



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
 Saturday, April 18, 2015; Community Forum on Police Accountability, Surveillance and Civil Rights presented by Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition and community partners, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 1962 Stokes Blvd: Cleveland City Council Safety Committee Chair Matt Zone participates on a panel on Body-Worn Police Cameras.

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# Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

## Panel tackles police accountability and the use of body-worn police cameras

by Chuck Hoven

At the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition, a panel of seven people with a variety of different areas of expertise weighed in on the question of whether or not Body-Worn Cameras will increase police accountability.

Shakya Diaz, a Policy Manager for the American Civil Liberties

Union of Ohio urged citizens to involve themselves in how the city of Cleveland is developing its policy on the use of police-worn body cameras. She criticized the roll out of the body cameras in the Fourth and Second Districts without issues surrounding the cameras being studied more and without protocols in place for citizens to view the video footage. "If you can't get the footage,

the city has no business putting cameras on the street."

Diaz also noted that the latest version of the Police Department's policy for the use of the body-worn cameras was vague in terms of how to discipline police for not following the policy.

Panelist Alice Ragland, an organizer with the Ohio Students Association and a member of Puncture the Silence, talked about messages prevalent in our society, which create an "implicit bias". She noted that when a biased person has a gun, that makes the situation more dangerous. She said the criminal justice system doesn't recognize "implicit bias," instead you must prove an officer had intentionally racist motives, or they are off the hook for their actions. Ragland cited the Trayvon Martin case in Florida saying society sees African Americans as threatening. She didn't think that police cameras would change that perception. Ragland, said while she believed the images captured by police cameras would be "better than nothing," the real changes have to come in the overall society.

Panelist Shahid Buttar, Executive continued on page 6



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Sunday, March 29, 2015; Palm Sunday Pony Ride, Denison Avenue United Church of Christ, 9900 Denison Avenue: Ahlivia Drdek, age 6, is on her first pony ride aboard Ariel, a pony from Coventree Farm. Susan Schnitke and Hayley Swinnerton from Coventree Farm walk along side.

## More details shared about plans for Aragon Ballroom building on W. 25

by Chuck Hoven

At a public meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup> at Lincoln West High School, Ali Faraj, owner of the Aragon Ballroom building at 3179 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street shared more details about his plan to reopen the building as a banquet hall and conference center. Residents in attendance, while expressing appreciation for the good reputation of the Faraj as a business owner and for the rehabilitation of an important building in the neighborhood, raised a number of concerns about the project. Among resident concerns are: the large capacity of the venue, parking, late night disturbance from vehicles loading and unloading, and the application by the owner for liquor licenses for the establishment.

Jeff Ramsey, Executive Director of the Detroit Shoreway Community Development and Program Director of the Stockyard, Clark-Fulton, Brooklyn Centre (SCFBC) Community Development Office, and Ward 14 Councilman Brian Cummins both spoke about how

the project was trying to address concerns raised by residents and area stakeholders. Ramsey noted the Aragon project going forward will mean a \$1.5 million dollar investment in the neighborhood and is projected to create 30 permanent jobs. The meeting was the second public meeting this year concerning the project.

Faraj is seeking a number of variances to make the project possible and made some adjustments to the proposed development based on public input from the first public meeting held in January. A major concession that resulted from the first public meeting was a decision to reduce the allowed capacity of the building from 1,200 people to 800 people. Faraj estimates that 90% of the events held at the Aragon will have less than 500 people in attendance.

According to documents passed out at the meeting, Faraj, purchased the Aragon building in 2011. Faraj

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## Despite setback, EDEN hopes to proceed with Detroit Shoreway housing for the homeless

Emerald Development and Economic Network's (EDEN) plans to build a sixty-six-unit apartment building for the chronically homeless at 8301 Detroit Avenue will require changes in order to proceed.

Some neighbors to the east of the development project on W. 81<sup>st</sup>

Street went to the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas to appeal the decision by the Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals to grant variances necessary for the development to go forward as planned. The neighbors won their case with Judge Pamela A. Barker ruling that the record

of the Board of Zoning Appeals did not show that EDEN would experience "unnecessary hardship" or substantial loss of property rights if the variances were denied.

EDEN Executive Director Irene Collins says she believes the project continued on page 8



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, April 18, 2015; Hoops for Children's Miracle Network, Luis Munoz Marin School gymnasium, 1701 Castle Ave: Walmart employees participate in a three-on-three basketball tournament to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. Carmen Perez, an associate at the Steelyard Walmart takes tickets at the door with help from l'Liyana Johnson, age 2, and Qiard Hudson, age 4.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, April 18, 2015; The Aragon Ballroom Building, 3179 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Entrepreneur Ali Faraj proposes to reopen the building as a banquet/assembly hall. Several variances are needed to make that possible. A Board of Zoning Appeals hearing for the Aragon Project is scheduled at 9:30 a.m. on May 11<sup>th</sup> in Room 514 of Cleveland City Hall.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, April 18, 2015; Hoops for Children's Miracle Network, Luis Munoz Marin School gymnasium, 1701 Castle Ave: Walmart employees participate in a three-on-three basketball tournament to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. Joslyn McLemore, the wife of Steelyard Walmart Co-Manager Joe, serves up hot dogs to hungry players and fans.



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.

**BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COUNTS** with the help of volunteers during the months of May and September annually. Assist in collecting data to aid in the prioritization of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and planning projects. To volunteer, take the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/noacabikespring2015> or learn more at <http://www.noaca.org/index.aspx?page=52>.

**BOOK DONATIONS**  
**DONATE A BOOK YOU LOVE** to support literacy and a love of reading with your neighbors. Do not use withdrawn library materials. Drop off books for Little Free Libraries at the Walz Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (7910 Detroit Ave., 216/623-7095) or the Jefferson Branch (850 Jefferson Ave., 216/623-7004).

**BOY/GIRL SCOUTS**  
Learn about **REDUCING, REUSING AND RECYCLING** at a free patch event for boy and girl scouts on Saturday, May 2. Youth, scouts, and their parents and troop leaders are invited to the special event at the Cleveland Metroparks CanalWay Center at 4524 East 49th Street in Cuyahoga Heights. The free event will run from 9:00 am -1:00 pm. All youth are welcome to attend, as long as they are accompanied by an adult or troop leader. Register your child or group with CanalWay Center at 216/206-1000 or [www.clevelandmetroparks.com](http://www.clevelandmetroparks.com). For information on the Cuyahoga Recycles patch program, contact Solid Waste District Education Specialist Kathleen Rocco at 216/443-3731 or visit [www.cuyahogawd.org/en-US/](http://www.cuyahogawd.org/en-US/)

rary struggles for freedom and justice. It will be held on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 10:30 pm at St. John's Church, 2600 Church Ave. Free and open to all ages. Join the Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1457114077911888/> for more details. Please consider making a donation.

**BICYCLING**  
**A BIKE AWARENESS RIDE** will be on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Registration for the four and ten mile rides begins at 9 am at the West Side Market parking lot, 1979 West 25<sup>th</sup> St. The rides begin at 10 am. Get help with bike repair, and practice putting your bike on a bus rack available. Bring a helmet and a lock. Call 216/664-2691 with questions. The Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) conducts

**ARTS AND CULTURE**  
**THE CLIFTON ARTS AND MUSIC FEST** will be held on Saturday, June 20 from 10 am to 6 pm at Clifton Blvd between West 112<sup>th</sup> and West 117<sup>th</sup>. Applications are available for the \$750 Student Scholarship entries. Student Scholarship Applications and Portfolios are due by May 22. Go to <http://cudell.com/Artist-Application.pdf> to download an application. For more information, call 216/228-4383 or email [cudell@multiverse.com](mailto:cudell@multiverse.com).  
**STATION HOPE** is a block party with a purpose, an art event for the people, a celebration of hope. It is a free, one-night-only, multi-arts event that celebrates the triumphs of the Underground Railroad, the history of St. John's Church, and contempo-

[ReduceReuseRecyclePatchProgram.aspx](http://ReduceReuseRecyclePatchProgram.aspx)

**BRIDGE TOURS**  
**THE GEORGE V. VOINOVICH BRIDGE** project team and The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) are offering public tours of the bridge. The hour-long tours will take place twice each month, through September. For a complete schedule of tours, log-on to [www.Innerbelt.org](http://www.Innerbelt.org) and select "Project Tours." Reservations for tours will become available early each month by visiting [www.Innerbelt.org](http://www.Innerbelt.org), by calling the project hotline at 216/344-0069, or e-mailing [Info@Innerbelt.org](mailto:Info@Innerbelt.org). All tours are weather permitting. Tour attendees will need to dress appropriately, to include long pants and hard-soled, closed-toed shoes, and will be expected to walk about a mile as part of the tour. Attendees must be at least 18 years old, or 12 to 17 accompanied by a parent or guardian. All attendees will be required to sign waivers, which are available on-line. For more info, please call Jocelynn Clemings at 216/584-4030 or email [Info@Innerbelt.org](mailto:Info@Innerbelt.org).

**CAREERS IN THE TRADES**  
**THE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY** at the Cuyahoga Community College offers training in certificate programs at no cost to students. Eligible students receive this training as well as supportive services such as bus tickets, OSHA 10 Certificate, up to \$250 stipend week paid internship, private job fair, and an extension to full-time employment. Programs are **Precision Machine Technology and Welding**. The short-term programs last 1 semester. Starting wages ranging from \$12-15 per hour, depending on the program. Students must be 18-21 years old, have a HS diploma of GED, be a Cuyahoga County resident, and meet low-income guidelines. Call (216) 987-3449 for more information. Other programs include **Facilities Maintenance, Culinary Arts, and Automotive Technology**. Call 216/987-6304.  
**WOMEN IN THE TRADES**. A career night will be held for Northeast Ohio women who are interested in learning more about and starting a career in the building and construction trades. Attendees will have the opportunity to talk to representatives

from a variety of trades, including: **plumbers, electricians, carpenters, iron workers, pipefitters, bricklayers, roofers, and more.** It will be held Tuesday, May 12 from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Cleveland Plumbing Industry (CPI) Training Facility at 950 Keynote Circle, Brooklyn Heights. For more information, contact Madeline Malicki at 216-574-2133 or [mmalicki@theadocomgroup.com](mailto:mmalicki@theadocomgroup.com)

**CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATIONS**  
**FREE IMMUNIZATIONS** are available at Mc Cafferty Health Center at 4242 Lorain Ave. every Monday from 8 am until 11 am, and every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday from 4 pm to 7pm. For more information, visit [www.clevelandhealth.org](http://www.clevelandhealth.org) or call 216/664-6603 or 216/664-3609.

**CLEVELAND SCHOOLS MEETINGS TO GET PUBLIC INPUT** will help refine plans for **SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION** projects. The meeting at Lincoln-West will be held at 3202 West 30<sup>th</sup> St. on Monday, May 4 from 6:30 to 8 pm, and the one at Tremont Montessori is scheduled for 2409 West 10<sup>th</sup> St. on Tuesday, May 19 from 5 to 6:30 pm.

**COUPON'ING**  
**EXTREME COUPON'ING** will be held at the Fulton Branch of the Cleveland Public Library on May 23, June 27<sup>th</sup> and monthly through November. For more information, call Keisha at 216/961-9073 ext. 204.

**DETROIT SHOREWAY**  
**78<sup>TH</sup> STREET STUDIOS** has over 43 retail galleries, studios and other creative spaces, north of Detroit. It has open houses on the **THIRD FRIDAY** of the month (next up is 5/15) from 5 to 9 pm, and **every Friday** from 11am to 4pm. For more information, visit <http://78thstreetstudios.com/>  
**THE NORTH END BLOCK CLUB** will meet on May 25 at 6:30pm at the West Bethel Baptist Church at 5207 Franklin Blvd. For more information, contact Austin Boxler at 216-961-4242 ext. 243 or Shelley Ketter at [sketter68@outlook.com](mailto:sketter68@outlook.com). Everyone from the neighborhood and surrounding block clubs is encouraged to attend.

**DRINKING WATER WEEK**  
**AN OPEN HOUSE AND TOURS OF GARRETT MORGAN WATER TREATMENT PLANT** will be held Saturday, May 9 from 10 am to 3 pm at 1245 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street. For more information or to schedule a tour, contact the Office of Special Events at 216/664-2444 ext. 5802 or visit [clevelandwater.com](http://clevelandwater.com). Bring a photo id.

**FIRE EXPLORERS PROGRAM**  
Learn about **FIRE SERVICE** and related topics (such as emergency medical techniques) through a program targeted to young men and women between the ages of 14 and 20 who have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade and have an interest in fire service. Participants must be willing

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Community Board & Website Editor: Margie Bray Hoven;

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# Money promised to Cleveland school children from Cleveland parking fees needs to be restored

**SCHOOLS' PORTION SHORTED BY \$1 MILLION PER YEAR SINCE 2010**

**To the Editor:**

City council just passed a major increase to the parking fees in this city. Coupled with major increases in rates at private lots, the increase in funds generated by the parking tax must be sizeable.

One of the incentives used to pass the 1995 parking tax was that the Cleveland schools would receive \$2 million annually for extracurricular activities for the children to compensate for the lifetime tax abatement given to the football stadium. In 2009, the children received their \$2 million. The stadium was given \$16 million and spent \$20 million creating a \$4 million deficit. In 2010, Mayor Jackson decided to divert \$1 million of the children's money to balance that deficit. He, nor the council, has yet to restore it to its promised level.

As dictated by the parking tax ordinance, every year, the district must provide evidence of the effective use of the funds and every year students in the programs have shown significant increases in attendance and grade point averages. The entire school board and the Chief Executive Officer have stated publicly, on the record, that the money should be restored. Yet, sadly, it has not.

Remember, one of the public's greatest fears of mayoral control was that the mayor would take advantage of school funds, while the appointed school board sat by silently. The fear is now real.

In 2013, the tax generated \$27 million. The stadium received \$21 million. The children received only

\$1 million. I cannot believe any informed, caring person would find this tolerable.

It appears it will take a concerted

effort by the public to resolve this matter in favor of the children.

Gene Tracy  
Retired Teacher

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Beware: non-competitive political districts subvert government by the people

**To the Editor:**

Who is responsible, ultimately, for a justice system more concerned with the livelihood of police officers than the lives of minorities? In regions where Blacks and Hispanics outnumber Caucasians; the answer, ironically, is minority voters. They contribute repeatedly to injustice in justice systems by paying more attention to a candidate's party label than to his or her job performance. Every voter that blindly follows *sample ballots* on Election Day rather than voting for candidates based on merit aids the process of transferring power into the hands of those who finance political campaigns. When non-competitive voting regions are created, government of the people, by the people and for the people is easily subverted by corporate money.

It doesn't make a difference whether the non-competitive district is created through gerrymandering, map-drawing, or naturally (Cuyahoga County). It doesn't matter whether the region is controlled by Democrats or Republicans. When you create a non-competitive voting district, you shift the power to determine who

governs a region from voters to donors.

Because of their intense dislike of Republicans, violation of the public trust by Democrats seems to matter very little to Black and Hispanic voters. Using the same voting method for decades -- following the Democratic sample ballot blindly -- they naively expect to achieve different results. Black and Hispanic voters repeatedly put Jimmy Dimora and Franks Russo and the rest of the Democrats sent to prison recently into office. Black and Hispanic voters repeatedly elect the judges and prosecutors who form the core of Cuyahoga County's *New Jim Crow* system of justice.

Cleveland was not only recently voted one of the *worst cities* in the United States, again; it was voted one of the *worst-run cities* in the United States, again. Yet, Black and Hispanic voters see no connection between these unacceptable outcomes and their less than thoughtful voting habits. Maybe, the emergence of the Green Party will help turn Cuyahoga County into a more competitive voting district. I, a Democrat, pray



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, April 18, 2015; Hoops for Children's Miracle Network, Luis Munoz Marin School gymnasium, 1701 Castle Ave: Walmart employees participate in a three-on-three basketball tournament to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. Kyle Padgett, age 8, of Wadsworth, Ohio, enjoys a snow cone.

**Plain Press:**

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### Cleveland Police Foundation presents the Crime Prevention "tip of the month"

Spring is here, and it's time to be aware of scams, and deception burglaries.

**Deception Burglaries:**

- 1) Be alert to anyone asking to gain entry into your home.
- 2) Always ask to see identification, and let them know you are going to call, and get authorization from their company. If they are legit, they won't mind the wait.
- 3) Never hesitate to call 911.

**Scams:**

- 1) Be aware of anyone posing as a repair person that offers a bargain price on a home repair.
- 2) Request to see identification.
- 3) If you feel it is too good to be true, it usually is.
- 4) If necessary call 911.

Thanks to the Ohio Crime Prevention Association for sharing this information and helping to make the community safer.

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**PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON**  
Saturday, April 18, 2015; Hoops for Children's Miracle Network, Luis Munoz Marin School gymnasium, 1701 Castle Ave: A Walmart employee participates in a three-on-three basketball tournament to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. The competition raised over \$3,000 for the charity, which will directly benefit Rainbow Babies and Children Hospital patients and their families.

## ARAGON BALLROOM BUILDING PLANS UDDATED

continued from page one

is also the owner of the La Villa Conference & Banquet Center at 11500 Brookpark Road, which he has successfully operated since 2011. Exterior renovations are nearly complete on the Aragon building and planned interior renovations will begin once variances and permits are approved.

### Public Hearings

Two public hearings on the project are scheduled in May. On May 1 at 9 a.m. in Room 514 of Cleveland City Hall the City Planning Commission will review the project. Adam Stalder, Economic Development Director of the Stockyard, Clark Fulton & Brooklyn Centre Community Development Office, says because the Aragon is located in a pedestrian retail overlay district, the Planning Commission must approve the use of any structure that has more than 40 feet of frontage. Stalder noted "The Cleveland Planning Commission does not place restrictions on the operations of the building. All comments of support or concern regarding the use or operation should be submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeals."

The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) hearing on the Aragon project will be held on May 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. in Room 514 of Cleveland City Hall. The BZA hearing will be held to consider variances requested for restrictions that apply to the property from six sections of the Cleveland Municipal Code. Residents will have an opportunity to weigh in on the proposal at the meeting itself or via written comments sent to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Three of the variances that the Aragon is applying for have to do with reestablishing the use of the building as a banquet hall. An informational sheet passed out at the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting explains that since the building has been not operating for some time, the original use of the building has expired. The Aragon is located in a Local Retain District where banquet halls are not permitted. The city code further states that even in a less restrictive General Retail District, a banquet hall is only allowed if it is located 500 feet away from a residential district. The Aragon abuts a residential district. Thus the owners will have to get a variance to use the building as a banquet hall.

The city of Cleveland code also requires that a ten foot wide landscaped transition zone be created at the rear of the property where it abuts the residential district. The informational sheet says this is not possible "due to the placement of the building and alley behind the building." So, another variance will be needed to forgo the landscaping requirement.

Another variance will be needed to forgo window and façade requirements recently placed in the city code for pedestrian retail overlay districts. The city requires that "not less than sixty percent of the front façade between two and one-half and seven and one half feet in height shall be composed of transparent windows or doors." The information sheet at the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting indicates that the Aragon already received design approvals for the exterior design and historic renovation of the building from the Landmarks Commission. The design does not include the transparency required by the city ordinance, thus an additional variance will be needed to go forward as planned.

The city code also requires "that an accessory off-street parking area equal to three times the gross floor area is required." The Aragon, which Councilman Cummins notes in his blog is a "16,698 square foot building" (editor's note: presumably floor area), does not have any off street parking. To receive a variance the owners must show they have secured sufficient off street parking for the facility.

### Parking

To this end, SCFBC's Jeff Ramsey noted that Aragon owner Ali Faraj

has worked out a deal with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to be able to use the Lincoln West High School parking lot to valet park up to 500 cars. In response to concerns about patrons using up residential street parking spots instead of valet parking, Faraj said there would be no charge for valet parking so as to encourage its use. Ramsey said Faraj also is working with area businesses with parking lots to secure additional parking places. He noted a number of possible locations including an 80-car parking lot at Dollar Bank, parking at the Kennedy Building, the H. J. Weber Building.

In response to resident expressed concerns about what would happen to the valet parking when the planned rebuilding or rehab of Lincoln West is underway, Councilman Cummins responded that the school district has pushed back the construction for Lincoln West to 2018-2019 which he said would give the Aragon ample time to secure additional parking spots. The availability of land on W. 25<sup>th</sup> would be complicated by Metro Health's needs as it rebuilds its main campus, said Cummins. He also noted that the repaving on W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street would be complete by the time the Aragon opened for business so it won't interfere with the proposed valet parking.

Some residents expressed concern about the use of valet parking on W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Sandy Smith noted the proposed valet parking route to Lincoln West was a mile round trip. She expressed concern that valets would opt to find parking places closer in order to get back faster and get more tips - parking on nearby residential streets. She also expressed concern about valets dashing across a busy W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street at night. Others expressed concern about traffic jams due to valet parking during big events.

### Loading and Unloading

Another resident expressed concern about large trucks loading and unloading on Althen a one-way street next to the Aragon. She noted there were a lot of kids on Althen and it would be unfair to allow truck traffic at night in a neighborhood populated by children. She asked if delivery trucks could be required use W. 25<sup>th</sup> saying it is a short walk from W. 25<sup>th</sup> to the side door. She expressed particular concern about bands breaking down after late shows and loading up equipment.

Councilman Cummins suggested some possible solutions - insulating the building for sound and scheduling deliveries for morning times. Owner Ali Faraj said he uses small vans for most of his deliveries from wholesale suppliers.

Gloria Ferris also expressed concern about noise late at night. She suggested perhaps bands could break down and leave their equipment till the next day to pick up. She also suggested signs telling patrons to "respect the neighbors."

### Liquor Licenses

A number of concerns were expressed about the Aragon Ballroom's application for D-3 and D-6 Liquor Licenses. The two licenses would allow the Aragon Ballroom to serve liquor seven days a week until 1 a.m. Faraj said the hours of operation for the Aragon will be from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and no later than 2:30 a.m. on Thursday through Sunday. He said most events would be over by 11 p.m. on weekdays and 1:00 a.m. on weekends, with no more than ten events a year scheduled to end at 2:30 a.m. on weekend evenings.

Faraj said Aragon Management

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# Study places Cleveland Metropolitan School District performance in context

**CMSD NEWS BUREAU** (4/16/2015) When poverty, other student demographic factors and past performance are taken into account, CMSD ranked slightly above average statewide on most indicators last school year, two higher-education leaders say in the draft of a new report.

Adjusting for these factors, CMSD also fared above average when compared with other members of the Ohio 8, a coalition representing urban districts, according to the draft report. In fact, the District's adjusted performance index -- a composite of achievement test scores -- ranked first among these urban systems.

Cleveland State University President Ronald M. Berkman and Cuyahoga Community College President Alex Johnson presented the report to the Board of Education on Tuesday. Berkman and Johnson are non-voting, ex-officio members of the school board.

The report, prepared by CSU's Office of Urban Education and Tri-C's Office of

Evidence and Inquiry, examined Ohio school district data from CMSD's first full school year under *The Cleveland Plan*, a customized set of reforms for education in the city.

CMSD serves more students, overall, and greater proportions of students who are low-income, racial/ethnic minority, limited in English proficiency and transient. Comparing districts without taking into account past performance and demographics is like comparing apples and oranges, the draft says.

"The performance of any individual district depends not only upon the practices, efficiency, and resources of the district, per se, but also upon factors outside of the district's direct control," the draft says. "A large body of research shows that districts' and schools' performance is in part a function of the types of students served."

Researchers used a "multiple regression model" to predict how each of Ohio's 610 school districts would have fared last year if they all had the state's average demographic profile and had achieved the average performance on six indicators in 2012-13.

Based on the adjusted scores, CMSD ranked above the statewide and urban averages in performance index, graduation rate, average ACT score, days of attendance and teacher "value added." Value added measures student gains in learning over time and is used in teacher evaluations.

CMSD third-graders' adjusted proficiency rate on the state reading assessment was three percentage points below the state average and four points below the urban average.

Berkman said Cleveland State and other institutions of higher education use similar demographic information to identify students who may be at risk of failure. He said the study offers a more balanced way to compare districts and can serve as a model.

"The entire educational biosphere will gain by what we're seeing here," he told the board.

Berkman and Johnson began issuing annual progress reports last year at the request of Mayor Frank G. Jackson and District Chief Executive Officer Eric Gordon.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Saturday, April 18, 2015; Hoops for Children's Miracle Network, Luis Munoz Marin School gymnasium, 1701 Castle Ave: A fan cheers on his team in the three-on-three basketball tournament. Teams from area Walmarts entered the competition including five teams of players from the Steelyard Walmart.

## Ohio House plan would undermine Medicaid expansion program

The Ohio House of Representatives is planning to erect barriers to the state's Medicaid expansion program that could jeopardize health coverage for hundreds of thousands of adults and children, a new report by Policy Matters Ohio says.

Medicaid expansion in Ohio has been an unqualified success, with more than half a million Ohioans newly insured and billions of federal dollars pumped into the Ohio economy, said Wendy Patton, report author and senior project director at Policy Matters.

Health-care providers report better bottom lines and healthier patients. But the Ohio House of Representatives took a giant step backwards in its version of the fiscal year 2016-17 budget, with a proposal that would make it more difficult for low-income families and their children to obtain and maintain health coverage. The House plan, outlined in substitute House Bill 64, directs the state to pursue a waiver of Medicaid rules to implement a new program design.

Under the House plan, Ohio patients would face higher costs and suspensions over payment or paperwork. Administrative complexity could cause delays in enrollment. Annual and lifetime caps could interrupt care. The hurdles would undermine the goals of health-care reform.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) included a federally financed plan to expand Medicaid coverage. The goal is to address unmet health care needs, control burgeoning costs of untreated chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes, and to strengthen a health-care system burdened by uninsured patients. Thirty states, including Ohio, have taken

the federal money.

Medicaid expansion in Ohio gets good reviews in national studies. It allows people to see a doctor and to get needed health care they could not otherwise obtain.

The new version of House Bill 64

would abandon successful model in Ohio and require the director of Medicaid to seek a waiver of many Medicaid rules. The plan, misleadingly named Healthy Ohio, would jeopardize the success of Ohio in extending health coverage to its most vulnerable residents.

## ARAGON BALLROOM BUILDING PLANS

continued from page 4

would be present at all events. He said his company would not lease the space to third party operators. He also offered to share his cell phone number with area residents so they can reach him directly if there are problems. He said any events with over 150 people would have off duty police officers employed as security.

Faraj said there would be no regular bar in the Aragon that is open to the public, but there will be liquor for sale at events.

Several people questioned why a liquor license was needed for the proposed banquet hall and conference center. Faraj said while he opened his other banquet hall without a liquor license and operated for a while without one, Faraj says 80% of his clients at that location were Muslim and didn't drink. He says he now has a liquor license and had received different requests

for liquor to be served ranging from corporate clients to boxing shows. He noted other banquet facilities such as Brennan's Party Center, VFW Halls, and the Landerhaven all have liquor licenses. Faraj noted his business plan is to serve as a banquet and conference facility for corporate and community events. He mentioned a theatre group from the Cleveland Museum of art that had already expressed interest in having rehearsals at the Aragon.

A number of residents said they had heard good things about the quality of Faraj's establishment on Brookpark Road and they were in favor of the Aragon being rehabbed as a banquet facility. However, they were against the establishment having a liquor license. They

expressed some concern about the possibility of an establishment with a liquor license changing hands and becoming another Moda or La Copa.

City of Cleveland Planner Trevor Hunt said the facility would be a banquet or assembly hall. He said he checked with the Cleveland Building and Housing Department and the Aragon did not need to apply for a dance hall permit. He said the Aragon would need to apply for a Change of Use Permit to have a nightclub.

Resident Henry Senyak disputed that interpretation of the law. He believed that if there would be public dancing during events at the Aragon, the facility would have to have a Dance Hall permit. He suggested that Hunt check with the City of Cleveland Licenses and Assessments to verify that requirement.

SCFBC's Jeff Ramsey said Faraj was a good man with good integrity that could be relied on to run a good business. He said that if the establishment were to change hands and become a problem, residents have the power through a local option to dry up a precinct and take the liquor license away.

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, April 18, 2015; Community Forum on Police Accountability, Surveillance and Civil Rights presented by Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition and community partners, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 1962 Stokes Blvd: A member of the panel on Body-Worn Police Cameras, Ed Little, an advocate for criminal justice reforms, says the body worn cameras raise more questions than answers.

## POLICE CAMERA PANEL

continued from page one

Director of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, said the body cameras could be "worse than nothing." He said, "We don't have any indication that juries will respond the way we want" to body camera evidence." He also said that with police officers riding around with cameras recording every even nominal criminal act, the cameras may result in even more mass incarceration in the United States which already has the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Ed Little, a member of the panel who is a consultant on criminal justice and juvenile justice policy and a member of the Collaborative for a Fair, Safe and Just Cleveland, said, "body cameras raise more questions than answers." He asked the audience to take a critical look at situations where police violence had been caught on video. He mentioned the cases of Rodney King, Tamir Rice, and Walter Scott. "We must all watch our government. It is critically important to keep our eye on the case of Walter Scott." He noted that the video shot Walter Scott being shot in the back by a police officer in South Carolina was taken from the perspective of a bystander. He wondered if a body worn camera would have captured the officer planting a taser next to the body. Little wondered how data from body cameras would fare before a grand jury. He speculated that grand jury members, like in some recent cases, "would try to figure out how to discredit what we saw."

Dr. Ronnie Dunn of the Levin College of Urban Studies at Cleveland State University said the policy for supervisor random review of video footage "doesn't say how it will take place."

Dunn, who is working with

Cleveland City Council to develop a bias free policing ordinance, called for a new legislation to govern and aid with the Civilian Review Process involving police actions. Dunn recommended Department of Justice and Ohio State Auditor monitoring of police policies and procedures take a long view. He urged looking at patterns, trends, and training. He urged data collection on bias and racial profiling. He said the City of Cleveland should prohibit the targeting by police of individuals based on social indicators such as race, sexual orientation, religion etc. He put forward Cincinnati as an example of a city that collects data to document possible police profiling. He urged collecting of such data on a statewide basis. Dr. Dunn also called for more transparency in the grand jury process -- he said it is too secretive now.

Panelist Matt Zone, a Cleveland City Council member and Chair of City Council's Safety Committee, talked about the listening sessions the Safety Committee sponsored following the Department of Justice report issued on the Cleveland Police Department. Zone said Council listened to the "frustration in the community" and he said that the summary of the four listening sessions which he estimated attracted over 1,000 participants resulted in seven areas of concern which he believes can be categories for City Council to address in terms of legislation to reform the police department.

According to Zone, seven major concerns brought to City Council's attention were: lack of community policing, fear of police, lack of police training and equipment, lack of trust in department leadership to reform and correct problems, abuse of police power, effectiveness of the

Civilian Police Review Board, and disparity between police and citizens in how their cases are handled in the justice system. City Council Safety Committee hearings are focused on all seven topics, said Zone.

Zone said the Safety Committee would also hold hearings on the use of technology by Cleveland Police and protocol for the use of cameras. He said the real test would be to see if the video captured by body worn cameras could lead to more police accountability. Zone promised to keep the Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition informed as to when the Safety Committee would hold hearings on police body cameras.

Will Tarter, a panel member and also a community representative on the Wearable Camera Policy Committee for the City of Cleveland Division of Police, called the City of Cleveland Policy governing the use of police-worn body cameras "a living breathing document." He said the policy was still in review and still changing. He said groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and domestic violence and sexual assault victim advocacy groups were weighing in on when the cameras should be used or turned off. He said the use of police worn body cameras would be a "win-win only if deployed within a framework which protects civil liberties and civil rights while having transparency."

Panelist Ed Little related the city's obstructionist role when people asked for public records -- in written form or video. He said while law enforcement has the opportunity to see the video footage from the police body-worn cameras, the public

was blocked from the same type of access by obstructions placed in their way by the public records request process. He noted that the city policies to date on cameras didn't deal with discipline of police officers. He said this is an area where "the rubber hits the road." He noted despite being captured on video at Cudell Recreation Center the officers involved in the death of 12-year old Tamir Rice were still on the police force.

Shahid Buttar urged those present to work together to shape the local law. He called for more transparency and said the city's policy to not allow a robust right of access by the public to video from the police cameras is a negative policy. Panelists and audience members called for accountability for state violence, tools to restore civil rights, and work toward building a broad based community partnership to assure community input into legislation related to police reform.

Those in attendance raised a number of issues related to transparency and monitoring of police and city government. Foremost was the question of how to gain immediate unfettered access to public records. Shakyra Diaz urged those making public record requests to document their efforts and how long it takes to obtain a document. She noted the right to the public records saying, "We are our government."

However, getting public records when needed was not the experience of those present when requesting records from the city of Cleveland. Even updated police policies on body-worn cameras requested from the city were not given to meeting organizers prior to the meeting. It turned out that Councilman Matt Zone was able to obtain a more updated copy that the Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Committee, which was relying on a dated February 2<sup>nd</sup> document for the

panel discussion.

Several people called for public records to be made available online or immediately upon request at a public office. Diaz said the police policies and procedures involving use of body-worn cameras should be up on the city's website. A number of people stressed the importance of the public knowing about their ability to request that the cameras be turned off and requirements that the cameras be turned off due to certain privacy concerns.

A number of activists and journalists attending the meeting noted that public record requests were routinely referred to the City of Cleveland Law Department where they were denied or stalled. Those present asked Councilman Matt Zone and his Safety Committee to work on legislation that would make the public records request process more fair to the public. Councilman Zone promised, "I'm going to look into it."

Several people noted the importance of cell phone cameras and citizen videos in creating awareness of misbehavior and criminal acts by law enforcement personnel. A member of Cop Block held up a cell phone and said, "Here is your body camera, use it."

A videographer recording the meeting for the Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition said he records on video a lot of public demonstrations and told of the many times he has been intimidated by law enforcement while trying to record such events. He noted he has had cameras broken and other violations of his first amendment rights while trying to record events. He noted judges that banned cameras from simple judicial hearings and said, "If the government has the right to tape us, we have the right to tape them."

Shahid Buttar said while the

continued on page 7



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, April 18, 2015; Community Forum on Police Accountability, Surveillance and Civil Rights presented by Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition and community partners, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 1962 Stokes Blvd: Will Tarter, the founder and past president of the Cleveland Young Professional Senate, says the body worn cameras will be a win-win situation only if deployed within a framework that protects civil liberties and civil rights while having transparency.

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, April 18, 2015; Community Forum on Police Accountability, Surveillance and Civil Rights presented by Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition and community partners, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 1962 Stokes Blvd: Alice Ragland, an organizer with the Ohio Student Association and a member of the panel on Body-Worn Police Cameras, speaks about how messages from society create an implicit bias that causes people to see African Americans as threatening.

## COMMUNITY BOARD

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to commit to attend meetings twice a month, usually on Tuesdays and Saturdays. For more information, contact Lieutenant Victor M. Gill at 216/543-8287 or [vgill@city.cleveland.oh.us](mailto:vgill@city.cleveland.oh.us).

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**CINCO DE MAYO/MAY FIFTH CELEBRATION** sponsored by the City of Cleveland's Community Relations Board will be held at the City Hall Rotunda, 601 Lakeside Ave., in downtown Cleveland at 11 am. Lunch will be served. Rep. Marcy Kaptur will be the keynote speaker. Entertainment by Mariachi «Santa Cecilia.» To register, call 216/664-6248.

**LA PLACITA CLEVELAND**, an open-air market that celebrates the rich culture and entrepreneurial spirit of Cleveland's Hispanic Community, is scheduled for May 9, June 13, and monthly through September at 2511 Clark Ave. Call Maria Soucek at 216/961-9073 ext. 202 for more information.

### METROHEALTH

**METROHEALTH'S** Second Annual Stakeholders Meeting, a progress report on the health system's future, is scheduled for Friday, May 8 from 8 to 10 am at the Cleveland Convention Center. Join the conversation at [www.metrohealthtransformation.org](http://www.metrohealthtransformation.org)

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## POLICE CAMERA PANEL

continued from page 6

courts can be used to address the violation of first amendment rights, you have to have standing to take the case to court--- which means the injury has already taken place. He said if the City Council passed a statutory restriction on police violating the first amendment rights of citizens to record events in public «the city would be standing by you before the fact, rather than after the fact,» he said. Buttar also urged a city policy that would fire police officers for arresting someone for observing or recording police actions.

Panelist Ed Little said an alternative to police cameras is for the public, armed with cell phones to be observing and recording the police.

Genevieve Mitchell, executive director of the Black Women's Center and a member of the Carl Stokes Brigade, complained about the generous contract that the city of Cleveland entered into with Taser Corporation for the body-worn cameras. She said the money could be put to a better use by being spent on education, jobs, hospital medical

care, and housing. She called for a public policy shift to bring resources to meet the needs of people rather than corporations.

Councilman Matt Zone responded that he didn't think there was a way the city could get out of the contract it had signed with Taser International for the cameras. He asked Buttar, an attorney, for his advise. Buttar said proving fraud would be one way to invalidate the contract. He said the authors of the Rialto California study that Taser Corporation uses to promote its cameras throughout the country said that study was specific to Rialto California and couldn't be applied to other communities. Buttar said that applying the findings in a manner broader than intended could be determined to be fraudulent. He urged Councilman Zone to consult with the Law Department if the city wanted to get out of the contract.

It was noted while the Justice Department specifically mentioned body worn cameras as an effective law enforcement tool, it also noted that a city where police officers don't have working computers in their cars needs to prioritize its purchases.

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# HOMELESS

continued from page one

to be an important project for the City of Cleveland and for those who are homeless. She says twenty-five of the sixty-six units in the proposed development will be for homeless veterans and the remainder for referrals from area agencies working with the chronically homeless. She says the project will help the United States meet one of its national priorities to end homelessness among veterans.

Collins says funders for the project have been understanding of the delay in the project and are working with EDEN in support of redesigning the project so it can go forward. She said a number of options are being considered and EDEN hopes to have construction underway by this fall.

Initially, the City of Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), in a July 7, 2014 ruling, had granted two use variances and four area variances from Cleveland Codified Ordinances to allow the project to proceed. Judge Pamela A Barker in a ruling filed with the Cuyahoga County Clerk of Courts on January 27, 2015 reversed the ruling by BZA and ruled that the adjoining parcels owned by 81 Street Properties, LLC McKinley Terrace holding Company, NE Cornerstone Properties, West End Townhouses and Michael Dolezal had standing to appeal the decision. The court said the owners of the adjacent properties demonstrated that granting the variances would directly affect them and cause them unique harm.

The adjacent property owners challenged the project on grounds that its proposed height of 43 feet would block their views and the density of the proposed development would be "an extreme detriment to (their) surroundings, quality of life and property values."

The proposed height of the EDEN development at 43 feet is eight feet higher than city code for the area, which allows a 35-foot high development. The property is located in a split zoning with part of the parcel in a two family residential area and part in a general retail business district.

The court ruled that EDEN must show it would have practical difficulty in using the parcel without the variances it sought, and the court said EDEN failed to do so. The court also ruled that EDEN knew of the zoning restrictions when it purchased the property and cannot demonstrate "unnecessary hardship" if the variances were not granted.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

**Saturday, April 18, 2015; 8301 Detroit Avenue: The site of a proposed development to provide permanent supportive housing for veterans and the chronically homeless remains empty while plans for the site are revised. Neighbors challenged the original plan for the site in Common Pleas Court. The Court denied variances originally granted to the project by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Eden Inc., which will administer the housing planned for the site, is working with funders to redesign the proposed project so construction can begin in the fall.**

## COMMUNITY BOARD

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[www.oac.state.oh.us/grantsprogs/OhioPoetLaureate.asp](http://www.oac.state.oh.us/grantsprogs/OhioPoetLaureate.asp)

**SENIORS**  
**A FREE SENIOR DAY**, presented by the Cleveland Department of Aging, is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20 at Cleveland Public Hall at 500 Lakeside Ave. in downtown Cleveland. An information fair will be held at 10 am, a program will take place at 11 am, lunch at noon and entertainment at 12:30 pm. For more information, call 216/664-2833 or visit [www.cleveland-oh.gov/aging](http://www.cleveland-oh.gov/aging).

**STOCKYARD/CLARK FULTON BROOKLYN CENTRE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY CLEANUP** is scheduled for May 2 at 9 am. Volunteer headquarters is at 3167 Fulton Rd. Online volunteer pre-registration is at [www.greenupcleveland.org](http://www.greenupcleveland.org). On-

site registration is also available. **NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK NIGHT** meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Archwood United Church of Christ, 2800 Archwood Ave. Noche de Comunicacion Comunitaria, Cada 2<sup>nd</sup> Miercoles del Mes. April meeting/Abril fetchas is on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Contact/llama a Keisha Gonzalez at 216/961-9073 x204 or [Kgonzalez@dscdo.org](mailto:Kgonzalez@dscdo.org)

**STOCKYARD, CLARK-FULTON AND BROOKLYN CENTRE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SAFETY COMMITTEE** is offering free technology training, including looking up court cases, finding property owners, setting up alerts for sexual offenders, getting updates on crime in your neighborhood and filing a crime report online. The training is scheduled for Monday, May 4th at 6 pm at The Connect Your Community

Center at 3730 Pearl Rd. For more information, contact Adam Gifford at 216/961-9073 ext. 205.

**TREMONT TREMONT ARTWALK** occurs on the second Friday of the month in the Tremont neighborhood (May 8) **from 6 to 9 pm**. Visit <http://tremontartwalk.com/> for more information.

**WiFi**  
**FREE WiFi** is offered by the Cleveland Public Library at its Main Library complex, including the Eastman Reading Garden, and all Cleveland Public Library branches. You need a laptop computer, tablet or mobile device with WiFi capability. For more information, visit [www.cpl.org](http://www.cpl.org).

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