



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Friday, January 9, 2015; Fiesta de Reyes (Feast of the Three Kings), Hispanic UMADAOP Youth Center, 3115 Scranton Road: In one of his first public appearances as the new Second District Community Relations Coordinator, Michael McDonald serves as one of the Three Kings. McDonald formerly served as coordinator of the Safety Team in the West Boulevard neighborhood.

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Plain Press

Cleveland’s Near Westside Newspaper

Residents relay concerns about police violence to Cleveland City Council members at Listening Tour

by Chuck Hoven

Following a 58-page report by the United States Department of Justice on excessive use of force by the Cleveland Police Department, Cleveland City Council's Safety Committee initiated a series of Listening Tours. Cleveland City Council President Kevin Kelley said the listening sessions were designed to “come to the neighborhoods and listen to what the citizens of Cleveland have to say. The end game is how do we use the Department of Justice findings to get better.”

Residents attending the City Council Safety Committee's Listening Tour at La Sagrada Familia Catholic Church on December 30th bared their hearts and souls to City Council members in hopes of engendering some changes in the relationship between the Cleveland Police and the Community. Over forty people got up to testify about their personal encounters with the police department, their fears about what will happen when they call police for help, and their ideas to help improve relations between police and the community.

Commenting on the testimony of residents following the meeting, Rev. Bob Begin, recently retired from St. Colman Parish, said ‘I don’t think I’ve ever seen this much pain expressed at a community meeting in Cleveland.’

Particularly moving was the testimony of a woman who said her son was killed three and a half years ago by Cleveland Police officers who crossed the line into Parma and waited for her son outside his home in order to rough him up. They ended up shooting him. She said, despite an eleven hundred-page report from internal affairs that recommended one of the officers involved should be terminated from his job, nothing has happened. She reported that the officers involved are still on the force in Cleveland. “They got away with murder. They murdered my son. They didn’t get indicted,” she said.

One woman, who referred to herself as a Christian Community Activist referred to a litany of issues – including woman being ignored when they report rape to the police, and officers disobeying state law when involving more than two cars in a high-speed chase. She said, “I don’t want to see another person die as a result of violations of a person’s human and legal rights” She then urged Cleveland City

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, January 17, 2015; Cleveland Public Library’s Carnegie South Branch Library building, 3115 Scranton Road: Community members were invited to a public meeting in December to share their vision on the future of this historic building. A campaign is now underway to convince the Cleveland Public Library Board to repair and reopen the building as a library.

Ohio Task Force on Community-Police Relations holds its first community meeting in Cleveland

by Chuck Hoven

The Ohio Task Force on Community-Police Relations convened by Governor John Kasich to address the issue of police community relations on a statewide basis held its first community meeting at Cleveland State University on January 20th. The Task Force formed in the wake of the U.S. Justice Department report on excessive use of force by

Cleveland Police and several police involved shootings of unarmed civilians that have occurred in the State of Ohio.

While there was a good turnout at the Cleveland State University meeting, a number of those in attendance were from out of town from as far away as Cincinnati. With two major meetings being held elsewhere in Cleveland the same night – a City Council Listening

Session on the same topic, and a Public Utilities Commission of Ohio meeting on a First Energy proposal to raise rates to allow it to burn dirty coal – many Cleveland voices were not heard. The Task Force Co-Chair, former State Senator Nina Turner said she would strongly consider having a second meeting in Cleveland. Also, people were

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, January 17, 2015; Family Open Studio at Art House, 3119 Denison Avenue: Karly Keirse and her daughter Harper, age 3, work on an art project together. Art House holds a free Family Open Studio the third Saturday of each month from 1-3 p.m. Art House provides the materials for children accompanied by an adult to work on an art project.

CTU President David Quolke draws crowd to Walz Library for breakfast meeting

by Chuck Hoven

Over fifty people attended the second Breakfast with Cleveland Teacher’s Union (CTU) President David Quolke and Cleveland Teachers Union leadership held at the Walz Library at 7910 Detroit Avenue on January 24th. Common Good Ohio and its staff Rowena Ventura and Pastor Aaron Phillips organized the meeting.

CTU President Quolke said he hoped these meetings would help build a coalition to “make sure schools are held accountable.” He said in the past, the CTU has reached out to parents and community members during crisis or at times when a levy is on the ballot. He hoped, with these breakfast conversations, to dialogue with parents and community members about issues they are concerned about on a regular basis. He hopes that if parents or community

members are seeking help about a problem in the schools, he can, at least, point them in the right direction.

Quolke said the American Federation of Teachers, to which the CTU belongs, is making an effort to unite with communities across the country.

Like the first Breakfast with the President, a major topic was the amount of high stakes tests students are taking, and what parents can do to help their children prepare for the tests. Cleveland Teachers’ Union President Quolke also talked about the readiness of Cleveland students to take the high stake tests and an effort to get the State Legislature to agree to a three-year moratorium on high stakes tests attached to the Common Core standards just being put in place.

Tracy Radich, 1st Vice President
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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, January 17, 2015; Halloran Park Skating Rink, 3550 W. 117th Street: Three members of the Halloran Huskies Hockey Team take time out from practice to pose for a picture.

ART
A FREE FAMILY OPEN STUDIO is held the third Saturday of every month from 1 to 3 pm. Spend time with your family as you make individual or family art works. Each month has a theme and Art House provides the materials. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-reg- istration not required. The Art House is located at 3119 Denison Ave. For more information, call 216/398-8556 or visit www.arthouse.org.

INSTITUTE FOR NEW FEELING (IfNf) presents an exhibition of works from their upcoming online collaboration, *The Felt Book*, a collection of home remedies in- spired by the structure of Fluxus scores, YouTube tutorials and eHow articles. *The Felt Book* spans 40+ artists and encom- passes works around wellness. During the opening reception at SPACES, IfNf will host a performative launch party, in- cluding a reading of treatments from their online publication, a video screening, and performances by *Felt Book* artists. SPACES is located at 2220 Superior Viaduct. Open from January 30 to March 27. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Sunday: 12 – 5 p.m., and the gallery is open un- til 8 p.m. on Thursdays. Admission (and parking) during regular gallery hours is free and open to the public. For more in- formation, visit www.SPACESgallery.org, call 216.621.2314 or email contact@SPACESgallery.org.

SHOCKWAVES, a hallucinatory trip into a man's subconscious mind in the moments before his death will be pre- miered at the Transformer Station, 1460 West 29th St., from Saturday, January 31 – Sunday, February 1. A reception to meet the artist will be held in the gal- leries at 5:00pm on Sunday February 1. Admission is free. Works by three artists—**Jessica Eaton, Mariah Rob- ertson, and Alison Rossiter**--who have developed techniques and processes unique to them, resulting in abstractions that challenge popular conceptions of photography will be on display from February 7 to May 2 at the Transformer Station. Member's Preview begins at 5:00 pm on February 7. The party con- tinues with DJ Eff and opens to the public from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Call 216/938-5429 for more information.

ART WALKS
Visit **THE SPICE BOX** for the lunch- time OPEN HOUSE at West 78th Stu- dios (north of Detroit) every Friday with at least 10 galleries open 11am-4pm.
THIRD FRIDAYS in the Detroit Shore- way neighborhood and at the West 78th Street Studios. See artwork and sip wine. Friday, February 20th! For more information, visit <http://www.dscdo.org/thirdfridays.aspx>.
TREMONT ARTWALK occurs on the second Friday of the month in the Tremont neighborhood, or February 13. Visit <http://tremontartwalk.com/> for more information.

CLARK AVENUE
CLARK AVENUE TLCI STUDY: A public meeting on the Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative planning study for Clark Avenue will be held on February 12th At Pilgrim Church, 2592 W. 14th at 6 p.m.

HEALTH CARE
Medworks' FREE MEDICAL, DENTAL AND WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINIC will be held on Saturday, February 21 from 9 am to 2 pm at Neighborhood Family Practice at 3569 Ridge Rd. Mammograms and dental screenings will be by appointment only; please call 216/201-9325. The free clinic is open to all--walk-ins welcome. For more information, visit www.medworksusa.org



The Plain Press Community Board is a listing of a variety of free activities and resources for neighborhoods served by the Plain Press. It is sponsored by Organize! Ohio through donations from readers and supporters.

HEATING ASSISTANCE
THE WINTER CRISIS PROGRAM provides assistance to eligible house- holds that are threatened with heating disconnection or have been discon- nected. The gross income of eligible households must be at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty guide- lines. Cuyahoga County providers are the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland (216/696-9077) and the Cleveland Housing Network (216/574-7100).
PERCENTAGE OF INCOME PAYMENT PLAN PLUS (PIPP Plus) allows eligible Ohioans to pay their utility bills based on a percentage of the household income. For a family of four the total annual in- come must be at or below \$35,775. To learn more about the programs or to find out if you're eligible call the toll-free hot- line at (800) 282-0880, Monday through Friday (hearing impaired customers may dial (800) 686-1557 for assistance) or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov for more information. When applying, customers must provide proof of their gross monthly household income for at least the last three months.

MUSIC
BRITE WINTER FESTIVAL will be held on Saturday, February 21st in the Market District. See the music lineup at <http://www.britewinter.com/2015-music-line-up-announced/>
NEAR WEST INTERGENERATIONAL SCHOOL CHOIR is starting an af- ter-school choir for students in junior or senior cluster, staff members, parents, grandparents, mentors, volunteers, partner facility residents or champions. Practices will be held at the Near West Intergenerational School (3805 Terrett Ave, off of West 38th) in the school library each Tuesday from 3:30 to 4:30 pm. Re- hearsals/instruction free to participants. For more information, contact Mr. Eric McGarvey at 216/721-0120 x 1107 or emcgarvey@tisonline.org
"RUST BELT ALLEY – Pop Music in Cleveland Before Rock and Roll " talk will be presented by Daniel Goldmark, Asso- ciate Professor of Music, Case Western Reserve University on February 11 at 7:30 pm at The Happy Dog, 5801 Detroit Ave, 44102, (216) 651-9474. Free.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH
LEARN TO START A NEIGHBOR- HOOD WATCH. Form a small planning committee in your neighborhood and call the Bureau of Community Policing at 216/623-5080 to ask for a crime pre- vention officer to come to your meeting to discuss your community's problems and needs.

TAXES
GET YOUR TAXES PREPARED FREE. Call 211 to make an appointment. IRS certified tax preparers and quick income tax returns. Appointments available Monday and Wednesday from 5:30pm to 8 pm and Saturdays from 10am to 12:30 pm at the Fulton Road Office in the Lin Omni Building at 3167 Fulton Rd, #305. Sponsored by the EITC coalition, United Way and the Stockyard, Clark-Fulton, and Brooklyn Centre Community Devel- opment Office.
LEARN TO PREPARE TAXES for oth- ers. Tax refunds are available to most low and moderate income families, and for many, are one of their largest sources of income all year - often one-fourth of their annual income. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the largest poverty relief program in the country. The EITC Coalition is looking for volunteer site coordinators, tax preparers, site greet- ers, and interpreters. Prior experience is not necessary, just attend a Coalition led training to become an IRS-certified volunteer. Sign up today by visiting www.refundohio.org or contacting Keely An- drews at 216/631-0280, x4121.

TEENS
COLLEGE NOW GREATER CLEVE- LAND AND THE CLEVELAND PUB- LIC LIBRARY are offering an 8-week after school program for high school students in the Fall, Winter and Spring consisting of enhanced Math and Read- ing proficiency through ACT Test Prep, \$100 stipend, Bus tickets, field trips and internship opportunities. Available at the South Brooklyn Library at 4303 Pearl Rd and the Eastman Library at 11602 Lorain Ave. For more information and to apply, visit www.collegenowgc.org/locate/community-based-programs/impact-the-216/, call 216/241-5587 or email impactthe216@collegenowgc.org.
HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: An Aware- ness Program for Parents and other Adults, is a free presentation with topics including substance abuse, violence, eating disorders, juvenile crime, tech- nology, risky games/challenges and more. Due to the nature of the materials presented, no youth are permitted to attend. The program will be presented on Thursday, February 5 at Lincoln West High School at 3202 West 30th St.. "Snooping and Searching" begins at 5:45 pm and the presentation begins at 6:30pm. Presented by Bath Township Police and Copley Police, assisted by Cleveland Police. For more information, call Clark-Fulton MyCom Neighborhood Coalition at Hispanic UMAMDAO at 216/495-1222.

TUTORING
FREE TUTORING. No registration or appointments necessary. Students also receive FREE healthy, nutritious bagged meals at all tutoring locations.
READING HELP FOR STUDENTS GRADES K-3 on Monday – Thursday 3:30 – 5:30 pm at the Walz Branch (7910 Detroit Ave.) of the Cleveland Public Library.
TUTORING IN ALL SUBJECTS (Math, Science, History, Language Arts, Home- work Help) **FOR STUDENTS GRADES K-8** on Monday-Thursday from 3 - 6 pm at the Carnegie West Branch (1900 Fulton Rd.), Fulton Branch (3545 Fulton Rd.), Rockport Branch (4421 West 140th St.), and Walz Branch (7910 Detroit Ave.). For more information about both programs, call 216/623-2835.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON
Saturday, January 17, 2015; Halloran Park Skating Rink, 3550 W. 117th Street: Logan Helmick, age 13, a member of the Halloran Huskies Hockey Team, practices for an upcoming game.

VETERANS
MCCAFFERTY OUTSTATION VET CENTER at 4242 Lorain Ave., serves veterans, their families and commu- nities with professional readjustment counseling, community education, out- reach to special populations, brokering of services with community agencies, and providing linkages to veterans and other services with the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Call 216/939-0784 or visit www.va.gov/rcs.
SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGISTRY EVALUATION PROGRAMS for Veterans include Ionizing Radiation Registry, Agent Orange Registry, Gulf War Registry, Depleted Uranium Fol- low-up Program, and Toxic Embedded Fragments Registry. For more infor- mation, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures or call the Special Health Issues Helpline at 800/749-8387 or the VA Benefits office at 800/827-1000.
THE TRI-C VETERANS EDUCATION CONNECTION CENTER, located in the Louis Stokes VA Medical Center at Wade Oval in University Circle, provides veterans with access to distance learning degree provide opportunities and support services. For further information, contact the Tri-C Veteran Services and Programs Office, Louis Stokes VA Medical Center, 10701 East Blvd, Room 1B-420, call 216/791-3800, ext. 6830, or visit www.tri-c.edu/veterans
VETERANS UPWARD BOUND pro- vides assistance to eligible US veterans who have served in the armed forces. It offers free comprehensive support services to eligible veterans interested in pursuing their first college degree or certificate. Services help veterans complete preparatory coursework, in- crease their access to college, develop academic skills, remain enroll in and graduate from any college in Ohio. Call Tri-C at 216/987-4938, email vub@tri-c.edu or visit www.tri-c.edu/VUB

VOLUNTEERING
Volunteer with **MY MENTOR MY FRIEND Program**, which matches caring adults in a lunch-time mentoring program with 4th, 5th and 6th grade students in underserved public elementary schools across the City of Cleveland. Sponsored by the Greater Cleveland Volunteers, the program is available at Denison School, 3799 West 33 Street. The commitment is to listen, encourage and appreciate a child at lunch-time just once a week. Call Carol Hasek at 216.391.9500 X125 or email chasek@greaterclevelandvolun- teers.org.

Correction

In an article in the January 2015 issue of the *Plain Press* titled “Collaborative for a Fair, Safe and Just Cleveland works for inclusion of citizens in efforts to reform Cleveland Division of Police” several inaccuracies occurred. While Rhonda Williams of the Collaborative for a Fair, Safe and Just Cleveland was a speaker at the meeting, the town hall meeting held at the Martin Luther King Library was not hosted by that group as indicated in the article, instead it was convened by the Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition which was formed with the help of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee in 2011.

Also, the Collaborative for a Fair, Safe and Just Cleveland was formed just in the last few months, and was not formed in the aftermath of the 137 shot “Cleveland Atrocity” in November of 2012. The Committee for Social Justice, founded by Don and Norma Freeman, who were in attendance at the Bill of Rights Defense Committee convened meeting, is the group that was formed following the tragic police chase that resulted in the death of Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams.

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For more information and to help, please call 216-392-9022 or 216-577-2224. Thank you!

Attention: Non Profit Community Organizations

The Plain Press Community Guide will be published in the March issue. The Plain Press offers free listings that include your organization's name and phone number. To place additional information in the guide you may purchase an advertisement. For more information contact Tom Sheehan at plainpressads@yahoo.com or call 216-621-3060.

Cleveland Board of Building Standards and Building Appeals rules Loren Naji Studio Gallery needs fire alarm system

by **Chuck Hoven**
The January 7th meeting of the Cleveland Board of Building Standards and Building Appeals featured a case where the opinion of the Building and Housing Department was at odds with the enforcement of municipal code by the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Loren Naji, the owner of a building at 2138 W. 25th Street, appealed a notice of a violation of the municipal code 391.02. After an inspection of the building, Cleveland Fire Marshall Captain Michael Dziak sent a letter to Naji dated October 14, 2014 notifying him that “Multiple room occupancy of A1, A2 and A3 assembly require a fire alarm system. Municipal Code 391.02 outlines the requirements necessary for an A1, A2 and A3 occupancy. You shall install an approved fire alarm system at your building.”

Naji was given 30 days to either comply or file an appeal with the Cleveland Board of Building Standards and Building Appeals.

Naji decided to file an appeal. In his appeal Naji contended that if the space were one large space with an egress rather than three separate rooms, he would not need a fire alarm system. His appeal suggests that he be allowed to consider each room separately because they each have a separate egress. He reasons that as separate spaces – each on their own – they would not need a fire alarm system. The appeal then says “three separate rooms would be redundant since all three would be occupied in any case. Therefore the Appellant is appealing the need for the alarm system for this space, stating that the building has been brought up to fire and building code requirements in every other respect.”

Thomas Vanover, newly appointed Chief Building Official for the City of Cleveland Department of Building and Housing was in support of the proposal to grant the appeal and allow Naji to forego installing the fire alarm system. Vanover argued that if Naji were to get the three separate occupancy permits he would be allowed to have 150 people in the space with no alarm system. He said if granted the variance the limit for

the space would be only 99 people. Cleveland Fire Prevention Bureau Chief Lieutenant Douglas Veselsky didn’t buy this argument. He was overheard asking the city’s lawyer present at the hearing why the city would take such a risk. He asked Vanover and the lawyer if they would need to have a dead fire fighter for the fire code to be taken seriously.

Veselsky said the reason for the signaling system is that the building is not being used as three separate spaces. The cease use order was for overcrowding when Naji was using three spaces for the same event. He told Naji that he needs to comply with the law install a signaling alarm system and keep the occupancy under 99 people.

Veselsky says the proposal for three separate spaces would not work unless Naji never used all three rooms at once. He would need a fire alarm system if using more than one room at the same time, otherwise the fire prevention bureau would have to shut it down. Also he noted the owner had never applied for a commercial signal system for the building. He said simple Home Depot smoke alarms would not be sufficient for a commercial building.

Community member Henry Senyak submitted photos from Naji’s Facebook pages as evidence to the Board as to the overcrowding at events at the facility in from 2011 through 2014. Senyak noted bands playing, dimmed lights, alcohol and a closed flammable drapes covering exits. He called dimmed lights and alcohol “a recipe for disaster.” He also submitted a document from a fire inspection that called on Naji to obtain a hazardous materials permit

for propane and flammables stored on the site.

Veselsky asked Naji what had happened since he had agreed last November to get an alarm system as a condition of his occupancy permit. He asked Naji if he had obtained estimates for the cost of a fire alarm system. Naji stated the estimates were from \$5,000 to \$12,000.

Board of Building Standards and Building Appeals Chair Joseph Denk advised Naji to purchase and install a fire alarm system saying “You’ll thank us later.”

In ruling on the appeal, the Board of Building Standards and Building Appeals said since the applicant had not applied for three separate occupancy permits the applicant was appropriately cited for not having the required fire alarm system in a multiple room facility. The board upheld the citation with Denk noting “I don’t know if you can vary ‘Shall’” – the language of the city ordinance.

At the end of the meeting, Naji indicated he still wanted to avoid putting in the fire alarm system by pursuing a proposal to try for three separate occupancy permits. Despite Veselsky’s warning that he would have to shut down events in a multiple room facility with no alarms, Thomas Vanover, newly appointed Chief Building Official for the City of Cleveland Department of Building and Housing seemed to be encouraging Naji, asking him to meet with him for assistance.

Following the meeting, Ted Thelander, a retired designer and planner for the food service industry, wondered where Naji was getting advice. Thelander said Naji’s



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON
Saturday, January 17, 2015; Aragon Ballroom building, 3179 W. 25th Street: at a January 22nd Public Meeting residents and stakeholders learned of a plan by Aragon Ballroom owner Ali Faraj to renovate the historic building as an event/conference center. The building’s occupancy was revealed as 1,200 people and the owner is seeking a D-5 Liquor Permit. The parcel has no parking of its own – the owner hopes to lease 500 spaces at Lincoln West High School. Area residents are requesting an additional meeting so questions about the proposed development can be answered.

advisers should be telling him to bend over backwards to comply with the municipal code. For him to get this far without the proper fire alarm system in place he should fire both his legal advisor and designer, said Thelander.

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Cudell Improvement celebrates 40th annual meeting -- highlights area as waterfront community

On January 21st, Cudell Improvement celebrated its 40th annual meeting with a gathering at Brennan's Party Center on Triskett. In brief remarks at the start of the meeting, Ward 15 Councilman Matt Zone noted that a new grocer

had committed to the proposed development at W. 117 and Clifton and while he couldn't yet reveal which grocer, he promised "you will be very impressed." Cleveland Metroparks Trustee Debbie Berry and Cleveland

Metroparks Chief Executive Officer Brian Zimmerman collaborated in giving the keynote address. Berry focused her remarks on the Metroparks' implementation of its 2011 strategic plan. She said while security and maintenance of

the park are a major focus and plan also calls for making sure everyone in Cuyahoga County has access to a park within five or ten minutes. Berry said the Metroparks are now managing 500 acres along the lakefront. Using public meetings and online surveys to determine public preferences, the Metroparks developed new programming for Edgewater Park. Berry said from the comments collected from the public, they learned people wanted to connect with the lakefront but also keep a unique Cleveland flavor. Berry said since taking over the management of the lakefront park from the State of Ohio, there has been an increase in the number of bicycles accessing the park from nearby neighborhoods. She cited a 53% increase in bicycle traffic in the lakefront park. Berry also talked about an increasing number of events and family oriented activities at Edgewater Park. Berry also mentioned the Metroparks involvement along

the Cuyahoga River at Rivergate Park including the new Metroparks restaurant, Merwin's Warf, which she said is now more accessible with the reopening of the Columbus Road Bridge. Metroparks Chief Executive Officer Zimmerman said the \$14 million the Metroparks secured in state funding when it took over management of the lakefront park has helped to fund some capital improvements. He said some construction and engineering contracts are still under state control with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources finishing up projects. Zimmerman noted a number of efforts under way involving collaboration with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the city of Cleveland. He noted a new roundabout planned for the entrance to Edgewater Park and the ODOT's plans to rebuild the West Shoreway. continued on page 5



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Wednesday, January 21, 2015; Cudell Improvement's 40th Annual Meeting, Brennan's Banquet Center, 13000 Triskett Road: (L-R) In honor of his parents, Walter Martens Jr. presents David Douglas with the Walter & Pauline Martens Lifetime Achievement Award. Douglas served as president of the West Boulevard Neighborhood Association in the early 1980s and wrote the grant for organizations recycling center. He also was involved over the years in assisting Simpson Methodist Church, St. Ignatius Church and Cudell Improvement. Cudell Improvement Executive Director noted Douglas' reputation as a successful debt collector for the City of Cleveland.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Wednesday, January 21, 2015; Cudell Improvement's 40th Annual Meeting, Brennan's Banquet Center, 13000 Triskett Road: Jerry Bird, owner of Cleveland Uniform, receives the Storefront Renovation Award for work on the Bird Building at 9861 Lorain Avenue.

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CUDELL IMPROVEMENT

continued from page 4

He talked about the Lakeland trail that would be under design by year's end and connected to the to the towpath trail coming from Scranton Peninsula to Columbus Road to Wendy Park. Zimmerman said he expects the trail, when completed, to attract people from across the country to enjoy the lakefront. He talked about the importance of the efforts of the Community Development Corporations such as Cudell to help make the lakefront a better place. Zimmerman noted the success of the Edgewater Live Thursday evening events at Edgewater Park in attracting crowds to the waterfront to enjoy family friendly activities. He talked about the NEO Cycle event this year that attracted cyclists to the park and of the accompanying Night Ride along the closed Shoreway.

Zimmerman talked about the amenities that attracted people to Edgewater Park and Rivergate Park. He mentioned the beautiful sunsets at Edgewater Park. He said some of the attractions at the parks included music, yoga, paddleboards, volleyball, and a water taxi. He said a partnership with the Rock-n-Roll Museum would help to bring music to the parks.

Zimmerman also talked about the Metroparks roll in preservation of wildlife including assuring the preservasions of food sources for migrating birds and butterflies.

Zimmerman and Berry urged those present to participate in an online survey about what amenities they would like to see at an Edgewater Beach House. Architect Ted Ferringer of Bialosky Architects is seeking community input on its design. To participate go to: <http://metroparksedgewater.mindmixer.com>.

Cudell Improvement Executive Director Anita Brindza thanked the keynote speakers and reminded all that Cudell is a waterfront community. She then talked about the unique and wonderful relationship of Cudell Improvement to the Cleveland Police Department, which she mentioned had gone through some tough times in the last few months. She then invited the Cleveland Police Department's First District Commander Thomas McCartney to the podium to speak.

Commander McCartney noted some upcoming milestones in his career. He said July 1st would mark his tenth year as a commander. In October he will have served 25 years as a Cleveland Police office and be eligible for retirement. McCartney said he talked to his wife about the possibility of retirement. She asked him if he enjoyed his job. He said every time he puts on his uniform he feels like a kid coming out of the academy. "I get a real kick out of being a policeman," he said. McCartney praised Cudell Improvement for its cooperation with the police department over the years. He talked about coming to meetings in the neighborhood to help develop strategies to combat crime. He said, "The Cudell area is successful because of the relationship we have with the community."

Following Commander McCartney, Brindza introduced Sea of Blue CLE organizers Mary Jo Graves and Megan Connelly. The two organizers spoke briefly as to why they organized the rally in downtown Cleveland in support of police officers. They said they did it out of a feeling that "every life matters" and "you can't make everyone guilty by association." They said what started out as a plan for a small gathering downtown ended up with an estimated 5,500 people in attendance.

The awards ceremony followed the speeches.

In honor of his parents, Walter Martens Jr. presented the Walter and Pauline Martens Lifetime Achievement Award to David M. Douglass, Esp. Martens noted that Douglass was a long time volunteer at Cudell Improvement, a former president of the West Boulevard Neighborhood Association (WBNA) in 1982-1983, he wrote the first grant for the WBNA recycling center and had provided assistance over the years to both Simpson Methodist Church and St. Ignatius of Antioch Church.

Jerry Bird of Cleveland Uniform received the Storefront Renovation Award for his work on the Bird Building at 9861 Lorain Avenue.

Volunteer Edward Kiss received the service award for helping Cudell Improvement staff member Pat Konopka to set up the organizations grants and contracts in QuickBooks.

Another award announced included the Good Guy Award to Douglas Nornyak of Hornyak Plumbing, 9900 Lorain Avenue.

Following the awards, Brindza noted some of the accomplishments of Cudell Improvement from 1974 to 2014. She said Cudell's Storefront renovation program, which began in 1984, had resulted in 151 projects completed. She said property owners had invested \$4,407,392 in the renovations of their properties and had received \$1,909,750 in rebates. Since 1982 the organization's Home Weatherization Assistance Program had provided \$18,865,000 in assistance to 11,600 units of housing. The organization's code enforcement staff had completed inspection of 34,000 structures and had a 58% voluntary compliance record.

Other accomplishments noted



Wednesday, January 21, 2015; Cudell Improvement's 40th Annual Meeting, Brennan's Banquet Center, 13000 Triskett Road: Volunteer Edward Kiss (L) received the Service Award for his work in assisting Cudell Improvement staff member Pat Konopka (R) in setting up contracts and grants on QuickBooks.

included numerous safety meetings, and a number of graffiti removal rebates issued.

Cudell Improvement Housing Director Jan Kappenhagen announced that the City of Cleveland plans to do a mailer soon announcing its waste collection policy. She said

the city plans to complete the roll out of its automated waste collection containers by October of this year. She urged residents to pay attention to the mailer from the city, which outlines the differences in the amount of waste residents can put out. She noted the city

plans to issue fines if the rules are not followed, but there will be a grace period as residents adapt to the new system. She said the city has a poor recycling record of only 13%. Also the city plans to phase out the recycling bins, which have experienced a lot of contamination.

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

CLEVELAND TEACHERS UNION

continued from page one

of the Cleveland Teachers Union, spoke of the stress that students were experiencing because of the sheer number of high stakes tests they were now required to take. She explained that the Common Core is a set of standards that the state legislature has mandated that teachers teach. While Radich believes the Common Core standards are good and will help students, she believes the state mandated PARCC tests being implemented to go with the standards are excessive.

As an example she said her seventh grade students would be required to take eleven PARCC tests between the beginning of February and the end of the school year. The testing she noted takes away more and more teaching time with students often missing other classes because of the length of the tests.

Radich said that students from the 3rd to the 9th grade would be taking the PARCC tests this year. However, the third grade guarantee will be based on the OAA test this year and begin using the PARCC test next year. Students currently in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades will

continue taking the Ohio Graduation Test during the remainder of their time in the school district.

In response to a parent's question about resources available to help engage with their children around the test, Radich said so far PARCC has not come up with anything but an online practice test. Radich passed out a sheet she prepared with websites and information about engaging students in a conversation about what they are learning in school. She said when students have to explain something to another person it increases their retention rate.

She suggested going online and using the practice tests would help make students more comfortable taking tests online. Many of the tests students will have to take will now be online. The website for the sample tests is www.parcconline.org.

Radich said the Cleveland Teachers Union also has a new tool parents can sign up to get answers to questions on their phones. To sign up she said to send a text to: 81010, and then text the following code: @ce535a.

Asked if students are being prepared for taking online tests

with instruction in keyboarding, Radich said students at her school, Gallagher, were being given keyboarding instruction as part of their reading intervention classes. She also said that there are free keyboarding websites where students can learn typing – some of them have games that students like.

Asked whether special needs students would be required to take the test, Radich said depending on what their IP says special needs students may be given unlimited time to take the test, be tested in smaller groups, be able to use a calculator, and have the test questions and answers read to them. Quolke added that depending on the IP, students also might

be able to request an alternative assessment.

Asked if anything can be done about the excessive amounts of

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON
Saturday, January 17, 2015; W. 25th and Lorain Avenue: (L-R) Emma Shook, Steve Holecko and Neil Waggoner protest First Energy's request to increase electricity rates to cover cost of continuing to use electricity from coal fired power plants. The protest occurred in advance of a Public Utilities Commission of Ohio hearing held on the First Energy request at Cleveland City Council's chambers on January 20th.

TASK FORCE

continued from page one

invited to submit testimony online at www.ocjs.ohio.gov/otfcpr, or at ohiopublicsafety.com.

The first two hours of the scheduled four hour meeting of the Task Force were taken up by two speakers—U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio Steve Dettelbach talked with the Task Force about the findings of a 58 page report issued late last year by the U.S. Department of Justice titled *Investigation of the Cleveland Division of Police*.

The Director of the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of criminal justice in New York, David Kennedy, took up the second hour. In his remarks Kennedy said the relationship

between police and community is damaged when police focus on a community in their law enforcement rather than on the 1% of that community that are criminals. He was critical of policies like stop and frisk and policies that violate the right to free assembly like “clearing corners.” He mentioned the Cincinnati initiative to reduce crime that focused on criminals, not the entire population.

While Kennedy emphasized the small percentage of bad actors in both the civilian and police populations, he said he believed that there was not a lot of overt racism in the police department. He didn't think that was what was driving the every day issues. Rather, he felt the way police are policing communities, leads to distrust and conspiracy theories. He said if enough people

believe in a conspiracy by police, good people would not work with the police. He said if communities have a toxic experience with police, the feelings of police legitimacy go down and crime increases.

Kennedy said when people don't trust police a cycle of violence can occur. He said most violence is retaliatory – if people don't believe police will take up their cause when they call 911 – the incidence of retaliatory violence will increase. Kennedy said, “we need to fix the legitimacy problem, so people know police are there to help.”

Kennedy said that for change to occur he doesn't think the community will be the problem. He said, “You can always work with the community. If you show good will, the critical mass of people will meet you half way.”

However, he said that wasn't always the experience with people that are getting paid to prevent violence. He said while it important to have the commitment of the police department and the command staff in order for change to occur, they can often be uncompromising and unwilling to change. He said likewise it is necessary to have the

commitment of the mayor and city officials.

Public testimony followed the remarks of the speakers.

A deaf man described the difficulty he has in encounters with police saying, “Sometimes they curse at you because you can't hear.” He urged better training of police so they know how to interact with people with disabilities.

A representative of Black on Black Crime urged that police get tested for alcohol and drug abuse. He also took issue with a police union representative's public statement that Tamir Rice was warned three times to drop his gun. He said the video showed how little time Rice had to respond before he was shot.

A mother of a ten-year-old child said her child was detained for 3 ½ hours without police notifying her. When she investigated, she learned that police were looking for an African American male between the ages of 7 and 18 with a paint gun. Not only did her child not have a paint gun but also after being held for 3 ½ hours without her being called, he was cited for violation of curfew on his way home. When she called and talked to the officer who detained her son, he insisted he didn't have to let her know her son was being detained. He gave her his name and badge number and she reported the incident to Police Commander Williams' office. She said two weeks later they told her the police did nothing wrong. The mother asked the Task Force, “Don't they have to notify me, when they detain my minor child?”

A representative from a Hispanic Newspaper who grew up in Lorain, Ohio said he experienced members of his community become police officers in Lorain and the community built a police force that was connected to the community. He urged hiring of police officers that are part of the community and connected to the community. He said officers and the community need to understand each other and how they are going to react in different situations.

Another citizen expressed concern about what types of psychological and emotional support were provided to police officers. The person also asked about psychological screening and background checks of applicants to “see if they have what it takes to be a police officer.”

A social worker suggested that eliminating the County designation on license plates in Ohio would help reduce stops by police of people that are outside their home county. He suggested posting policies and procedures of the Cleveland Police Department on its website would also help improve the debate and help with the ability of the community to come up with the adoption of best practices both nationally and internationally.

Representative Nickie Antonio, who represents Ohio House District 13 where Tamir Rice lived before he was shot and killed by police, asked that police be trained in first aid, and CPR. In light of what

happened to Tanisha Anderson she also suggested that officers receive Crisis Intervention Training and make use of Frontline, Cleveland's 24 hour Crisis Intervention Team. She suggested duplicating a program in Portland, Oregon where dispatchers are trained to call mental health professionals to the scene when they recognize a call as a mental health emergency. Antonio urged the restoration of the local government funds by the State of Ohio to help properly equip local safety forces.

A homeless woman who says she suffers from mental illness tried to describe an incident where police didn't treat her as a credible witness and she said a child died as a result.

A state corrections officer described his being fired three times for reporting racism at work. While he said he was reinstated, he believes racism is rampant in the law enforcement community. He described another incident where he was questioned by a police officer as to why he was standing on a corner when he was just waiting for a bus. When he questioned the officer for his action, he said he was shoved in a car and charged with disorderly conduct. While being held, the man said he started talking with another person being detained about freedom of speech and the fate of Michael Pipkins who died when a Cleveland police officer put him in a choke hold in 1992. After hearing his comments, the man said a police officer punched him through the bars and upped the charge against him to aggravated assault.

The man talked about an unfair justice system noting the recent release from prison of a Cleveland man wrongly accused of a murder forty years ago. The man urged hiring of police officers from the community instead of a bunch of white guys that stand around looking like the Ku Klux Klan.

A man from Steubenville, Ohio talked about the consent decree that city entered into with the U.S. Justice Department twenty years ago. He said twenty years later, police misconduct still scares him. He called Ohio Ground Zero in the effort to reduce police violence, with more Department of Justice Consent Decrees than any other state.

Another woman, who described herself as the mother of five children, called the tackling of Tamir Rice's sister and the treatment she received by police a sign of “lack of respect for the Black community by police.” She called for more respect and justice. She also decried the lack of accountability when police kill civilians. “Kill somebody and be able to walk away and we are not going to do anything about it – is disgraceful,” she said.

A member of the Collaborative for a Fair, Safe and Just Cleveland brought to the attention of the Task Force a Wisconsin Bill that calls for the independent investigation of all deaths in police custody by a five member panel. He said the bill resulted from the efforts of Wisconsin resident Michael Bell whose 21-year-old son was shot in front of him in 2004.

Charles See, Executive Director of the Community Re-Entry Program at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, addressed a number of issues related to the Department of Justice report that he felt were important to the safety of citizens and law enforcement personnel. He summed up some of the recommendations made by citizens and added some additional ones: posting online the police department rules and regulations, drug testing of police officers, vigorous recruitment of police officers from communities of color, increasing the resources of law enforcement personnel, training

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CTU PRESIDENT DAVID QUOLKE

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tests students are required to take, Quolke explained the tests had their origins in the federal No Child Left Behind law, which began in the George W. Bush administration. Under the law every state must do an annual assessment in order to continue receiving federal funds such as Title I which provides pay for many teachers and Title II which provides funds for support personnel in the schools. Quolke said he sees NCLB as a punishment law that rates schools and punishes them.

Quolke said that the Cleveland Teachers Union is working to try to get the State Legislature to institute a three year moratorium on the PARCC tests to give school districts time to figure out the challenges with technology and other issues associated with the new tests. However, he says that is an uphill battle. He also noted there have been discussions with key Republicans and key Democrats in the legislature a he said there are “logical people in both parties that believe we are testing too much.”

Quolke noted that in many suburban communities children are on computers at age 3 or 4. They have the skill set to take online tests. He said in Cleveland we should be offering keyboarding to help our students gain these skills, and the state should put up funding for that.

Quolke talked about the Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s budget and how that relates to charter schools. He said that charter schools receive about \$6,000 per student from the state allocation given to the Cleveland schools. This amounts to about \$130 million out of \$400 million the district receives in state funds.

CTU President Quolke said that Republican State Auditor David Yost released an audit of how charter schools count students. As part of the audit his office randomly visited charter schools and counted students – then comparing the student count to the number of students claimed by the charter school. In one charter school audited, Quolke said the school claimed to have 95 students, but there were no students in attendance on the day of the audit. Some of the charter schools audited in Cleveland only had 30% of the students in attendance. Quolke said many students return to the public school after leaving a charter school, the funding remains with the school they started the year at.

Quolke talked about teachers trying to organize a union at two local charter schools last year that were fired on the last day of

school. He said that teachers’ voices were not welcome in these charter schools. He called for the voices of teachers and parents to be united on issues pertaining to children’s education.

Parents and community members had a number of additional questions about various issues including the costs of standardized tests, a bus driver regularly not showing up on time to pick up a child for school, and State Board of Education rule changes.

As to the rule changes proposed by the State Board of Education to no longer require that schools offer 5 of 8 different classes or services such as art, music, school nurses, guidance counselor, and library services, Quolke said that the union had instituted in its contract protections such as that art, music and physical education must be offered in each building. A parent from Louisa May Alcott asked Quolke to check on why that school was in violation of the contract by not offering an art class. Those in attendance not getting a chance to ask a question were invited to write their question on a card with contact information so they could receive a response.

Larry Bresler of Organize Ohio was invited to speak about the state budget and the efforts of Northeast Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE). Bresler talked about the critical need for increasing funding for public education in the state of Ohio budget. He talked about trying to change the state policy that leaves funds at a charter school even though a student has returned to their public school. Bresler said while we don’t have the money that a charter school operator like David Brennan has, we sure have voices. He urged parents, community members and Common Good Ohio supporters to join in NOBLE’s effort to lobby the state legislature for changes in the budget. He said NOBLE planned to take busloads of Clevelanders to Columbus to lobby the state legislature in March. He promised to update Common Good as the date of departure comes closer and invited all to join in the effort.

Rowena Ventura said the next breakfast meeting with Cleveland Teachers Union President David Quolke would be on February 21st from 10 a.m. to noon. She said because of the increasing size of the group attending a location had not yet been determined. For more information call Common Good Ohio at 216-795-5375 or email ventura@commongoodohio.org.

TASK FORCE

continued from page 7

of police officers in non violent conflict resolution techniques, and work training for the incarcerated. See urged the Task Force to come back to Cleveland for another meeting.

A Cincinnati resident testified that it took 13 ½ years to change policing in Cincinnati. She urged Cleveland to enter into a collaborative agreement and to have community members at the table when the agreement is made. She had a few recommendations: 1) Reserve arrests to serious transgressions – avoid arrests for minor transgressions, avoid stop and frisk and surveys. 2) Have clear mandates – educate officers and hold officers accountable for criminal offenses and violation of administrative rules, and discipline officers. 3). Implement Community Problem Oriented Policing.

One resident was skeptical as to what action would result from the

mostly Republican State Legislature as a result of the Task Force’s report. He described most of Ohio’s Legislature as “Elderly white males who don’t have experience with what the Task Force is addressing – most don’t have a clue.” The speaker contended that most action would have to be local. He asked the panel, “Do you think anything will be done by the state? What actions can we take locally?”

One Task Force member, Senator Cliff Hite, who described himself as a Republican and an elderly white legislator, assured the questioner that he was listening to the community and promised that legislation would come out of the efforts of the Task Force. “I thank you for the challenge, and I accept it,” said Senator Hite.

Another panelist, the Franklin County Prosecutor Ronald O’Brien urged the questioner to take action locally saying, “The solution is with the local level.”

A representative of the Collaborative for a Fair, Safe and



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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Friday, January 9, 2015; Fiesta de Reyes (Feast of the Three Kings) celebration coordinated by Lucy Torres of the Hispanic Liaison Office of the City of Cleveland Community Relations Board, Hispanic UMADAOP Youth Center, 3115 Scranton Road: The three kings (L-R) Cesar Colon, Michael McDonald, and Michael Shockley distribute gifts to children.

LISTENING TOUR

continued from page one

Council members to “listen with your hearts to what is being said here. These are painful things. Tamir Rice’s mother--she expected 12-year-old Tamir to come home. If you ask yourself: What Would Jesus Do? Jesus loves people. He would not let this happen. These are horrible things – someone to die and bleed out.”

Councilman Matt Zone, the Chair of the Safety Committee, responded to the heartfelt plea by the woman saying, “My colleagues care, you will see that in action after the 1st of the year.”

A Ward 15 resident said she was taught “to call the cops if there was a problem.” She said young people now are afraid to call the police. If they have a problem, they don’t believe the police will do anything about it. She talked about being hassled by police when she has called them for help, “I’m scared to call the police. I can’t imagine how kids feel.” The woman called for more programs to keep kids off the street.

Cleveland Tenants Organization Executive Director Angela Shuckahosee appealed to Cleveland City Council for reform that will help her do her job. She said, “It doesn’t matter if I stabilize someone’s housing situation, if they are afraid if they call the police something is going to happen to them.”

Another woman reported that she is worried about her young African American child having an encounter with police that goes wrong. She said she is so worried that she now is considering moving out of the City of Cleveland.

Several mental health consumers or their family members spoke out about their fears in calling police. A Ward 14 woman said she suffers from mental illness and said her concern is “If I’m having a crisis situation and police are called – who shows up?” She said if she is unlucky and the wrong officer shows up she is worried “I’m getting treated the same as Tanisha Anderson.”

A white woman, who said she has an African American son who has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Mental Health issues, spoke of a positive experience when she recently called the police. She said the police responded quickly, listened and helped to de-escalate the situation. She said she is grateful for her positive experience with the police and “would like to have that kind of experience for everyone in the community.” She said she now

is worried that when she calls police what could happen if the wrong officer responds.

Several people offered City Council suggestions. A Ward 15 resident called for increased training of police officers and better hiring procedures. She cited as a prime example the hiring of the police officer that shot Tamir Rice – an officer whose former employer said should not be a cop. She urged the City of Cleveland to accept the Department of Justice Report. She also said that there has to be accountability. She said all of Cleveland has seen the video of the Tamir Rice shooting. She said, “There is no doubt that the two officers need to be indicted. Tamir Rice’s family must have their day in court. I would like to see what you guys (City Council members) can do to make sure it happens,” she said.

Another Ward 15 resident said she felt people of the city of Cleveland were at the mercy of the Council and Administration to enact needed reforms. She asked that in the next 3 or 4 days, Cleveland City Council present ways “citizens can be meaningfully involved in making reforms – reforms that people in the community want.”

Citing statistics on the Citizen Review Board, one Ward 15 resident said that 83% of the complaints of police misconduct were not thoroughly investigated, not investigated in a timely manner and those filing the complaints were not informed of the results. The resident urged City Council members to familiarize themselves with the work of Cleveland State University Urban Studies Professor Ronnie Dunn on racial inequality in the criminal justice system in Cleveland. Referring to the issue of racial disparity in the number of arrests per capita, the resident said, “it is a very serious issue and it needs to be addressed.”

Ward 14 resident Rick Nagin said things would not change until police officers are held accountable for their actions. He asked that those present sign a petition to Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy McGinty file charges against the two police officers – Frank Garmback and Timothy Loehmann – involved in the shooting of Tamir Rice.

A Ward 15 resident said she was shocked to learn the Department of Justice report on the Cleveland Police Department did not address the issue of race. She said she is in favor of the effort by the Collaborative for a Fair Safe and Just Cleveland to have citizens instrumental in forming the consent decree between the City



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Friday, January 9, 2015; Fiesta de Reyes (Feast of the Three Kings) celebration coordinated by the Hispanic Liaison Office of the City of Cleveland Community Relations Board, Hispanic UMADAOP Youth Center, 3115 Scranton Road: Children patiently wait as the three kings finish distributing gifts.

of Cleveland and the Department of Justice.

A Ward 14 resident called for bringing back the neighborhood based Police substations. He said problems in the neighborhood have a pretty simple fix: “Officer Friendly – we don’t have that any more. No kind of officers we can even remotely call a friend.” He also called for officers to live in the community. He said a common attitude of police officers that are not from the community is that “the poor, lower middle class and minorities are the enemy. That mentality has to go.”

The resident said police officers often ask that residents call police if they see something wrong happen. He asked that officers reciprocate and that when they see another officer doing wrong they “drop a dime on these fellow officers.”

That concern was echoed by a resident who said, “Silence is acceptance. If there are good cops, why are they not saying something?”

A representative of the Carl

TASK FORCE

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schools out of nearly 100 schools in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. She called for more money to expand the program and get into more schools. She said the program helps young children to learn there are “really good police out there.”

Another resident said it would be a mistake for the Task Force not to address race. Ronnie Dunn, a Task Force member, agreed with the man that race is an important issue and assured him that “we will address race.”

A retired black police officer referred to a comment made by a citizen and said recruiting from High School ROTC-like programs would be a good start to attracting young people to the police force that want to serve, help people and make a difference.

Retired Congressman Louis Stokes, honorary Co-Chair of the Task Force offered some history to the issue of police brutality in Cleveland. He said 49 years ago in July of 1966 he and his brother Carl walked the streets of Hough

with fires raging and bullets reigning down. “It was a turbulent time in our city,” said Stokes. Stokes then noted that police brutality was a major problem at the time as were poor living conditions, lack of health care and other issues. He talked about a community meeting he and his brother attended at the time with Stanley Tolliver and Charlie Bibbs where people were vocal about the need to curb police brutality.

Stokes cited the case of Terry v. Ohio, which he said established rules about when police can stop and frisk. However, despite the Supreme Court ruling, he said, “Today in New York City and Cleveland, stop and frisk is still as bad or worse than it was then.”

Referring to the testimony of people before the Task Force, Stokes said, “It means so much to me to see our community express its will, as it did seeing those people in Hough 49 years ago – addressing the same problems.”

Stokes told those who had testified before the Ohio Task Force on Police-Community Relations in its first community meeting that “The testimony of the community is very important – I just want to thank you.”

Stokes Brigade said he had heard a phrase to describe the attitude of police, when they give orders “Comply or Die.” Speaking of this mentality, he said, “If that is truly the way they think – that is why you have a problem.” He talked about people being beaten or kicked after they are already cuffed. He said this is particularly an issue for black males citing a statistic that in encounters with police “Black males are 21 times more likely to be killed than their white counterparts.”

Another west side resident said after a recent shooting in her neighborhood, she attended a block club meeting hoping to learn from the community policing officer what had happened. She was surprised to learn “the police officer didn’t know anything about the gun shot in our neighborhood.” She said she called the commander and learned that community involvement police officers are not part of roll call. She called for an end to this practice. She said if there is a shooting in the neighborhood “Shouldn’t

Community Involvement Police be the first to know?”

Other suggestions included looking at the Cincinnati agreement with the Department of Justice as a model for involving people in the process of forming the consent decree in Cleveland, appointing a Civilian Review Board more representative of the community, and appointing a youth delegate to sit on the Civilian Review Board.

A Ward 15 resident made four suggestions to Cleveland City Council: 1) a diverse board of residents from each Police District be involved in the hiring of new police officers and that they have the last say in the hiring process and make sure that the right questions are asked of applicants. 2) Lie detectors should be a part of the screening process for officers. 3) Psychological screening be involved in the selection of police officers. 4). Police Substations be brought back so police will be part of the community.