbound 7 buses will turn north on Taylor and end their runs at the Stokes-Windermere Red Line station in East Cleveland. There will no longer be any RTA service on Coventry Road or Euclid Heights Boulevard.

As noted above, the East 185th-Taylor (37) line, which had already seen reduced service in Cleveland Heights, will cease serving the city altogether. The rerouted 7 line will replace a small part of the lost 37 service.

Changes will be less dramatic to other bus lines. The only 24-hour service to the area, the Warrensville (41) line, will be relatively unchanged, with some added service on Sundays. Weekday frequency on the Lakeview-Lee (40) line will be significantly improved, and the East 200th-Green (34) bus, which runs along the eastern border of University Heights, will continue as a limited-service, weekday-only line, but will be extended to Tri-C East from its current terminus at Green Road.

For more information on NEXT GEN, visit www.riderta.com/nextgen.

Vince Reddy works at LAND studio and has lived in Cleveland Heights for 24 years.

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PRIDE FLAG continued from page 1



A screen shot from Channel 19 News' coverage of the flag bandit.

that's our pride flag,' and I looked and saw a big, fat raccoon walking up the limb."

Turns out, the flag was taken by a raccoon for a nest that, apparently, needed a splash of color.

University Heights residents celebrated the happy end to the story on social media. Leilani Hall surmised that the "raccoon wanted to show his pride," while Chris Janata stated he was "so happy the result is a critter, not hate."

Olivio and Chesnes "love calling University Heights home," and were happy to find out that the thief was not someone with malicious intent.

For the third year in a row, a pride flag will be displayed in front of University Heights City Hall for the entire month of June, as part of the city's pride-month celebration. And this year, at the base of the flagpole, a toy raccoon will be displayed in honor of the Great Edgerton Road Capers of 2021.

Maeve Kozak is a summer intern with the city of University Heights.

Safe. Happy. Not lonely anymore. That's how Lillian Gattozzi describes her new life.

"I'm so much happier since I moved here. I can't imagine a better place."

A former nurse that radiates kindness, Lillian grew up in Bainbridge and made the move to South Franklin Circle in 2019. Relishing the bustling activities in her new community, Lillian quickly joined in for social gatherings, exercise programs, and card groups with fellow residents.

"We go for walks, we talk, and I'm able to meet lovely people. The warm, caring staff is just icing on the cake. I can't begin to say how comforting that is," says Lillian.

Read the full story at
judsonsmartliving.org/blog

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Lillian Gattozzi

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JUNETEENTH continued from page 1

celebration has been a widely attended event for the past five years, though it was held digitally in 2020.

On Saturday, June 19, at 4 p.m., the church will present a community meal, and an outdoor concert featuring Elégie will begin at 4:30 p.m. Community members are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets, to sit on the front lawn of the church.

All COVID-19 protocols will be observed, and masks will be required for all attendees.

In case of inclement weather, the food service still will take place at the church at 4 p.m.; the concert, however, will be presented digitally at 6:30 p.m., on Forest Hill Church's Facebook and Youtube pages.

This will be Elégie's first public concert since 2019. The group comprises four vocalists, Brian Barron, Mist'a Craig, Michael Hives and Caleb A. Wright, all graduates of Heights High, where they were members of the original Heights High Barbershoppers. They will be joined by pianist Phillip K. Jones II, another Heights High graduate, and other musicians.

For more information on the Juneteenth celebration or Forest Hill Church Presbyterian, contact the church office at 216-321-2660, or visit www.fhcpresh.org. For more information on Elégie, like and follow the group on Facebook and Instagram.

Ajab Hales, a Cleveland Heights resident, is a poet, activist and social justice advocate. She is a member of the Forest Hill Church Black History Education Committee, and has been a member of the church since 2005.

UH community remembers Pete Bernardo

Mike Cook

For decades, Pete Bernardo dedicated his life to his country, his community, and to John Carroll University (JCU). Bernardo died on May 14, at the age of 75. He is survived by his wife, JoAnne, and three sons.

"To describe the loss of Pete Bernardo and what he meant to this community is almost beyond words," University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan said. "He was a model of service and dedication to our community and to our country. All of us who worked with him are honored to have done so."

A decorated Vietnam War veteran, Bernardo was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross and three Purple Hearts for his heroic efforts in the line of duty for the U.S. Army.

Bernardo helped plan, coordinate, and negotiate the configuration management, product



The late Pete Bernardo, pictured at University Heights' Memorial Day Ceremony in 2019.

assurance, and safety plans for a \$164-million research-and-development test program designed to produce and test the free world's only non-nuclear antiballistic missile system.

Following a distinguished 20-year military career, Bernardo

served in a variety of roles at JCU, including director of alumni relations (1988-1997), director of advancement services (1998-2000), and director of planned giving (2001-2007). Most recently, Bernardo was senior director of philanthropic relations.

Upon receiving JCU's 2016 Alumni Medal, Bernardo explained his dedication to service. "There are just some things that have to be done," he said, "and someone needs to do it."

Bernardo was active in many activities at JCU and in Greater Cleveland. He staffed the chain crew at JCU football games, and mentored ROTC cadets on campus. He was

one of Santa's helpers, dressing up as Santa Claus for JCU's annual Breakfast with Santa event for more than 20 years.

Bernardo also served on University Heights City Council, 2007-2009. He helped organize the University Heights Memorial Day Parade and ceremony for 30-plus years.

"My heart hurts over this. I first met Pete in 1991 when I transferred to Carroll, and loved him immediately," said Rachel Mullen, executive assistant and special projects coordinator for University Heights. "I was thrilled to work with him again on the 2019 parade. We all experienced his kind heart and generous spirit firsthand."

Brennan said planning for the city's Memorial Day Ceremony and the parade (usually held on Memorial Day, but rescheduled this year for July 4) will be emotional. "This will be the first time in over 30 years we are doing these community events without him," Brennan said. "He will be in our hearts and minds, never more so than this year as we do these things in memory of Pete."

[Portions of this article were adapted, with permission, from a JCU press release.]

Mike Cook is the communications and civic engagement coordinator for University Heights.

Friends of The Walt restore native plants



The reigning University Heights Volunteers of the Year were back at it on May 15 and 16. Over the weekend, they planted and watered 404 plants, bringing 23 Ohio native plant species back to Walter Stinson Community Park. As a group, they volunteered for a total of 46 hours on May 15, and an additional 23 hours on May 16.

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CH residents deserve a public hearing on Meadowbrook-Lee site

Fran Mentch

Cleveland Heights citizens have not been asked what they think about the city’s (sixth) attempt to develop [the site at] Meadowbrook Boulevard and Lee Road.

My friends and I think that putting in an urban activity park (a space with a stage; an area to hold farmers markets, or food trucks; a water feature, etc.) is a good idea for the 1.07-acre space at Meadowbrook and Lee.

Many people agree—more than 668 have signed our Change.org online petition—and have joined with us to help make this happen.

Don’t let people tell you a park won’t bring in money. If they say this, explain that the Coventry merchants are on record saying that Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park brings them business.

We have repeatedly asked city council [members] to put a discussion of a park at Meadowbrook-Lee on their agenda. They have refused to

do so.

Citizen participation in council meetings has been severely weakened because the meetings are virtual—citizens can’t go to the meeting and bring up the issue ourselves. We have submitted written comments that are read at the meetings, but they have been ignored.

No matter how you feel about what should be done with that city land—build apartments or a park—the more important issue is: Shouldn’t citizens have an opportunity to participate in the discussion about this space?

We think citizens deserve a public hearing about Meadowbrook-Lee; not a public meeting, but a formal public hearing.

If you agree, please e-mail city council (clevelandheightscouncil@clvhts.com) and ask for a public

hearing, or, better yet, call them. Their numbers (except one) are on the city’s website. Just google Cleveland Heights City Council, then click on their photos to find their phone numbers.

For more information, visit our website, www.cedarleepark.com, or our Facebook page. If you agree that the Meadowbrook-Lee space should become Cedar Lee Park, please e-mail us cedarleepark@yahoo.com to request a yard sign, or leaflets to pass out to your neighbors.

Fran Mentch was a leader of Citizens for Oakwood, the group that tried to stop the development of the former Oakwood Country Club. She is a doctoral candidate in the Cleveland State University Levin College of Urban Affairs, the chair of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club Executive Committee, and a community activist.

It’s time for fair school funding

Robin Koslen

The following is a shortened version of the testimony I gave to the Ohio State Senate’s K-12 Education Committee on May 5, in support of HB-1:

Like you, I think my community is pretty amazing. We in the Heights pride ourselves on our racial, economic and religious diversity. We believe that diversity is our strength. Yet, when you [talk to] someone who has looked for a home here, the most common [comment] is, “I love Cleveland Heights and University Heights, but the taxes are so high.” Residents agree, and some may think it is because their tax dollars aren’t used well.

But that is not the case. In so many ways, we have fallen into a black hole with regard to the funding of our schools.

Our public school population is a diverse group. All of the children in our public schools qualify for free lunch because so many of our kids are eligible. Ten percent of the children attending Noble Elementary School come from refugee families from Bhutan. Many of our kids are in foster care, and some of our kids live in huge mansions in families that could have chosen any private school around, but chose public because it reflects their values. A more homogeneous group of kids might be cheaper to educate, but then it would not be Cleveland Heights-University Heights.

We are tired of the cap on state funding, which results in new students not generating new dollars. We are tired of EdChoice dollars coming from district funds instead of directly from the state (and with no cap). We are tired of being considered wealthy, when anyone taking a look at the actual income of our families would never make that assessment.

We are tired of having to explain to citizens every three years that our state designed a system in which the additional funds needed just to keep up with inflation are the responsibility of homeowners, yet again. But mostly, we are tired of the inadequate contribution that the state of Ohio has made to the 90% of children who attend public schools in the state.

The Fair School Funding Plan addresses many of the complex issues around school funding. It takes into account both property values and income of the residents of a community. It funds EdChoice vouchers at the state level instead of saddling homeowners with bills that leave some communities writing checks to the state, and costing my district over \$9 million this school year. It addresses the true cost of education and provides a framework to share the cost between the community and the state. It pays for state mandates, such as busing. This is a plan that has been in the works for three years. It has been researched and studied extensively. It needs to be passed—now.

Robin Koslen is a mom, grandma, Cleveland Heights resident, retired teacher, part-time activist, and full-time rebel.

The nobility of Noble Neighbors

Diane Hallum

I love the gardeners market sponsored by Noble Neighbors at the Roanoke park. I have found new homes there for my crowded native perennials.

The park that finally occupies that space, after years of begging the city to allow citizens to create it, is wonderful and charming, all initiated by the early work of Noble Neighbors’ Beautification Committee.

Noble Neighbors’ May event is also tremendous, but I do wonder who actually plans it, since members never discuss [the plans].

I learned long ago as a member of Noble Neighbors (we first came together in winter 2013, because of crime and related housing issues) that beautification and promoting our area had become the group’s sole purpose. Any confusion about this was made quite clear at one of the group’s monthly meetings, that I had attended religiously. In mid-2015, one woman became frustrated by the leader’s refusal to allow attendees to discuss vacant-housing issues. The leader and her allies told her angrily that she was not wanted, and she should leave!

believed we were members of a local citizens group focused on improving our area. It turns out we aren’t even considered “members” by our “leaders.” We’re just on an e-mail list like any other schmuck!

Under the watchful eyes of city leaders, including FutureHeights, which acts as the fiscal agent for Noble Neighbors, somehow a Noble-area citizens group transmogrified into an e-mail list, and “members” were stripped of having any rights over its functions or operations.

When city leaders claim Noble Neighbors was included in some decision, or approved something, what does that actually mean? An e-mail list said this was okay?

Just how did it indicate its approval, I wonder.

Joking aside, this is how systemic racism plays out: a group of frustrated, fed-up and angry citizens in a long-abused and -neglected part of the city is co-opted by city leaders and its agents to create a marketing e-mail list that exists to tell everyone that whatever the city or its agents decide, it’s great!

The takeaway: “Noble” here does not apply to my neighborhood on the north side, but instead to the feudalistic treatment of it.

Diane Hallum is a 30-year resident in the Noble Road area, north of Monticello Boulevard.

BOULEVARD continued from page 8

bors members and Beth El - The Heights Synagogue members fanned out along several streets for a neighborhood trash pickup to dispose of trash that had accumulated over the winter.

For the latest news and information, check out the group’s Facebook page at Boulevard Neighbors Cleveland Heights, or e-mail boulevardneighborshts@gmail.com.

Rachel DeGolia is a member of Boulevard Neighbors.

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Cleveland Heights Girl Scout receives a Medal of Honor



Cleveland Heights resident Ellie Costanzo points to her new medal.

COURTESY BREANNA GANUELAS

the water herself, Costanzo jumped in and pulled him out, putting him on the dock's ladder. From there, family members were able to pull him completely out of the water and on to the dock to safety.

"Because of her quick thinking and willingness to jump right into action, someone's life was saved," said Christyson. "It takes courage and confidence to do what she did, and we are happy to present her with this national award."

Training in health and safety is part of the Girl Scout program. A Girl Scout, because of the Promise and Law to which she has subscribed, is expected to be resourceful, skilled and competent; to have presence of mind and be of service to others. Many factors are taken into consideration in determining if an act is of unusual bravery beyond that which is expected of a Girl Scout.

Between 1998 and 2020, GSUSA has bestowed this honor on more than 500 Girl Scouts, and GSNEO has recognized 11 of its own scouts with this national honor. On May 3, Costanzo joined their ranks.

Breanna Ganuelas is marketing coordinator and brand specialist for Girl Scouts of North East Ohio.

Breanna Ganuelas

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) awarded Elizabeth (Ellie) Costanzo, a Girl Scout Brownie, its Medal of Honor for saving the life of a family friend last year. The Girl Scout Medal of Honor is presented to Girl Scouts who have performed acts of heroism beyond the degree of maturity and training expected for their age.

Jane Christyson, CEO of Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (GSNEO) presented Costanzo with the award, along with a congratulatory letter from GSUSA, in a ceremony at Church of the Gesu in University Heights, on May 3.

While visiting her grandparents' lake house last summer, Costanzo was standing on the dock with her siblings and two family friends. Her brother was fishing on the dock and had a bite on his line; but soon after the fish bit, it swam under the dock. One of the friends, who was 3 at the time, bent down to look at the fish and fell into the water. Costanzo saw that he was having trouble breathing and struggling to stay above the water. Knowing she was able to stand in



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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education

Meeting highlights

APRIL 20, 2021 – Work Session
Board members present were President James Posch, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, Jodi Sourini, and Beverly Wright. Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer also attended.

School-community partnerships
Nancy Peppler, supervisor of the community and school partnerships program, reported. District community partners have provided services, staff, and funding to support the district and its students during the COVID pandemic. Notably, MetroHealth is providing health care, education, and employment to students and their families. Other community partners are providing additional enrichment and support, including supervision and intervention, for this summer's Tiger Camp.

Board members commented on the importance of having centralized and experienced management of the community partnerships. They also noted the educational and employment opportunities that MetroHealth provides for students at all levels, in addition to its medical services.

Noble community learning center
Peppler also reported on the district's community learning center's research-based school improvement strategy, built on the pillars of expanded learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, collaborative leadership and practices, and integrated student support. The district is working with Noble Elementary School to launch a community learning center in fall 2021, and hire a full-time coordinator in spring 2021.

Performance audit update
Jodi Sourini reported her research on performance audits, which included discussions with the superintendent and treasurer of the Talawanda school district about its 2020 performance audit. Talawanda was one of two Ohio school districts to have requested a state performance audit between 2018 and 2020. The other district's audit was limited in scope, covering only facilities.
The Talawanda officials criticized the audit process and did not think it was worth the \$60,000 expense. They said many audit recommendations would have adversely affected the district's state report card results and would not be acceptable to their school community; others were impractical or inconsistent with state requirements. [A detailed summary of their objections can be viewed online.]

LWV Observer: Kathy Petrey.

APRIL 30, 2021 – Special Meeting
All board members were present, as were the superintendent, treasurer, and Assistant Superintendent Alicia Gould.

Paper and pencil for third-grade tests
The board met with one agenda item: to authorize a paper-and-pencil format for the third-grade math and English language arts tests; the format was approved.

LWV Observer: Robin Koslen.

MAY 4, 2021
All board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer

Pandemic planning
Fourth-quarter instruction and graduation: Students began participating in the five-day option model for in-person instruction on April 12. State testing for grades three through 12 will be completed by May 14. Graduation is planned for June 3, with June 4 as the rain date.

Summer school: Planning continues; presently, 447 students have registered.

Vaccine clinics: The district held a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the high school in partnership with Giant Eagle Pharmacy and the Educational Services Center. Students will receive their second dose at a clinic on May 19. For a future middle school student vaccination, the district will host as many clinics as allowed.

District finances, Fair School Funding Plan
Scott Gainer presented the five-year forecast in a new, expanded format that was easier to read. The Ohio legislature is considering how to fund the Fair School Funding Plan. Currently, funding for the bill is embedded in the senate's biennial budget bill. EdChoice vouchers would be funded directly by the state, and the district's per-pupil allocation would return to a base amount. However, funding for the plan would be phased in over six years. Thus, the district would not immediately see significant funds. Once the state's biennial budget is finalized, the district will be able to adjust the forecast.

The state's Student Wellness and Success funds have been folded into funds for the Fair School Funding Plan. Malia Lewis interjected that the governor did not intend for those funds to be used in this manner; Gainer concurred. The state expects districts to use Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds as a stopgap for the six-year phase-in of the Fair School Funding Plan. ESSER funds and Student Wellness and Success funds are separate from general operating funds.

The superintendent is considering using the district's ESSER funds, which must be spent by 2024, to support various educational models or summer programs.

The board approved the five-year forecast and agreed that the community should be educated regarding the changes in funding.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

Documents for all board meetings can be accessed at www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx. Go to "BoardDocs" in the left menu; then "MEETINGS" in the top menu; click on "Agenda." Board meetings are livestreamed on the district's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/CHUHSchools) and recorded for later viewing.







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Joshua Madlock
Cleveland Heights High School

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Love the Madlock Family!



Zelda Thayer-Hansen
Cleveland Heights High School

What a person you are! Phi Beta Kappa scholar, soccer star, visual artist extraordinaire, virtuoso violinist, dedicated activist, a great friend and our darling daughter. And on to exciting things at OU's Honors Tutorial College! We are so proud and we love you so so so so much.

— Mom, Dad & Orson



Kassidy Cameron
Laurel School

Congratulations Kassidy! We are very proud of all that you have accomplished. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for you. Good luck at NYU!

Love, Your Family



Maple Buescher
Cleveland Heights High School

To our favorite author, Congratulations on closing the book on high school and starting the sequel! We're so proud of you every day, and can't wait to watch as you write the next chapter of your life.

*Love,
Mom, Dad, and Laurel*

Congratulations to the Class of 2021!

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CH-UH Board of Education
Jim Posch, Malia Lewis, Beverly Wright,
Dan Heintz, Jodi Sourini

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Library offers memory kits for those with dementia



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COURTESY HEIGHTS LIBRARIES

Isabelle Rew

Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia that result in memory loss impact many in our community. According to the Alzheimer's Association, more than 6 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's, and more than 11 million provide unpaid care for people with dementia.

In June, all Heights Libraries branches will begin circulating memory kits to support community members living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia, and their caregivers.

Library staff developed the kits after attending a Dementia Friends training in fall 2020, hosted by the Benjamin Rose Institute, which described ways people and spaces can be made more welcoming to those with dementia.

"The library is always trying to find ways to assist various groups in our community," said Adult Services Librarian Amia Wheatley. "After this training, we formed a task force to create these memory kits and programming for those living with dementia and their caregivers to use to help start conversations."

Memory kits are interactive bundles of library materials, containing

books, music, movies, and activities that center around a theme or a decade. The materials are designed to trigger fond memories, and help caregivers and those with dementia connect over fun and relaxing activities.

"I hope that the users of these kits will find enjoyment in using them, and that they will help stir up memories through the music, movies and activities we've selected," said Wheatley.

Library staff also partnered with Amy Jenkins, supervisor of the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging, to develop the kits. The library will be donating six kits to the city's Senior Center.

"With this partnership, driven by an initiative called Dementia-Friendly Cleveland Heights, our office hopes to expand our programming to include Cleveland Heights seniors with dementia and their caregivers," Jenkins said. "Our vision would be to someday be able to host a support group at the center."

"The kits that the library has compiled should serve as a wonderful vehicle for discussion, participation, stimulation, and fun! We look forward to sharing them with the community," added Jenkins.

This summer, Heights Libraries is planning programs to educate community members about Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. The Cleveland Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association will present an online series on topics ranging from "Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia," on June 7, to "Effective Communication Strategies," on July 26. All programs will be on Zoom, and will begin at 7 p.m.

For more information, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

Isabelle Rew is the community engagement associate for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

What's going on at your library?

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400
Monday, June 21, 7 p.m.

Matchmakers Midsummer Outdoor Book Talk. Looking for a great summer read? Join Matchmakers on the library's front lawn, where participants will share book suggestions. Bring your own chair or blanket, and look for the sign. This program follows CDC safety guidelines, and will be held weather permitting.

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600
Monday, June 28, 5 p.m.

Greater Cleveland Food Bank Drive-Through Mobile Pantry. Free fresh produce will be available to those in need at this drive-through pickup. Those served must be 18 or older, and should bring a photo ID and make sure their car trunks are clean. First come, first served, rain or shine.

Noble Neighborhood Library

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665
Saturday, June 19, 12 p.m.
Juneteenth Book Giveaway. Books

can reveal how people all over the world fight for freedom and equality. The library is observing Juneteenth with a book giveaway for children and teens. Enjoy some time outdoors with library staff and choose a title for your home library.

University Heights Library

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700
Monday, June 14, 6 p.m.

Wizbang Circus in the Park. Come one, come all, to this special performance by Cleveland Heights' Wizbang Circus Theater. The Big Top moves outside to Walter Stinson Community Park for an evening of laughter, thrills and magic. For kids, teens and adults.

Online program

Monday, June 28, 7 p.m., on Zoom
Starting a Small Business in Ohio. Baffled by LLCs? EINs? Operating Agreements? Attorney Joe Dunson will present a legal overview on starting a small business, and answer questions. Registration begins June 1.

Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights



APRIL 19, 2021

Board members present were President Dana Fluellen, Vice President Gabe Crenshaw, Patti Carlyle, Max Gerbec, Annette Iwamoto, Tyler McTeague, and Vikas Turakhia.

Finances

Total cash balance across the operating accounts, Bauer Fund accounts, and investment accounts was \$21,063,366.46.

Board resolutions

- Recognition of Assistant Finance Manager Amy Gerson's retirement.
- An amendment to the service and administrative policy, stating the library's willingness to modify services or programs to allow full participation of people with disabilities.
- Removal of overdue fines on hot spots and video games; the library is now a fine-free library.
- A contract with Bostwick Design, in the amount of \$49,840, for help with predesign and visioning of the Noble Neighborhood Library's renovation/addition.

Director's report

- Heights Libraries returns to pre-COVID hours of operation on May 10.
- The Noble Presbyterian Church sale closes on April 30.
- Two public Zoom meetings were held to introduce the community to the Noble branch expansion.
- Staff from Maximum Accessible Housing of Ohio are conducting accessibility assessments of each of the Heights Libraries buildings, beginning with the Lee Road branch.
- The Small Business Development Center has

been up and running during the pandemic; classes and workshops can be found at www.csusbdc.com.

Public service report

- Deputy Director Kim DeNero-Akroyd presented the 2020 Strategic Plan annual report.
- The library now has a tablet-lending program.
- As a supplement to the ongoing "1619 Project" discussion series, Librarian John Piche has been interviewing authors and academics on the topic of race in America. Links to the interviews can be found at: heightslibrary.org/services/1619-project.
- Technology trainers Ann MacNamara and Jackie Mayse conducted Facebook live events in March on how to use Zoom and language learning. Sessions were recorded and are available on the library's YouTube channel.
- Students at Noble and Roxboro elementary schools logged in to connect with library staff during one of three 30-minute sessions designed for kindergarten through grade one, grades two and three, and grades four through five. Staff shared new books, read aloud, and talked about what to expect at the library.

LWV Observer: Elizabeth M. Tracy.

Library board meetings are livestreamed, recorded, and available on YouTube on the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Channel.

Information about the board, including meeting minutes, can be found at heightslibrary.org/locations/heights-libraries-board.

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LEI offers in-person and virtual camps

Eli Millette

As Lake Erie Ink (LEI) prepares for the start of in-person creative expression camps this summer, one cannot help but reflect back to last summer, when the idea of meeting in a physical space seemed impossible.

The story of LEI this past year is one of difficulty, as the entire organization scrambled to find ways to adapt.

Perhaps no one had to adapt more than Catherine Madison, LEI's program operations coordinator, and mother of a first-grader. Looking back on the year, Madison noted, "I've had to find a balance of being able to manage work and also manage my daughter's schoolwork. To be honest, it was driving me nuts."

Despite the difficult year, Madison noticed moments of growth. "There's been growth in our patience," Madison said. "We had to grow and learn how to be patient with ourselves, with work, with our kids."

After her daughter went back to school, Madison was able to come in

to work, and feels more in control of her space and her career.

LEI found opportunities for growth, as well. Forced to create a writing space for youth without youth allowed in the space, LEI patiently adapted, creating strong, virtual programs (including a virtual Comic Con) and finding unique ways to get the community creatively engaged.

Now, LEI is coupling in-person camps with a series of virtual programs, taking lessons learned from last year and applying them to the future.

LEI is offering limited, outdoor creative-expression camps, finally bringing youth back to the Coventry PEACE campus.

Learn more about LEI's summer programs at <https://lakeerieink.org/summer>, and register for LEI's in-person and virtual camps at <https://lakeerieink.org/register>.

Eli Millette works as the communications and outreach director at Lake Erie Ink, and lives in Cleveland Heights.

Dobama releases anti-racism policy

Colin Anderson

In 2019, Dobama Theatre was recognized with the Kathryn V. Lamkey Award for its efforts toward equity, diversity, and inclusion. On March 8, Dobama's Board of Directors renewed the theater's commitment [to those principles] when it unanimously adopted its Love and Respect document. In a statement, the Dobama Theatre team noted it was "continuing to learn about each other's life experiences, engaging with and supporting colleagues, and challenging injustice when we encounter it will help us create the community we seek."

The living document is a plan for anti-racist action, and building a culture of authentic inclusivity at Dobama Theatre, focusing on the intersections of race with sexuality, gender, disability, religion, and other oppressed identities. The plan establishes a set of guiding principles for creating opportunity and undoing previous harm. It is divided into three parts, with each section containing actionable items for initiatives, such as fair pay, non-union employee protections, and preventing bias in casting and hiring, among others.

The first part, The People, emphasizes the importance of physical, mental, and emotional health in creating a thriving workplace, which leads to high-quality art. It creates a plan for ensuring representation in programming, reimagining the board's role as stewards of the organization, and investing in living wages.

The next section, The Work, establishes a new model for collaborative artmaking and visible inclusion, removing barriers to access through mentorship, clear reporting systems, and anti-bias training. This section emphasizes the ongoing nature of the document, building a plan for annual

review and assessment of progress.

The Process defines how Dobama plans to take action going forward. Dobama will reimagine existing structures and operations, emphasizing circular management models rather than top-down hierarchies. It will invest further in community engagement and deepen important relationships in order to serve its neighbors more fully, connecting with small businesses, local schools, and initiatives with the city of Cleveland Heights. Most importantly, Dobama promises to democratize programming by involving more representative voices in script selection, education programs, and audience engagement.

Dobama worked closely with ALJP Consulting in the creation of the document. ALJP is a Chicago-based firm focused on creating equity in the nonprofit arts sector.

Dobama recognizes that there is still much work to be done beyond this document. Breaking down barriers set in place by years of systemic racism and other forms of bias has been, and will continue to be, at the center of Dobama's mission to inspire an examination of the contemporary world. The Love and Respect document seeks to end xenophobia within the theater industry and in our community.

Dobama Theatre has made this commitment to action publicly in order to be held accountable. To read more about Dobama's anti-racism actions, including solidarity and accountability statements, visit dobama.org/antiracism.

Colin Anderson is the director of production at Dobama Theatre. He has worked as a director, designer and dramaturg with theaters throughout Cleveland, with a special focus on LGBTQIA.



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Heights Arts presents 'Random Acts of Art'



COURTESY HEIGHTS ARTS

A performance from the 2020 season.

Megan Gallagher

Heights Arts is proud to announce the return of its Random Acts of Art LIVE! music program for this summer and fall. The concert series was born during the pandemic, when local musicians found that their usually steady summer work was no longer available due to the shutdown of many, if not all, performance opportunities. Concerts went virtual, and artists were inspired to write and create new music addressing current issues and challenges. The Random Acts of Art LIVE! series allowed for continued live performances, bringing friends and neighbors together, while remaining socially distanced.

"There is something magical about hyper-local pop-up events like this, especially after some of the isolation we felt in the last year," said Arleigh Savage, music coordinator at Heights Arts. "I always witness spontaneous conversation and excitement shared with listeners at these concerts, with everyone walking away feeling energized with the connection the event fosters."

The Random Acts of Art LIVE! program provided eight

performances to the community last season, and it gave vital work to 17 musicians trying to make ends meet in the Heights community. Past hosts said the music provided a light during an otherwise gray period.

"Northcliffe neighbors enthusiastically hosted several socially distanced front-porch concerts this past summer. This was a wonderful opportunity for neighbors and friends to enjoy live music safely during the pandemic," remembered concert host Donna Johnson. "The first concert was emotional. We were gathered with face masks on. For many of us, this was the first live music we had experienced since March. And this was our first neighborhood gathering since the pandemic. It was a joy seeing everyone!"

Heights Arts hopes to continue the momentum and provide more performances to the community in a safe, fun environment this season. Certain communities will also benefit from free concerts thanks to funding from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation.

Said Heights Arts Executive Director Rachel Bernstein, "In many ways, this program is allowing us to reach communities we might not have been able to reach prior to the pandemic. It has given us a way to bring music to a neighborhood instead of waiting or hoping for its residents to find us—providing a performance for those who might never have heard it otherwise."

In addition to free performances, private bookings are available to those who would like to host a performance. Those interested in booking a concert can visit www.heightsarts.org/random-acts-of-art to fill out a host reservation form. E-mail questions to Arleigh Savage, at music@heightsarts.org.

Megan Gallagher works in marketing at Heights Arts.

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SEVERANCE continued from page 3

munity’s expectations for transforming Severance. That did not happen; in 2016, the Namdar Realty Group, based in Great Neck, N.Y., purchased it at a public auction for \$10.5 million.

Since then, Namdar, which owns more than 400 properties nationwide and specializes in acquiring distressed properties, has managed Severance without making a significant reinvestment in it.

The future of Severance: One could say, “Severance is too big to fail”; or, more accurately, “Severance is too big and too important to Cleveland Heights to be allowed to fail.”

A glimpse into what might be part of Severance’s future came between 2000 and 2007, when Peter Rubin’s Coral Company redeveloped the northeast segment of Severance with

50 owner-occupied townhomes—the Courtyards of Severance.

Another glimpse into a possible future came more recently, with the establishment and proposed expansion of a MetroHealth hospital.

Some observers have suggested that Severance be reconfigured to feel more like the rest of Cleveland Heights.

The revitalization of Severance should be a top priority for Cleveland Heights’ new administration.

What are your thoughts about its future?


Robert N. Brown is a city planner with 45 years of experience, including nine years as Cleveland’s city planning director. A Cleveland Heights resident for more than 40 years, he is the co-chair of the FutureHeights Planning & Development Committee. He can be reached at citybobbrown@gmail.com.

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Class of 2021



Join Heights Schools Foundation and the CH-UH School District in congratulating the Heights High Class of 2021, along with our 5th and 8th grade students moving up to new buildings next year. All of Tiger Nation can help celebrate these milestones by displaying this tiger in your window.

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