PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Saturday, June 6, 2020; Justice for Desmond Rally, Second District Police Station, 3481 Fulton Road: An individual showing the support of Native Americans for Black Lives was one of about 2,000 people joining in the rally led by Desmond Franklin's family and Black Lives Cleveland organizers. Franklin, age 22, was shot and killed by an off duty Second District Police officer on April 9, 2020.

FREE

Non Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CLEVELAND, OHIO
PERMIT 1354

Vol. 47, No. 7 July 2020

Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

Minneapolis video inspires Black Lives Matter Cleveland protest at the Second Police District

by Chuck Hoven

Seeing four police officers roughly treating a black man on the evening of May 25, 2020, Minneapolis teenager Darnella Frazier had the presence of mind to stop and record an iphone video of what she saw. Her actions will be cited throughout history as an example of the difference one person can make.

Frazier, age 17, told Minneapolis' *Star Tribune*, "The world needed to see what I was seeing. Stuff like this happens in silence too many times." The video she took showed a Minneapolis police officer pressing his knee against the neck of George Floyd limiting his ability to breath. While Floyd pleaded "I can't breathe," the other three officers failed to intervene. Frazier, who captured Floyd's murder on video, said to the *Star Tribune* "My video proves what happened."

NEWS ANALYSIS

The video helped to ignite protests against police brutality throughout the United States and on four continents around the globe, including a large protest on May 30th in downtown Cleveland. Black Lives Matter protests called for the re-examination of incidents where police actions have resulted in the deaths of black citizens.

A week after the May 30th Black Lives Matter protest in downtown Cleveland, Black Lives Matter Cleveland joined with family members of a Clevelander killed by an off-duty Cleveland Police Officer in the Second District to organize a protest to demand the re-examination of the April 9th, 2020 death of 22-year old Desmond Franklin. Franklin was killed by a bullet fired by an off duty Second District Police Officer Jose Garcia on Pearl Road in front of Riverside Cemetery. The June 6th Justice for Desmond Rally

continued on page 6

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Saturday, June 6, 2020; Justice for Desmond Rally, Second District Police Station, 3481 Fulton Road: Medical students from Ohio University joined in the rally showing the support of White Coats for Black Lives.

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Saturday, June 6, 2020; Justice for Desmond Rally, Second District Police Station, 3481 Fulton Road: A young protester urges people to speak out against injustice with a sign saying "Silence=Violence".

Cleveland City Council gets tough with dollar stores & hands out tax subsidies to developers

by Bruce Checefsky

Cleveland City Council held a virtual meeting electronically on June 17, 2020, in compliance with Ohio's Open Meetings Law. Council President Kevin Kelley, who represents Ward 13, of which Old Brooklyn and part of the Stockyard neighborhood are included, led the proceedings.

Placing a moratorium on new construction permits for the building of so-called "dollar stores" was on the agenda. Several council members noted that bargain stores proliferate in low-income neighborhoods. Many are unsafe and unsanitary.

Council President Kelley suggested the moratorium will temporarily stop the spread of new stores while Council crafts stiffer regulations on how they should operate.

"We need more tools to hold these businesses accountable," said Kelley. "We have met with small box operations several times to discuss our concerns, but improvements haven't taken place."

Ward 1 Councilman Joseph T. Jones supported the moratorium, adding, "The Family Dollar store in my neighborhood sells beer and wine. We have a couple more applying to sell alcohol."

Ward 8 Councilman Michael D. Polensek and Ward 12 Councilman Anthony Brancatelli were in favor of the moratorium.

"I'm concerned about their operations," Polensek said. "These businesses are owned by large corporations and I can't understand for the life of me why they can't maintain their properties. They are

continued on page 4

Concerns about proposed Lincoln Park Flats Project expressed by Auburn-Lincoln Block Club members

by Bruce Checefsky

A recent report released by RealtyHop ranked Cleveland #99 out of 100 cities in terms of having a strong housing market. Cleveland saw a -6.83% change in the asking price in June, according to Nina Furseth, Corporate Communications Analyst for the New York-based property investment company.

The RealtyHop Market Health Report for June investigates the strength of the 100 largest housing markets across the United States. To do this the company, founded in 2008 by Lawrence Zhou and Lee Lin, analyzed over 300,000 real estate listings on RealtyHop to identify the "market health" of each city based on the median change in asking prices over the past month. Their results explore this metric of housing market health across the country.

The report ranked two Arizona housing markets near Phoenix - Gilbert and Chandler - at the top of their list while Detroit and Cleveland fell to the bottom. Housing prices in both Midwestern cities required significant discounts on listed housing prices in order to be sold.

Despite data showing a slowdown in the housing market in Cleveland, investors at Rust Belt Development are forging ahead with plans to build a 49-unit apartment complex slated for the former Holy Ghost Byzantine Church parking lot at the corner of W. 14th Street and Kenilworth Avenue. David Maison from Maison Architecture and Design submitted a second-round design of Lincoln Park Flats to the Auburn-Lincoln Block Club at their June meeting held via ZOOM.

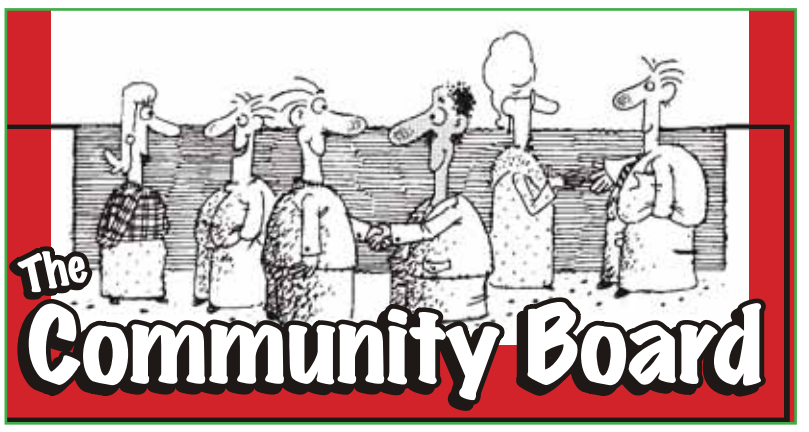
In September 2019, Maison Architect + Design and Rust Belt Development, led by Sam Messina, proposed demolition of the rectory (housing that the Byzantine Church provided for priests and nuns) on the lot just south of the parking lot. Shortly after, the Local Design Review Committee for the Tremont Historic District asked the Landmarks Commission of the City of Cleveland to deny the demolition request. The Lincoln Park Flats development is proposed in an

continued on page 5

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Saturday, June 6, 2020; Justice for Desmond Rally, Second District Police Station, 3481 Fulton Road: The crowd listens to speakers from Desmond Franklin's family, and family members and advocates for other Clevelanders whose loved one's death resulted from actions by Cleveland Police. After about an hour and a half of speeches the protesters marched to the site on Pearl Road in front of Riverside Cemetery where Desmond Franklin was killed.

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, June 6, 2020; Justice for Desmond Rally, Second District Police Station, 3481 Fulton Road: Medical students from Ohio University doing a rotation at Northcoast made it known that "Racism is a Public Health Crisis" while showing the support of 'White Coats for Black Lives."



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

ADVOCACY

POOR PEOPLE'S MORAL JUSTICE JUBILEE POLICY PLATFORM: The legislative and Policy Priorities of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival: download a copy of the platform at: www.poorpeoplescampaign.org.

ARTS

SPACES offers project-based support through The Urgent Art Fund to Cuyahoga County artists, in partnership with Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. This support may go toward production expenses and artist commission for the creation of "urgent art" that is socially, politically, or culturally responsive. Funds are designated specifically for projects taking place in the public realm to help artists immediately engage their communities in dialogue about the most pressing issues. For information about grants and artist workshops visit the website: www.theurgentartfund.org.

TRANSFORMER STATION, 1460 W. 29TH Street, reopened on July 1st. Signal Noise: Aaron Rothman, organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art will be on exhibit through August 23, 2020. To visit, obtain a free timed "group" tickets. For more information on how to get a ticket visit: www.TransformationStation.org.

BENEFITS

INTERVIEW ABOUT YOUR BENEFITS: Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality wants to hear about your experiences applying for or renewing your benefits like food stamps or Medicaid. To get information to improve the system, they are doing short interviews with people on benefits. If you can do a brief interview, contact Jacie at jacie@organizeohio.org or call (216) 651-2606.

HOW TO APPLY FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS: Visit www.benefits.ohio.gov to apply for food, medical, cash, and childcare assistance. Available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Or call the Eligibility Contact Center at 1-844-640-OHIO (6446) for real-time eligibility and case changes for food, cash and medical assistance. Available Monday - Friday 8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

MEDICAID: Medicaid patients can use telehealth services even for first time visits. **REDETERMINATIONS ARE SUSPENDED FOR 180 DAYS.** Medicaid Benefits will not be lost if the renewal process is not able to be completed.

SNAP AND OHIO WORKS FIRST: **REDETERMINATIONS ARE SUSPENDED FOR SIX MONTHS**. Meaning if benefits were supposed to expire in March they now expire in September, April they now expire in October, and for May they will expire in November. **FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 216-987-7000 OR VISIT THE COUNTY WEBSITE AT: cjfs.cuyahogacounty.us/**

CENSUS

NORTHERN OHIOANS FOR BUDGET LEGISLATION EQUALITY (NOBLE), urges you to take the Census right now! The Federal Government sends Ohio $2,880 per person to support health, human services, and education programs. The State stands to lose this amount for each person not counted! PLEASE TAKE THE CENSUS RIGHT NOW AND PASS THIS INFORMATION ALONG! CALL: 1-844-330-2020 or VISIT: www.my2020census.gov to complete the Census today!

CITY SERVICES

CLEVELAND'S RIGHT TO COUNCIL LEGISLATION becomes effective on July 1st. Offers free eviction help for low income tenants with children. Visit FreeEvictionHelp.org to find help.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: The City of Cleveland's new rental assistance program begins this month with the goal of keeping residents out of the homeless system, maintaining viable tenants in their homes, and helping landlords to continue supporting themselves. Low to moderate income residents impacted by COVID-19, experiencing unemployment and/or a reduction in household income will be eligible to apply. To Apply send an email to caresapplication@city.cleveland.oh.us or leave a voicemail message at 216-664-2169.

BULK PICKUP/TIRE DISPOSAL: In July the City of Cleveland will offer bulk pickup on the week of July 6 and July 13th. Limit 3 items such as appliances, tables and chairs, mattresses and box springs, couches, furniture. All mattresses, box springs and cloth furniture must be wrapped in plastic. In addition, can dispose of up to 4 tires. The City does not accept construction material. Boxes and bags are not bulk items.

COMMUNITY

CLEVELAND POLICE FOUNDATION offers programs designed to build bridges between the Cleveland Division of Police and members of the community. For more information about the Cleveland Police Foundation and its programs visit: www.clevelandpolicefoundation.org.

CONSENT DECREE

CLEVELAND COMMUNITY POLICE COMMISSION has two working groups the Accountability Work Group and the Interactions with Youth Work Group. For more information about joining a work group send an email to info@clecpc.org or call 216-505-5920.

CONSUMER

PARATRANSIT SURVEY: Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE) is conducting a survey regarding Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) paratransit rider experiences over the next couple of months in an effort to improve paratransit services in entirety. If you, or someone that you know, utilizes paratransit and would be open to hearing more about the survey or would be willing to take the survey, please contact our organizer, Brittney Madison at BMadison@organizeohio.org or 330-571-3333.

EDUCATION

LITERARY CLEVELAND FREE ONLINE WRITING CONFERENCE; July 13-31. For more information visit: www.litcleveland.org.

JAMES A. GARFIELD NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE: offers virtual tours all of the time. To check them out visit: https://www.nps.gov/jaga/virtual-garfield-home-tours.htm.

CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: Visit the website for educational resources and updates at https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Coronavirus

CLEVELAND METROPARKS OFFERS FREE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM ON FACEBOOK LIVE: Mondays through Fridays at 11 a.m. visit Cleveland Metroparks Zoo's Facebook Page to join our biologists who are working to secure a future for wildlife at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Check-in with your favorite Zoo animals and learn about what it takes to care for some of the most endangered species in the world. Then, at 1 p.m., visit Cleveland Metroparks Facebook Page to join our park naturalists as we explore the Emerald Necklace and look for early signs of spring, learn about the forest floor, birds and more.

EMPLOYMENT

WEST SIDE CATHOLIC CENTER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CLASSES assist all people in transition, without housing, or who are underemployed. The eight-week program will assist you in identifying your passion, preparing you to re-enter the workforce and get you in front of employers with permanent positions with a career path potential. The program can also count as a county provider for individuals seeking a work requirement for SNAP benefits. This is all done in a one-on-one environment. With daily attendance and work requirement completed…our Program WILL GUARANTEE YOU JOB OFFERS! Classes run from 9:00 AM to 12:00 pm Monday thru Friday. Open computer lab and ServSafe every afternoon from 1:00-4:00 pm Questions, please call Frank Johanek, 216-631-4741 ext. 167 Class begins July 20 and August 17.

FOOD

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY SUMMER MEAL SERVICES: The Greater Cleveland Food Bank will provide five grab and go meals at two West Side locations to children age 18 and under. Distribution will be every Thursday through August 7th: Walz, 7910 Detroit Ave: 10:30 a.m. – Noon; Fulton, 3545 Fulton Road: 12:30 – 2 p.m. Food Bank staff will also help adults apply for food assistance and other critical benefits.

CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT's 22 meal sites will remain open without interruption (M-F: 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.) throughout the summer, providing grab-and-go breakfast and lunch bags, and also making summer reading and enrichment materials available for children ages 18 and under. The sites in the Plain Press service area are: Buhrer Dual Language, 1600 Buhrer Ave.; Clark, 5550 Clark Ave.; Denison, 3799 W. 33rd St.; Garfield, 3800 W. 140th; and Louisa May Alcott, 10308 Baltic Road.

URBAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL, W. 48th and Lorain, is also a site for grab-and-go breakfast and lunch bags. (M-F 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.) for children ages 18 and under.

ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH HUNGER CENTER, 2486 W. 14th Street, distributes two takeout meals at the hunger center door daily Monday thru Sunday at 11:30 a.m. For more information call 216-781-5530.

MAY DUGAN CENTER, 4115 Bridge Ave., will host drive through food distribution each month. For more information and to register to pick up food visit their website at www.maydugancenter.net.

CLEVELAND HOPE EXCHANGE HOPE DAY DRIVE THROUGH: Saturday, July25, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. 3381 Fulton Road. Free resources: fresh produce, dry food, kids books, giveaways, and referral assistance.

FIRST CALL FOR HELP: For days, times and locations for free food distribution call 211.

GREATER CLEVELAND FOOD BANK: Call 216-738-7239, or visit GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org for food assistance. Apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) if you are under sixty (limits are higher for persons age 60 or older or persons receiving disability assistance) and your monthly family income is $1,316 or less for a one-person household; $1,784 or less for a two person household; $2,252 or less for a three person household; $2,720 or less for a four person household. Add $453 for each additional household member. For information about Food Stamps (SNAP) applications, food pantries, free produce, and hot meals text FOOD to 63566.

HEALTH

VIRTUAL SUPPORT AND RECOVERY groups are available and listed on the ADAMHS Board website homepage at: adamhscc.org.

LIBRARIES

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY: While you still can't enter the library buildings, all branches are now offering walk up service. To use the service, first reserve the items you would like to pick up online at cpl.org or by phone. Hours are Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Friday 2-6 p.m. Borrowed materials can be returned to book drops. Several libraries also are offering drive-up service including the Eastman Branch at 11602 Lorain Avenue (216-623-6965), and the Jefferson Branch at 850 Jefferson Avenue (216-623-7004).

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY VIRTUAL PROGRAMS, including Kindergarten Readiness, are available at CPL.org.

IMMIGRATION

IMMIGRATION DETAINEES IN NORTHEAST OHIO: If you need legal assistance with an immigration matter and cannot afford an attorney, Legal Aid may be able to help. Call the Legal Aid's Detention Project at 888-817-3777.

OHIO

OHIO: Ohio will only require a rear license plate beginning July 1st. The requirement for a front plate was eliminated in the latest State of Ohio Transportation bill signed by Governor Mike DeWine in April of 2019.

PETS

CLEVELAND ANIMAL PROTECTIVE LEAGUE offers help if you are struggling to feed your pet due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Contact free pet food delivery is available to Cleveland residents living in isolation during the pandemic. For more information visit clevelandapl.org or call 216-771-4616.

RECREATION

CITY OF CLEVELAND RECREATION CENTERS: City of Cleveland plans to reopen Zone, Clark and Estrabrook recreation centers beginning on July 6th. Halloran Recreation Center and City outdoor pools, spray basins and splashpads will remain closed. New rules will be in place and activities will be limited in the recreation centers.

EDGEWATER BEACH will have lifeguards on duty from 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. through August 16.

REUNION

THE 1960 CLASS OF SAINT STANISLAUS HIGH SCHOOL will hold a reunion at the end of July 2020. For more information contact Reie Dix of the Alumni Committee at 216-357-2674.

SERVICES

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER'S LATINA PROJECT offers culturally sensitive services that take into consideration the realities of the Latino life. Services provided in Spanish and free of charge include information about legal rights &Justice System Advocacy, personal assistance & escort, counseling services, weekly Spanish-speaking Support Group/ childcare and more. For more information call 216-229-2420 or visit www.dvcac.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

CUYAHOGA COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN aims to show how residents are "Spreading Joy" during COVID-19 Pandemic by using the hashtag #SpreadingJoyNEO share ideas and joy and inspire others to do things that feel good for them.

SUPPORT GROUPS

NATIONAL ALIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL (NAMI) GREATER CLEVELAND VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS: Please call the support group numbers below 5 or 10 minutes beforehand in case you run into any difficulty.

NAMI FAMILY GROUP (for family member, friend or caregiver of an adult with mental illness) Tuesdays from 7-8:30 p.m. Join by calling 216-452-6841. You will be prompted to enter the following code: 391 639 233, then push pound (#) to continue.

NAMI FAMILY GROUP- DUAL DIAGNOSIS (for family member, friend or caregiver of persons with mental illness and substance use disorder). Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Join by calling 216-452-6841. You will be prompted to enter the following code: 391 639 233, then push pound (#) to continue.

NAMI PEER GROUP (for adults 18 & older living with mental illness). Thursdays from 3-4:30 p.m. Join by calling 216-307-8224. You will be prompted to enter the following code: 829 554 282, then push pound (#) to continue.

NAMI PEER GROUP (for adults 18 & older living with mental illness). Mondays from 6:30 – 8 p.m. Join by calling 216-352-6137. You will be prompted to enter the following code: 504 127 492, then push pound (#) to continue.

TAXES

FREE TAX FILING is available again! Schedule an appointment with the Cuyahoga EITC Coalition today. Using virtual and telephone options, our IRS-certified volunteers can help you prepare and e-file your taxes today. Visit refundohio.org or call 211 to schedule your appointment. The extended tax deadline is July 15.

INCOME TAX FILING DATES have been extended for both Federal and State income tax filings until July 15th. You may file your taxes for free at myfreetaxes.com. Updates on in-person tax prep will be at refundohio.org.

VOLUNTEERS

CASA of Cuyahoga County, a program of Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County, needs volunteers to advocate for children who have been neglected and abused. CASAs are everyday citizens who are appointed by the Court to advocate for the safety and well-being of children and represent the children's best interests. CASAs are trained to investigate, facilitate, advocate, and monitor one or two cases at a time to help the Court make the best decision for a safe, caring, and permanent home for children involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Those interested in becoming a CASA, please visit cfadvocates.org or call 216.443.3377 for more information.

Plain Press
2012 W. 25th STE 500
Cleveland, OH 44113
Phone: (216) 621-3060
email:
plainpress@gmail.com
Advertising email:
plainpressads@yahoo.com
Website:
https://plainpress.blog
Plain Press © Established in 1971
Circulation: 21,000 copies.
Published monthly.
Distribution area: Cuyahoga River west to W. 140, Lake Erie south to the Lower Big Creek Valley. Available free at over 500 locations.
Managing Editor: Charles E. Hoven;
Editor: Deborah Rose Sadlon;
Copy Editor: Craig Bobby
Editorial Intern: Colin Murnan
Reporters: Bruce Checefsky & Victoria Shea
Photo Editor: Coriana Close;
Photographer: Michael Oakar
Advertising Sales: Ed Tishel
Graphic Artist: David Myers
Distribution: Ahmed Morad
Mailing: Teresa Calvo
Board of Trustees: Keith Brown,Peggy Davenport, David Gamble, Dr. Leo Jeffres, Joe Narkin, and Helen K. Smith.

Cleveland City Council declares racism a public health crisis

CITY COUNCIL POLICIES CONTRIBUTE TO CLEVELAND'S HIGH CHILDHOOD POVERTY RATE

by Chuck Hoven

At its June 3rd meeting, Cleveland City Council declared Racism is a Public Health Crisis. The legislation was unanimously passed by Cleveland City Council.

Four Cleveland City Councilmembers joined with members of the Racism and Public Health Crisis Working Group on the steps of Cleveland City Hall for a June 5th press conference to discuss the newly passed resolution and how the city plans to address the public health concerns it raises.

COMMENTARY

Cleveland City Council President Kevin Kelley; Cleveland City Council Health and Human Services Committee Chair Blaine Griffin, Ward 7 Councilman Basheer Jones and Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack all attended and spoke at the press conference. In addition to the City Council members, speakers at the press conference included: Marsha Mockabee of the Urban League: Margaret Mitchell of the YWCA; Helen Forbes Field of the United Way of Greater Cleveland; and Christian Farmer of Birthing Beautiful Communities.

In a press release issued prior to the press conference, Councilman Griffin, a sponsor of the legislation, explained how the current pandemic has highlighted the impact of racism on our city. "The pandemic has laid bare even more plainly that African Americans and other minority groups who have less access to high quality medical care, cleaner environments, and healthy fresh food are dying at greater rates than others, despite not being infected at a higher rate," said Councilman Blaine Griffin.

However, Griffin said the legislation was introduced before the impact of the pandemic was known. He said existing racial disparities in health outcomes, including infant mortality rates, were being examined as examples of the impact of racism on public health.

The City Council press release offered a definition of a public health crisis agreed upon by experts: "A public health crisis is when the problem affects a large number of people, threatens health over the long-term, and requires the adoption of large-scale solutions."

According to City Council the resolution declares that "Council recognizes that racism is a public health crisis that affects all members of our society both on a local level and nationwide and deserves action from all levels of government and civil society."

Cleveland City Council says the resolution "also supports the establishment of a working group to address these issues and to: seek solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in racial justice work; continue to work to build alliances with organizations that are confronting racism and encourage partners to recognize racism as a public health crisis; continue to promote racially equitable economic and workforce development (and in Cleveland; continue to promote racially equitable hiring and promotion of all employees including City employees); and advocate and draft relevant policies that prioritize the health of people of color and mitigate exposure to adverse childhood experiences and trauma in childhood."

Speaking of the need to address racism as a public health issue, Griffin says, "We must act swiftly. Now is the time, after too long of inaction."

Given recent events highlighted by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Councilman Griffin added "equitable law enforcement will not be overlooked."

A member of the Racism and Public Health Crisis Working Group added childhood poverty as a major concern to be addressed in tackling this public health crisis. She cited statistics from a recent report by the Centers for Community Solutions that said among cities in the United States with populations over 250,000 Cleveland had the second highest poverty rate and the highest child poverty rate.

A blog by Emily Campbell on the Center for Community Solutions website, communitysolutions.com, titled "Cleveland ranks 1-2-3 in poverty" says "Cleveland is worst in child poverty, second for working age adults, and third in older adult poverty."

The source cited by the Campbell, the United States Census Bureau, estimates the 2018 childhood poverty rate in Cleveland at 50.5%. Meaning just over half of the children in Cleveland are living below the official poverty line. Cleveland's overall poverty rate is estimated at 33.1%, second only to Detroit Michigan.

While somewhat dated, a 2016 ward population profile provided by the Center for Community Solutions indicates that the percentage of Cleveland children living in poverty is highest in wards with predominately Black or Hispanic populations. At least 25% of children in every ward in Cleveland are living in poverty, with a high of 77.7% in predominately black Ward 5 and a low of 25.9% predominately white Ward 17.

Following the statistics noted by the member of the Racism and Public Health Crisis Working Group, Council President Kevin Kelley was asked what specific actions Cleveland City Council had taken to address childhood poverty in Cleveland given that this isn't the

continued on page 8

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Sunday, June 14, 2020; Right to Health Care Protest, W. 25th and MetroHealth Drive: Mary Huck of Our Revolution Ohio and Brian Houlehan of Single Payer Action Network Ohio joined protesters gathered along Route 42 from Cleveland to Cincinnati to show their support for HB 292 the Medicaid for All and Medicaid for All Crisis Program Act. State Representative Michael Skindell is a sponsor of the legislation which has been introduced in the State Legislature on an annual basis, but has not received the legislative support it needs to become law.

ATTENTION PLAIN PRESS READERS

Please feel free to pick up extra copies of the *Plain Press* to drop on a neighbor's or friend's porch. The *Plain Press* distribution crew will monitor many of our distribution points and provide additional newspapers as they run out. Thank you for helping to bring the *Plain Press* to those who are staying at home.

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Sunday, June 14, 2020; Edgewater Park: Pastor Doug Horner of St. Paul's Community Church chats with friends and members of the St. Paul congregation offering him farewells and best wishes. Pastor Horner has decided to take time out for reflection and is leaving St. Paul's after 17 years of ministry.

Clark Fulton neighborhood plan seeks input from target area residents and stakeholders

by Chuck Hoven

MetroWest Community Development Organization has joined in partnership with Ward 14 Councilwoman Jasmin Santana, the City of Cleveland, MetroHealth Medical Center, and the Cleveland Foundation to develop a master plan for a target area that includes all of the Clark Fulton neighborhood plus a portion of the Tremont and Brooklyn Centre neighborhoods. The target area for the master plan stretches from I-90 on the North to I-71 on the South and from I-71 on the East to W. 44th on the West. The planning area includes both sides of W. 44th Street

MetroWest Community Development Organization Executive Director Ricardo Leon says the effort to develop a master plan began 18 months ago in December of 2018. He said the five partners all had planning projects underway. They met and decided to put their personal agendas aside and work together so their "collective impact would be more significant."

Councilwoman Santana noted some of the planning efforts underway in the target area that are now collaborating on the Master Plan: The City of Cleveland's $65 million Neighborhood Transformation Initiative; MetroHealth's $1 billion dollar Transformation Plan; Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's MetroHealth Line Plan which includes Transit Oriented Development; and FHAct50 dollars which promise to build 180 units of affordable housing in the neighborhood. Councilwoman Santana also mentioned plans to upgrade Meyer Park by Lincoln West High School and a variety of initiatives in the neighborhood which directly invest in people. Those people oriented initiatives include a women's empowerment initiative, investment in dumpsters throughout the neighborhood to reduce unsightly garbage in the neighborhood, neighborhood art projects and movie nights for family oriented fun for residents.

The partnership has hired an urban planning and design firm called WRT, which is headquartered in Philadelphia, but works on projects throughout the United States. Part of WRT's Master Planning Team includes Cleveland based Neighborhood Connections which will be helping with outreach efforts; WSP's Cleveland based transportation planning team; the Reinvestment Fund, a Philadelphia based Community Development Financial Institution.

While the partners hosted some public meetings late last year and early this year, the outreach effort has had to take a different tack due to the advent of the COVID-19 Corona Virus Pandemic. Planners are now reaching out via a website with an interactive video, various forms of social media, post cards, phone calls and neighborhood ambassadors to name a few of the means they are using to engage neighborhood residents in the planning process.

The principal representatives of each of the five partners all have connections to the neighborhood—Councilwoman Santana, Executive Director Leon, City of Cleveland Planning Director Freddy Collier, and Cleveland Foundation Program Officer Keisha Gonzalez – all live in the target neighborhood area. Greg Zucca, MetroHealth's representative, works in the area and lives on the Near West Side.

All of the principal organizations will have additional staff engaged in the planning effort. In addition, neighborhood ambassadors have been recruited to help reach out

continued on page 8

CLEVELAND CITY COUNCIL

continued from page one

a detriment to our communities."

Ordinance Number 286-2020 included a Tax Increment Financing Agreement (TIF) with the Sherwin Williams Company to provide assistance in funding construction of the company's global headquarters building on Public Square. The 30-year TIF diverts a portion of the company's taxes to help finance the project which will city officials hope will generate $8.6 million in annual payroll tax revenues for the city. The headquarters will house 3,100 employees.

David Ebersole, Director of Economic Development, was asked by Councilman Joseph T. Jones to tally the final package deal.

"The previous ordinances authorized a $13.5M grant to support the new construction, a performance-based income tax job creation credit up to $11.5M, and the 30-year TIF dependent on the taxable valuation of the building. The non-school portion is roughly 40% of the property tax for a period of 30 years."

A total package deal has yet to be determined.

City Council approved legislation for tax increment financing for The Lincoln apartment complex development at the south-west corner of Scranton and Kenilworth/Willey. Sustainable Community Associates is seeking a 15-year tax abatement followed by another 15 years of tax increment financing using the non-school portion of the property tax along with a $360,000 half forgivable loan

"This is an exciting project," Councilman Brancatelli said. "We thoroughly reviewed and support it."

"Sustainable Community Associates went through our community process with neighborhood residents and local block club which supported their project," 3rd Ward Councilman Kerry McCormack added. "The developers have also set up a fund that helps local residents in the immediate area with minor repairs to their properties."

Council President Kelley asked whether Sustainable Community Associates was using prevailing wage on the project. A prevailing wage is defined as the hourly wage, usual benefits and overtime, paid to the majority of workers, laborers, and mechanics within a particular area. Public protests erupted over prevailing wage issues at Tappan apartments project on the corner of Branch Avenue and Scranton Road in Tremont earlier this year. Representatives from Sustainable Community Associates have repeatedly denied any wrong-doing.

"I don't know," Director Ebersole said. "I'll have to look into it."

Illegal dumping in abandoned property sites was addressed. Several frustrated council members asked for more information. Recent efforts from the Mayor's office to reinstate bulk pickup are underway, according to Acting Director of Public Safety Karrie Howard.

City Council approved legislation allocating $18,740 to the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Environmental Crime Task Force to stop illegal dumping on empty lots in the city. Acting Director Howard noted that the task force investigates and prosecutes environmental crimes, particularly open dumping, which is a felony in Ohio.

"Investigators try to identify the perpetrators. They issue a citation or make some arrests when possible. It's a case-by-case scenario," Howard said.

Ward 7 Councilman Basheer Jones took the opportunity to address his dissatisfaction with the Cleveland Police Department. Jones reportedly stated publicly that he intends to vote against all public safety legislation until the police department responds to his request for a full accounting on the racial makeup of the police force.

"I want to make something clear. The media has reported that I am voting no on all safety legislation. I have received the information requested from Acting Director Howard. I'm voting no because we have no plan for diversity. That's the reason why I'm saying no, and will continue to vote no, to every piece of safety legislation until we have a plan for diversity of our public safety forces in place with the city."

Councilman Joseph T. Jones has also stated publicly that he will support a no vote and join Councilman Basheer Jones on voting no on every safety legislation holding the Mayor's office accountable for a plan on diversity.

Director of Public Works Michael E. Cox couldn't provide a timeline for opening public basketball courts. City Recreation Centers are planning to open on July 6 for restricted classes only. Public pools will remain closed until further notice.

"We're following CDC guidelines," Cox said. "Our programs will not include open gym activities like basketball. We will have skilled training in limited class sizes."

Councilman Basheer Jones paused for a second. "I understand we have CDC guidelines. Young people are getting restless and you know when young people get restless, bad things can happen. Do we have authority within the City of Cleveland to do what we need to do if we choose to?"

"We follow the Governor's recommendations," Cox replied. "The pandemic is still here."

"Casinos have opened," Councilman Basheer Jones noted. "Places that make money are open. What about our communities?"

Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and Cudell Improvement team up to aid local businesses providing free meals to residents

by Colin Murnan

The Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and Cudell Improvement Inc. have teamed up to help their local neighborhoods in a time when it is needed. The organizations started compensating small businesses on June 8 by providing 7,200 free meals to the Detroit Shoreway, Cudell, and Edgewater residents over an eight-week period at six locations. This program is a response to the closings caused by COVID-19, and the goal is to keep these local businesses stable, their employees working, and their customers fed. The Cleveland Foundation funded the program with $56,000 through the Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund.

The meals will be distributed Monday through Friday. Each day 150 meals are distributed on a first come first served basis at a different local business. A couple of these businesses have been providing free meals even before the organizations and funding came through.

Tom Owen of Banter Beer and Wine, the program's Monday setting for free meals, said that the restaurant started giving out hot dogs during the first week of the pandemic, when everything first shut down. The hot dogs kept customers attracted to their restaurant, keeping eyes on their menu while also providing a service to the community. The new June 8 program has been effective as well, and Owen said they went through the free meals that first Monday very quickly, distributing most of the meals within the first hour. The meals are prepared, packed up and ready to go for customers to take.

Gypsy Beans and Baking Co., the Thursday setting for free meals, also started giving out free meals early on, all the while adhering to safety standards.

Josh Jones, Marketing Director of Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, also talked about the high demand during the first week of the free meals program, saying that all six days of the program meals ran out.

Along with free meals, the Kids' Book Bank Cleveland donated 300 children's books to be passed out at the Good Earth Farm Stand on Wednesdays, and Tuesdays at Dudley Triangle pocket park.

Jones used social media, emails, and postcards sent to residents of the community to notify people

continued on page 7

PHOTO BY COLIN MURNAN

Wednesday, June 17, 2020; Good Earth Farm Stand, 9600 Madison Avenue: Cherie' Billingsley-Ballard helps give out free books with Christopher Brown at Ohio City's Good Earth Farm Stand (9600 Madison Avenue). Christopher Brown is the Safety and Communication Outreach Coordinator for Detroit Shoreway Community Organization. Billingslye-Ballard helps pick out age appropriate books for children attending the Wednesday free meal event sponsored by Cudell Improvement and Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization. Each Wednesday 150 free meals prepared by Pulp Juice and Smoothie Bar are passed out on a first come, first served basis.

LINCOLN PARK FLATS PROJECT

continued from page one

"Urban Overlay Zone", a regulatory tool that identifies distinctive development provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone. No variances were being sought by Rust Belt Development back then. The membership present at the September Auburn-Lincoln Block Club meeting voted unanimously to support the proposed development as presented including demolition of the rectory.

The Landmarks Commission of the City of Cleveland has since denied Rust Belt Development's request to demolish the rectory. Messina asked Maison to redesign the project keeping the rectory in place. The results were surprising. The new configuration provides no parking for its 49 tenants. Occupants will be asked to lease parking from a third party or park their cars on the street.

"The development team was excited about providing a living solution to a section of the marketplace that does not rely on automobile ownership to exist," explained Maison. "Ride sharing is reliable and cost effective. We need a parking variance for 32 spaces to achieve our goal. We are not providing any on-site parking."

The revised plans call for 45 market-rate one-bedroom apartments at 700 square feet each. Rents start at $1,400 per month. Four market-rate micro units at 300 square feet each start at $690 per month. Micro units will include a Murphy wall-bed allowing one room to serve many purposes. Most Murphy wall-beds have no box springs. The mattress lies on a wood platform or wire mesh and is held in place so as not to sag when in a closed position. Market-rate micro units have taken hold in larger cities like New York City and Tokyo where rental real estate is at an all-time premium. New York City Department of Planning recently removed the 400-square-foot apartment zoning minimum in many new development projects to make way for smaller apartments. Some newer apartments range from 260 to 360 square feet, according to the New York Times.

The Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research (formerly known as the Housing Research & Advocacy Center), a non-profit fair housing agency that promotes equal housing opportunities and positive race relations in Northeast Ohio, issued a Guide to Local Occupancy Codes in Northeast Ohio. In the report, the minimum habitat floor space for a single occupant in Cleveland is 150 square feet and 250 square feet for double occupancy.

Still, parking was the central topic of discussion. With no parking provided for tenants, some block club members were concerned about grocery delivery and other needs to access the apartment complex. An alleyway entrance may provide the best solution but won't be used for deliveries. Most tenants will be riding their bikes, according to Maison.

"You're going to have to figure out how the get groceries into the building," Maison said when asked about deliveries. "You are not going to park in the back for delivery. You're going to walk from wherever you park."

Steven Harrison wasn't so concerned. "Let developers build the project at their own risk," he said. "If this is the way of the future, we should let them either sink or swim." Messina assured Harrison and others that the project was based on calculated risks.

"We didn't just shoot from the hip on the product size. We're not trying to west coast or east coast Tremont. Some of the residential and multi-family products have a negative turnover at $2,000 a month. Smaller units renting for less are driving a specific lessee with less turnover."

Population density is part of the Tremont West Development Long Term Plan. Adding an age-diverse segment of younger residents and empty nesters without cars can be seen as part of their ongoing strategy. Unstructured density and escalating housing and rental costs causes more disruption to the community than enhancement according to several Tremont residents. Not everyone agrees.

"This project is targeted for someone like me," said Patti Choby. "I'm an empty nester. I don't own a car. There is a huge market for this type of development. Tremont is incredibly well-situated with the RTA routes. I would encourage everyone to think about attracting a certain population. I would live here if I could."

Ben Cooper thought the Maison Architect + Design concept for Lincoln Park Flats was out of proportion for the neighborhood. The potential number of additional cars parked on public streets added to an already rising problem for Tremont residents.

"We absolutely have a right to give voice to our view on the impact of parking on the neighborhood and ourselves, not just the developers' risk in building the project," Cooper said. "Most residents feel the impact will be negative."

"I think the apartment complex will destroy the beauty of the neighborhood. To take people without cars is a ridiculous idea. All of the people on 14th Street are against it,"
--Sister Corita Ambro

A few days later in a phone conversation with Sister Corita Ambro, beloved figure in the St. Augustine Catholic Church community and recently retired after spending 48 years feeding millions of meals to the homeless at Saint Augustine's, she reflected on the project.

"I think the apartment complex will destroy the beauty of the neighborhood. To take people without cars is a ridiculous idea. All of the people on 14th Street are against it," Sister Corita said. "No one from the development company or Tremont West Development has talked to me."

Sister Corita would like to see someone buy the rectory and turn it into something more useful for the neighborhood noting that she would purchase the building if she had the money. She worries that Lincoln Park will be flooded with too many people. The 83-year old community leader has lived in Tremont for over 50 years.

"I've never been so against a project as this one," she added.

Kate O'Neil, co-chair of Auburn-Lincoln Block Club, reserved her right to withhold an opinion on the project. The block club developed a list of questions years ago for developers to consider before meeting with them, she acknowledged, including whether a project will need variances and which variances. Considerations include light and noise pollution, traffic congestion, garbage pickup and odors, food and restaurant services, and liquor license issues. Once a developer comes back to the block club with these concerns addressed getting the block club's support is usually easier.

When it came to round-two of the Lincoln Park Flats proposal by Rust Belt Development, many members of the block club were surprised. They originally supported 29 units with parking back in September. They were now being asked to consider 49 units without parking. Various leased parking options were suggested by Messina, but none could be confirmed. Rust Belt Development is asking the block club to support a variance to wave the requirements for the 32 parking spaces required by zoning.

Messina and Maison knew beforehand that Tremont residents were concerned that parking would be the number one issue going into the meeting, according to O'Neil. She was right. There were no surprises. Parking took center stage. Messina could only suggest parking alternatives acknowledging that no legal agreements have been reached with any potential partners including with Grace Hospital or St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church several blocks south of the proposed site.

"$1,400 for a one-bedroom apartment is a high rate," O'Neil said. "Two people per apartment would make the rent more affordable, but if I could afford a $1,400 a month apartment, I probably own a car."

She paused to reflect on the overall impact of the meeting, noting there were more concerns than support for it.

"If I have to be a tie-breaker on a vote, then I'll weigh in," O'Neil added. "I'm always surprised. The process works."

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Thursday, June 18, 2020; Press conference announcing Fathers for Freedom March, 3607 Pearl Road in front of Riverview Cemetery: Ward 7 Councilman Basheer Jones urges "every father who loves his son or daughter to stand up" and march on Father's Day "for the protection of their children as well as to call for justice in the shooting death of 22-year old Desmond Franklin." Franklin, who died on the spot where the press conference was held from shots fired by an off-duty Cleveland police officer, was the father of four young children. Accompanying Jones at the press conference are members of the Cleveland Clergy Coalition, Cleveland Alphas in Action, the Cocharan Firm and Stan Jackson.

BLACK LIVES MATTER CLEVELAND

continued from page one

drew a crowd of about 2,000 people to 3481 Fulton Road in front of the Second District Police Station.

Members of Desmond Franklin's family were in attendance at the rally. Desmond Franklin's brother Quavon Franklin said, "The cop says he pulled a gun. Where is the proof?" He said there have been 57 days of silence following the death of his brother. He said Jose Garcia, who killed his brother was off duty. He said Garcia had no badge and no uniform when he "killed my brother."

Protest leaders also spoke out about the militarization of the police force and called into question the $217 million Cleveland allocated this fiscal year for its police department while schools in Cleveland were being shuttered. There were shouts and signs at the rally bringing attention to the call to "Defund the Police."

Another issue that organizers addressed was the investigation of police use of force. One speaker said, "Police cannot investigate police. We don't trust them to investigate their own officers. They don't even speak up when their officers are killing someone." Other calls from organizers included a call to abolish "qualified immunity" and "collective bargaining agreements" between police and city government.

"7/30/97 – 4/9/20 Desmond Franklin – My Life Mattered – Convict Jose Garcia". --Sign made by family of Desmond Franklin

The mother of Angelo Miller, a 17-year-old who was shot and killed by a uniformed off-duty police officer in 2007, said there are 96 families in the City of Cleveland who have loved ones who have lost their lives due to the actions of Cleveland Police. Speaking of those that have died as the result of encounters with the police, the mother of Angelo Miller asked Clevelanders to "Show the mothers and fathers respect and learn their names." She also called on members of those 96 families to join her and another parent who lost a child as a result of a police-killing who have been regular attendees at Cleveland Community Police Commission meetings set up as part of the Consent Decree between the United States Department of Justice and the City of Cleveland. "We need those 96 families to come to those meetings," she said.

Organizers talked about the make-up of local Grand Juries consisting of largely suburbanites. They stressed the importance of voting as a means of changing laws and holding government accountable. They noted that in Ohio felons can vote. The organizers called upon those individuals not yet registered to vote to register to vote.

Organizers called upon those in the crowd to access information online about future actions via social media from Black Lives Matter Cleveland, the Cleveland Remembrance Page, NAACP Cleveland, and Stan the Lawyer.

As the crowd readied to march from the Second District Police Station to the place on Pearl Road where Desmond Franklin was killed in front of Riverside Cemetery, organizers urged the crowd to remember that "this is a peaceful protest. We are maintaining the peace as much as possible. If someone disrupts the peace, call them out."

The organizers urging a peaceful protest reminded protesters that they were protesting for the families of Desmond Franklin, Tamir Rice and the 96 other families of Clevelanders who have lost a loved one to police violence. "It is important that we respect their wishes, and they wish peace," said march organizers.

After an hour and a half of speeches and rallying in front of the Second District Police Station, as crowd began to get ready for the march organizers also urged them to get something to eat and drink before they departed. Organizers directed the crowd to drinks, snacks, water and sunscreen available in front of a nearby church.

Among the signs carried by protesters there were many messages. The family of Desmond Franklin held a sign saying "7/30/97 – 4/9/20 Desmond Franklin – My Life Mattered – Convict Jose Garcia".

Other signs said, "Desmond Franklin Should be Alive – Black Lives Matter", "Desmond Franklin – Killed by Off Duty Cop", "My Son's Keeper", "Justice for Desmond", "Desmond Franklin Deserves Justice, Arrest Jose Garcia", "Desmond Franklin: Convict Jose Garcia – My Life Mattered", "Authority Killing is Still Murder – Convict Jose Garcia", "Black Lives Matter" "White Coats for Black Lives", "Racism is a Public Health Crisis", "Silence is Betrayal, Latinx for Black Lives Matter", "No Justice, No Peace", "Change the System", "End Racism", "Silence is Compliance", "Justice for Desmond Taylor, Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd", "Defund the Police", "It's Protect & Serve, Not Choke & Kill", "How many weren't filmed?", "Say Their Names …" "Black Lives Should Always Matter", "Respect Black Lives, Like You Respect Black Culture", "I Might Not be Black, But I know this is WACK, I Can't Breathe, Everyone Heed", "Silence is Violence", "Abolish Q.I. and Police Unions", 'That's Not a Chip on My Shoulder, That's a Foot on My Neck", "Murderer", "End White Silence", "Justice for Tony McDade", "Say Her Name…", "Reparations Now", "Native Americans for Black Lives," "Filipinos 4 Black Lives", "Give them the Boot", "Las Vidas Negras Importan", "Being Black and Beautiful Means Nothing in this World, Unless we are Black and Powerful – John Henrik Clarke", 'We the People… are Tired, We are 400 Years of Mfn Tired", "We all Bleed Red, Black Lives Matter", "The Time Has Come to Rise Above Principles", "What if Your Son Was Black?", "Choose Love", "Humanity Yes, White Supremacy No refusefascism.org", "I Matter", "Commitment, Not Convenience", "Unlearn your Internalized Racism", "End the Cycle – BLM", "My Color is Not a Crime", "Care About Black People Beyond Moments of Tragedy", "Allies to the Front", "Policing = (Racist) Failure of Social Imagination", "White Supremacy is Terrorism, Enough is Enough" ,"Say His Name – George Floyd" , "Justice for George Floyd Now" ,"Justice for Desmond Franklin Now! Refusefascism.org #Out Now", "End Police Brutality", "Vocal About Looting, Silent About Murder", "Abolish the Police" and "Defund and Demilitarize the Police."

Visit the Plain Press website at:

plainpress.blog

BUSINESSES PROVIDE FREE MEALS

continued from page 5

about the program. He talked about the struggle of notifying those in the neighborhood who did not have internet access, so they focused on a "print and word-of-mouth marketing." The strategy seems to have worked, as proven by the long lines meandering out of these businesses.

The program also purposely targeted a variety of businesses in lower income neighborhoods as well as higher income neighborhoods, and also sought to find female-owned and minority-owned businesses first to be a part of their program, as a part of their long-term goal to seek social justice.

Below is the program's schedule, first documented on their press release.

- Mondays: Banter Beer & Wine (7320 Detroit Avenue) with free coffee donated by Ready Set! Coffee Roasters
- Tuesdays: Dudley Triangle pocket park (W 73rd St & Dudley Ave) with meals provided by Rincon Criollo, free coffee donated by Ready Set! Coffee Roasters, and free books donated by Kids' Book Bank Cleveland
- Wednesdays: Good Earth Farm Stand (9600 Madison Avenue) with meals provided by Pulp Juice and Smoothie Bar and free books donated by Kids' Book Bank Cleveland
- Thursdays: Gypsy Beans & Baking Co. (6425 Detroit Avenue)
- Fridays: Frank's Falafel House (1823 West 65th Street)
- Saturdays: Ninja City Kitchen and Bar (6706 Detroit Avenue)

PHOTO BY COLIN MURNAN

Monday, June 15, 2020; Banter Beer and Wine, 7320 Detroit Avenue: Tom Owen, a partner at Banter Beer and Wine provides free lunches every Monday to Ohio City residents. The restaurant started giving out free hot dogs when things first shut down during the pandemic. During this time, some of the regular customers donated money to help with business. Later, Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and Cudell Improvement Inc. donated money to help some of Ohio City's local businesses. According to Detroit Shoreway's press release, "The two organizations are arranging this urgent response to COVID-19 to provide financial stability to locally owned businesses and high-quality meals to residents of all ages. The Cleveland Foundation has generously funded this program with $56,000 through the Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund." Owen said they give out 150 lunches on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Ohio Supreme Court green lights fast-track process that gives homes to developers, but fails to compensate owners and taxpayers

In 2019, Taxpayers lost at least $11.25 million, While Homeowners and Banks lost up to $77 Million, But Title to Revamped Houses Remains Sound

by Lucia Walinchus

This article provided by Eye on Ohio, the nonprofit, nonpartisan Ohio Center for Journalism. Please join our free mailing list as this helps us provide more public service reporting.

The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled that an unusual foreclosure process that can result in people's homes being sold without compensation for their equity should remain legal in the Buckeye State.

However, in a recently released opinion the state justices couldn't agree on the reasoning behind it.

Justice Judith French authored the majority opinion, joined by Justices Michael Donnelly and Robert Hendrickson. (Justice Robert A. Hendrickson, of the Twelfth District Court of Appeals, replaced Justice Melody Stewart.) They declined to comment on the constitutional issues presented by the case involving what are called "administrative foreclosures," saying that they would not stop the process because the law governing these procedures was not "patently and unambiguously" unconstitutional.

Not to be confused with expedited foreclosures, administrative foreclosures send abandoned properties to a county's board of revision, a committee that usually considers home values for property owners wanting to contest their taxes. The board can then give foreclosed properties to the local land bank, which can clear any debts on the property and give them to local businesses to revamp and resell.

Elliot Feltner, a Cleveland landowner, sued the board in 2018 arguing that the process was an unconstitutional government seizure without compensation. The board had foreclosed upon his property, worth $144,500 in county records. In a sheriff's sale, the state would have recovered the $68,089 owed to taxpayers and he would have received the rest. But under the BOR foreclosure, both he and the state got nothing.

Eye on Ohio previously reported on thousands BOR foreclosures in Montgomery and Cuyahoga Counties in 2019. In those cases, local land banks wiped out at least $11.2 million in tax liens. Homeowners and banks lost up to $77 million in home equity.

Though they lost, Feltner's counsel, former Ohio Attorney General Marc Dann, filed the opinion as a Notice of Supplemental Authority in both federal cases where he is litigating similar issues, one in Montgomery County and one in Cuyahoga County.

"One of the things we have to prove is that there's no adequate remedy under state law. And I think the fact that Mr. Feltner was turned down demonstrates that people who have their properties taken who have equity, and have their properties given to government entities without payment, they don't have any good remedies under law in the state courts because of the way the statute was structured," Dann said.

Opposing Counsel Gus Frangos said the administrative foreclosure process was an important way to prevent blight. "In the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis, there was rampant vacancy, abandonment, and tax delinquencies, where people just abandoned their properties. Whole neighborhoods were decimated. In 2006 we were seeing all this stuff coming, although Washington didn't really see it. So, there was an expedited foreclosure process in place in 2008, and it caused foreclosures to just skyrocket."

Frangos was the primary drafter of the expedited foreclosure process and runs its largest program in Cuyahoga County.

"The fallacy of all of this is that somehow people's properties have been taken. They've abandoned them. They have to pay taxes. You know, you and I have to pay taxes on our properties. And so that somebody doesn't pay, and now they want to turn around and change the narrative to, 'oh no, my property, my valuable property, was taken,'" Frangos said.

> **"The whole scheme is unsettling and just seems wrong,"**
> **-- Justice Patrick Fischer**

"At what point do these properties become harmful to all the surrounding neighborhoods?" he continued. "So, number one, it applies to them. And number two, these cases don't just happen when a person wakes up and loses his property. They get letters. They get served with notices. They get an opportunity to appear. And they ignore it all. They have an opportunity to come in and appear and get on a payment plan. So, if you're delinquent, and you can't pay, you can get on a payment plan. If somebody feels they had a lot of equity in their home, all they have to do is pick up the phone and call a realtor and sell it. The nanny state idea that we should babysit somebody who has totally neglected their obligation to pay taxes, at some point becomes an affront."

At the Ohio Supreme Court, Justice Sharon Kennedy agreed to the judgment, but not the reasoning behind it.

Justice Pat DeWine also ruled for the county, but in a concurring opinion he laid out very different reasons: He said that the court should have addressed the constitutional issues, but that administrative foreclosures were very similar to normal taxing practices in the nineteenth century.

Justice Patrick Fischer and Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor also agreed on the outcome, but they wrote a concurring opinion explaining their reasoning. They said the case should have been dismissed for procedural reasons, but the constitutional issues "cannot and should not be avoided" and that the majority opinion used "circular reasoning" to avoid getting to the heart of the issue.

"The whole scheme is unsettling and just seems wrong," Fischer wrote.

CLASSIFIED

PLAIN PRESS CLASSIFIED: $10 for 12 words and 30¢ for each additional word. To advertise count the words and mail a check or money order with your ad to the Plain Press, 2012 W. 25th #500 Cleveland, OH 44113.

FLEA MARKETS/THRIFTS

ST. PAUL'S THRIFT STORE: W. 45th and Franklin, Clothing, bric-a-brac, household items and more. **Open Wednesdays** 1 to 5pm (regular prices) **First Saturday** of Month 10 to noon store and Gym, Bargain Prices, Clothes $**1.00 a bag**. **Third Saturday** of Month 10 to Noon Store only, All unmarked racked clothes $**1.00 a bag.**

FOR RENT

SEEKING A LANDLORD to accept my 1 Bedroom Section 8 Voucher. 216-312-9742.

PROPERTY OWNERS NEEDED: If you are a property owner with nice, clean, reasonably priced apartments, and are looking for tenants, please call Care Alliance at (216) 372-2348 and ask for Jim Schlecht.

SUBSCRIPTION TV

STREETS MOS SUBSCRIBE: STREETSMOSTV: YOUTUBE. COM/STREETSMOSTV • Interviews • HoodNews • Music • Lifestyle • 216-633-1078.

RACISM DECLARED PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

continued from page 3

first year Cleveland has led the nation in having the highest percentage of its children living in poverty. Council President Kelley answered that everything the City Council does addresses childhood poverty.

Yet it seems that Cleveland City Council should seriously examine everything that it does. If everything City Council is doing addresses childhood poverty, why are we still the city with the highest childhood poverty rate in the nation?

Some examples of actions taken by Cleveland City Council that limit the city's ability to address the needs of its poorest citizens involve the city of Cleveland's tax subsidies to developers, tax abatements to new homeowners, and its devotion of major long term tax dollars to the building of stadiums and arenas.

It seems that Cleveland City Council has yet to meet a developer it did not want to award a tax break to. Lately, it is not only awarding fifteen-year tax abatements to developers building new apartment buildings, but also is tacking on another 15 years of tax increment financing – allowing the apartment owner to use (non-school) property tax dollars to make improvements on their property for another 15 years after the initial tax abatement. All these dollars should be going into city, or school system, or library system coffers. Taxes would allow the city, school system and library system to offer more programs and services to Cleveland's families – helping them to deal with the impact of poverty. Addressing such concerns as increasing staffing for school and after school programs, internet connectivity for families, preventing evictions, preventing lead poisoning, offering additional public sector jobs to residents, and assistance to avoid utility shutoffs would help to stabilize Cleveland families. While there has been talk about eliminating tax abatement in neighborhoods with hot real estate markets such as Tremont, Ohio City and Detroit Shoreway – that has not happened. New developments still go up without any property tax going to the schools for 15 years.

In a March 23 article, titled "With revenue about to plunge, Cleveland Council should delay vote on Sherwin-Williams incentive package" on the Policy Matters Ohio website, Policy Matters researcher Zach Schiller urges Cleveland City Council to reconsider giving away $100 million of its future tax base in light of layoffs due to COVID-19. Schiller argued that due to the layoffs the City of Cleveland should expect that it will lose a large portion of its main source of revenue, the payroll tax.

Schiller argues in the article that Sherwin-Williams did not need or deserve the tax incentives that the City of Cleveland was offering. He noted the company had the resources to spend $1.2 billion to buy back its own stock. Schiller also notes that "Sherwin-Williams paid Chief Executive Officer John G. Morikis $14.85 million, 349 times the amount paid to the company's median employee. The city of Cleveland should not provide $100 million to a company that reinforces inequality."

In furthering his argument, Schiller cites a recent article in *Governing* magazine that says such incentives are unnecessary. "Study after study demonstrates that when states and cities give out tax breaks to companies looking to relocate or expand, they typically get very limited bang for their bucks, if any." Schiller further states, "Timothy J. Bartik of the W.E. Upjohn Institute reviews 30 studies on such incentives and found at least 75% of the time – and possibly up to 98% of the time – the firms would have made the same decision without the incentives. Sherwin Williams paid $49 million for land for its new headquarters in downtown Cleveland, before city and state incentives had been approved."

Cleveland City Council also opposed major citizen led attempts to address poverty through ballot initiatives. They opposed the effort led by Greater Cleveland Congregations and a number of other activist groups to have a dollar for dollar match of money for social services for every tax dollar given to Quicken Loans Arena for its expansion. Cleveland City Council also opposed an effort to raise the minimum wage in the City of Cleveland. Cleveland City Council members did nothing when residents tried to get major property tax exempt hospitals such as Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals to make payments in lieu of taxes to help pay for local education, health and human services.

In the past Cleveland City Council worked to stymie efforts by the Cleveland Teachers Union and Cleveland educational activists to end property tax abatement in Cleveland.

Investment in human beings and their future is crucial to ending the cycle of poverty. Education is a proven long-term route to help people to emerge from poverty. Taking dollars directly from education to offer a tax break for new homeowners deprives the school system of much needed revenue for 15 years.

Cleveland City Council members would insist their policies are the correct ones. They are attracting new residents who they insist will eventually pay property taxes. Yet a whole generation of children will go from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 before any school system revenue is realized from a person building a new home in Cleveland. Cleveland schools will continue to have less resources than the property tax wealth of the city would merit.

Cleveland City Council is being asked by Black Lives Matter Cleveland and other activist groups to take a serious look at its budget and align its resources to better meet the health, education and human services needs of Cleveland residents, it will be interesting to see if Cleveland City Council is up to the task. At the same time Cleveland City Council should examine all its tax incentive programs. Such programs have led to depriving Cleveland's children of resources they so desperately need to help provide the necessary stability to shake off the shackles of poverty. Efforts to tackle racism and classism in public policy will take additional resources. Ending tax incentives to developers and new homeowners will help provide those resources.

If Cleveland City Council members insist their policies are the best for the future of Cleveland's children, ask them why, after so many years of pursuing these polices, does Cleveland still have the highest child poverty rate in the country?

City Council Members should ask themselves who their policies are benefiting? If such policies are largely benefiting wealthy White Major League Sports team owners or apartment developers at the expense of largely Black, Hispanic, and poor White children, then those policies are contributing to the racist and classist status quo in our society. Will we be facing the same disparities a generation from now? The answer is yes, if we do not change our patterns and practices of doing business at Cleveland City Hall.

Childhood Poverty by Ward
Center for Community Solutions analysis of United States Census 2016 estimates

City Council Ward	Percentage of children living below poverty line
1	47.6%
2	51.5%
3	61.8%
4	60.3%
5	77.7%
6	63.1%
7	66.5%
8	47.7%
9	64.9%
10	52.4%
11	46.7%
12	59.4%
13	32.3%
14	60.8%
15	54.5%
16	32.2%
17	25.9%
City Wide Average	53.5%

PHOTO BY COLIN MURNAN

Monday, June 15, 2020; Good Earth Farm Stand, 9600 Madison Avenue: Jeanette Toms helps a customer at her Good Earth Farm Stand. The stand is open Mondays and Thursdays from 3-7 p.m. and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. Good Earth Farm participates in ProducePERKS, matching up to $20 for purchases of fresh produce.

Honey Hut Lane named in honor of Honey Hut Ice Cream Shoppe

The street sign at Buechner Avenue and State next to Honey Hut Ice Cream Shoppe was replaced with one that says Honey Hut Lane in small lettering above the name Buechner and has the Honey Hut logo – honeybee with ice cream cone to the left. Ward 13 Councilman Kevin J. Kelley unveiled the sign at a June 27th ceremony held at the original Honey Hut, 4674 State Road (at Buechner Avenue) in the Old Brooklyn Neighborhood. The original Honey Hut opened in 1974 and continues to make homemade ice cream.

CLARK FULTON NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

continued from page 4

to get public input to the planning process. The planning is currently in a phase where they are reaching out to residents through a survey to listen and learn what residents want to happen in the neighborhood. They are also asking residents to send pictures of places they would like to see improved and engage in planning for those places.

Ricardo Leon spoke of the commitment of the planners to make sure residents are included in the planning process. *"As the neighborhood changes, residents must have a voice at the table and be empowered to shape the future of the community. Working with WRT throughout this planning process will allow us to partner directly with residents to develop a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community that actually delivers on their wants and needs,"* he said.

A video has been posted online where residents with online access can view a presentation by various members of the master planning effort and also contribute to an online survey.

The themes of the planning effort call for equity, health, sustainability and resilience.

Input from residents and stakeholders thus far calls for balanced neighborhood reinvestment that includes housing options for people of all income, commercial corridor revitalization, arts and culture, health and wellness, livable transportation and sustainable infrastructure, and community engagement and capacity building.

Residents want the planning process to be inclusive and equitable, have a clear vision and strategic goals, enhanced job opportunities, increased prosperity and community wealth, and support of existing businesses and entrepreneurs.

Places that people in the neighborhood said they cared about, that needed more attention or would like to see added to the neighborhood included: restaurants and bakeries, homes/houses, businesses, parks and recreation center, schools, libraries, streets and allies, gardens, communal spaces and churches.

People would like to see more opportunities for both youth and adult sports, and outdoor dining.

Residents say qualities they like about their neighborhood include its welcoming of immigrants and newcomers, the Hispanic and Latina Culture, its multicultural diversity and murals and public art.

Challenges in the neighborhood listed so far include: absentee or disengaged property owners or landlords; homeowners struggling with maintenance; fragility and vulnerability of small business owners due to the pandemic; and lack of access to recreational space.

Residents would like to see streets that are safer for those walking, bicycling, using a wheelchair or taking out a child in a stroller. They say they would like to see a greater variety of businesses in the commercial areas and better maintenance of private property.

The planning process is divided into four phases. The first phase which involves listening and learning will last through August of this year; the second phase scheduled from August through December of this year involves exploring issues, opportunities and initial design ideas; the third phase involves deciding on plan recommendations to be shared at a Community Open House in January through March of 2021; and the fourth phase in March and April of next year involves documentation and creation of a draft plan. The goal is to have the new master plan completed by June of 2021, says Ricardo Leon.

Residents or stakeholders in the target area that would like to offer their input in the planning process can visit the website online at: www.ClarkFultonTogether.com or www.ClarkFultonJuntos.com; make contact by email at: together@metrowestcle.org or call 216-961-9073, ext. 228. Residents and stakeholders can also sign up for a newsletter at www.ClarkFultonTogether.com/newsletter. Access is also available via social media such as Facebook, Instagram and You Tube under Clark Fulton Together.

Visit the Plain Press website at:
plainpress.blog
for links to graphs and websites referenced in this issue.