

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Thursday, March 17, 2022; St. Patrick's Day Mass at St. Colman Church, 2027 W. 65th Street: Bishop Edward Malesic of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland emerges from St. Colman Church following the St. Patrick's Day Mass.

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Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

Four area schools slated for renovation or new construction

by Chuck Hoven

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) held a series of community meetings in March to discuss its plans to renovate or construct schools as part of Segment 8 of its School Facilities Plan which began with the passage of a bond issue in 2001. For every local dollar it spends on facilities, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District receives roughly \$2 in matching funds



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, March 12, 2022; Towpath Trail Lantern Parade, Sokolowski's Overlook at east end of Abbey Bridge: Jeff Niesel stands with a beehive shaped lantern called "Beelightful". The lantern was constructed by artists Samantha Fryberger and Darla Arnold using upcycled sweet tea bottles, lightbulb packaging, candle lids, rope, newspaper, clothes baskets, Frappuccino collars, cardboard boxes, and a tree branch.

Participatory Budgeting Cleveland wants public involved in decisions about spending of American Rescue Plan Act funds

by Bruce Cheecksky

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members directly decide to spend part of a public budget. Residents play a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process. Participative budgeting shares the responsibility of creating a city's budget with the community to expand civic engagement, develop new community leaders, build community, and make public spending more equitable.

Participatory budgeting started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in response to the rapid growth and inability to provide services to its city residents. In 1989, a newly elected Workers Party inverted the decision-making process so that citizens decided how a portion of the budget gets spent. By 1997, sewer and water connections went up from 75 percent to 98 percent; health and education budgets increased from 13 percent to 40 percent; the number of schools quadrupled, and road building in poor neighborhoods increased five-fold. Participation in budgeting meetings grew from fewer than 1,000 people

from the State of Ohio for building plans that meet criterion established by the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC). Items in plans not approved by the OSFC will not receive matching funds. The CMSD plans shared with the public call for the renovation of Joseph Gallagher School and the construction of three new schools – Clark PreK-8 School, Marion C. Seltzer PreK-8 School and Lincoln West High School.

Gallagher School

The \$30 million renovation of Joseph M. Gallagher PreK-8 School is slated to begin at the end of this school year and is expected to be completed by August of 2024. During the renovation students will be attending school at the former Garrett Morgan School at 4016 Woodbine Avenue. The 145,000 square foot building built in 1977 currently houses 765 students and 106 staff members.

At a March 10th meeting at Gallagher School, 6601 Franklin Boulevard, finding ways to alleviate car congestion on Franklin Boulevard during drop-off and pick-up of students was a major point of discussion. The school property lies between Franklin and Bridge Avenues from W. 65th to W. 69th. Planners said it would be difficult to create a drop-off loop without sacrificing the school's green space. One suggestion that plan-

continued on page 4

Near West Design Review Committee tables MetroHealth park proposal

COMMUNITY INPUT SOUGHT TO DETERMINE FATE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

by Chuck Hoven

At its March 9th meeting the Near West Design Review Committee voted 9-0 to table a proposal by MetroHealth Medical Center to update the MetroHealth Campus Transformation Plan to create a 3.5-acre park that would involve the demolition of two buildings on the site.

Prior to making the motion to table the proposal by MetroHealth, Near



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Thursday, March 17, 2022; St. Patrick's Day Mass at St. Colman Church, 2027 W. 65th Street: A drummer beats his drum as youths from the West Side Irish American Club emerge from St. Colman Church following the mass.

West Design Review Committee member Jenice Contreras talked about the importance of community engagement with residents as to how they would like to utilize the park and what residents hope to see in the park. She, along with committee member Kerry, also said that MetroHealth should bring a full demolition package to the Near West Design Review Committee like other applicants have done

when planning to demolish a building. Contreras said MetroHealth should explain why the buildings should not be saved and explain more detail about the design and programming ideas for the park as other committee members (Kerry, Pasquale Esposito & Esbeey) had requested. Committee Member Gideon Hart asked that MetroHealth also consider incorporating the St. continued on page 6



PHOTO BY TAURUS KINGS PHOTOGRAPHY
Members of the Participatory Budgeting Cleveland Team: Gwen Garth, Trevor Pollack, Laylah Allen, Molly Martin, Austin Davis, Robin Brown, Loh, Daniel Ortiz, Angelique Salizan, Kayla Knight, Chrissy Stonebraker-Martinez, and Jonathan Welle.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, March 12, 2022; Towpath Trail Lantern Parade, Sokolowski's Overlook at east end of Abbey Bridge: Eddie Olschansky of Trash Fish holds the 'ICK-thyology' lantern made from plastic fished out of the Cuyahoga River. Trash Fish offers free guided kayak tours to individuals willing to help fish garbage out of the Cuyahoga River. Visit their website at www.trashfishcle.org or view on Instagram @trashfish_cle.

Easter Greetings from St. Malachi Parish

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EASTER SERVICES

Holy Thursday – April 14
7:30 PM – Mass of the Lord's Supper
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
after Mass until 10:00 PM

Good Friday – April 15
12:00 Noon – Solemn Stations of the Cross
3:00 PM – Commemoration of the Lord's
Passion with Communion

Holy Saturday – April 16

8:30 PM Easter Vigil Mass

Easter Sunday – April 17

10:00 AM Mass

www.stmalachi.org

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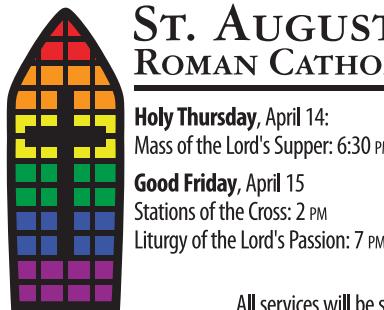
St Patrick, Bridge Easter Services

Holy Thursday - 7:30 p.m.
Good Friday — 3:00 p.m.
Holy Saturday – 8:30 p.m.
Easter Sunday – 8:30 a.m.
& 11:00 a.m.

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Mass of the Lord's Supper: 6:30 PM

Good Friday, April 15
Stations of the Cross: 2 PM
Liturgy of the Lord's Passion: 7 PM

All services will be signed for the Deaf

Holy Saturday, April 16-
Blessing of Easter Food: 2 PM
Easter Vigil of the Lord's Resurrection: 8:30 PM

Easter Sunday
of the Lord's Resurrection, April 17
8:30 AM and 11 AM

Loving God, for all who feel on the margins, but who are at the center of your heart,
we ask you to open our hearts. Help us to become a church and a nation where

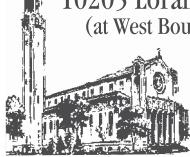
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✖ 2022 ✖

HOLY WEEK SACRED TRIDIUM

Palm Sunday -

April 9 Vigil Mass 5:30pm;
April 10 Mass:
9am, 11am, 5pm(Latin)

Holy Thursday -

April 14 Morning Prayer 9am,
School Service 10am,
Simple Soup Dinner 5:30pm,
Mass of the Lord's Supper 8pm

Good Friday -

April 15, Morning Prayer 9am,
Lord's Passion Service 3pm

Holy Saturday -

April 16, Morning Prayer 9am,
Food Blessing 1pm,
Easter Vigil 8:30pm

Easter Sunday -

April 17 Mass:
9am, 11am, 5pm (Latin)
Taize Prayer Service:
4/21 & 6/2 @ 7pm

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HOLY WEEK SERVICES April 14-17, 2022

HOLY THURSDAY, 7:00 p.m. Mass

GOOD FRIDAY, 3:00 p.m., Solemn Reading of the Passion
6:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross followed by Confession

HOLY SATURDAY, 1:00 p.m., Blessing of Easter Foods,
8:30 p.m., **EASTER MASS**

EASTER SUNDAY, 9:00 a.m. Mass in English
11:00 a.m. Mass in Polish



The Community Board

successful gang rehabilitation and re-entry program in the world. Homeboy Industries offers an "exit ramp" for those stuck in a cycle of violence and incarceration. The organization's holistic approach, with free services and programs, supports around 10,000 men and women a year as they work to overcome their past, reimagine their futures and break the inter-generational cycles of gang violence. <https://homeboyindustries.org>. For more information call St. Augustine at 781-5530 or visit www.StAugustineCleveland.org.

FIRST DISTRICT POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

will meet on April 7th from 6-7 p.m. at St. Ignatius of Antioch School cafeteria.

SECOND DISTRICT POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

has a new meeting location, Garden Christian Academy, (formerly Family Ministry Center), 3389 Fulton Road, on the Northeast of Trowbridge and Fulton. There is onsite and street parking. Folks will enter in the back of the building. The next meeting will be on April 12th at 6 p.m.

CITY CLUB IN THE COMMUNITY:

Happy Dog takes on the SCOTUS Nomination, Wednesday, April 6 at 7:30 p.m., The Happy Dog, 5801 Detroit Avenue.

STATE OF THE CITY: Mayor Justin Bibb's State of the City Forum, April 13, 7 p.m. Live streamed at www.cityclub.org.

PUBLIC RADIO

IDEASTREAM PUBLIC MEDIA AND WKST have combined operations and

have made changes to where programs are located on the radio dial. WCPN 90.3 FM listeners in greater Cleveland will find their favorite news, reporters, programs, and NPR coverage on 89.7 FM and 104.9 FM. WCLV, Ideastream Public Media's classical service, has moved from 104.9 FM to 90.3 FM.

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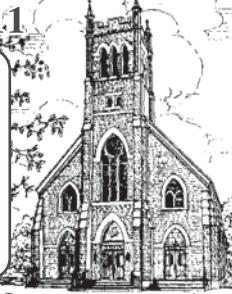
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HOLY WEEK DATES:

Good Friday German - 3:00 pm
English - 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday German - 9:00 am
English - 10:30 am



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Palm Sunday: April 9/10th - palms available at all Masses

Saturday 4pm. Sunday 7:30 am, 9:30 am & 12 pm

Mass of the Lord's Last Supper - Holy Thursday, April 14th at 7 pm

Adoration of the Holy Eucharist until 11pm

Stations of the Cross

Good Friday April 15th at 2pm

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion & Veneration of the Cross -

Good Friday, April 15th at 3pm

Procession thru the Streets at 6:30pm

Devotions to and Sermon on the Sorrowful Mother following the Procession

Blessing of Easter Food, Holy Saturday April 16th at 2:30pm

Easter Egg Hunt, Holy Saturday April 16th 1:30pm-2:15pm

Easter Vigil Mass at 8pm

Easter Sunday Masses 7:30am, 9:30am & 12pm (Traditional High Latin Mass)

Confessions

Good Friday, April 15th 2:00-3:00pm & after the Procession

Holy Saturday, April 16th 2:30-4:30pm

Easter Sunday before the 9:30am & 12pm Masses

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Transit advocates want to decriminalize fare evasion aboard RTA buses and trains

by Bruce Checfsky

In 2017, two transit police officers boarded a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) HealthLine bus and demanded passengers show proof of payment. When Ronnie Williams could not produce a fare card, he was removed from the bus and issued a citation for fare evasion, a fourth-degree misdemeanor.

In Ohio, misdemeanors of the fourth degree are met with a maximum jail sentence of 30 days and a fine not to exceed \$250. A

second traffic conviction within one year is a fourth-degree misdemeanor, as is the consumption of alcohol in a motor vehicle and acts of public indecency. A misdemeanor conviction can stay on your record unless a petition is filed for an expungement to get the information removed. If not paid within 72 business hours, a citation from the Clerk of Courts for criminal prosecution is issued. If there is more than one violation within 24 months, violators are issued a criminal citation.

Williams pled not guilty to the misdemeanor charge and elected to have a trial. On October 26, 2017, Cleveland municipal court Judge Emanuella Groves found the RTA fare enforcement unconstitutional. "Fare enforcement policies encourage law enforcement officers to perform investigatory stops of passengers without possessing reasonable, articulable facts that passengers have committed a criminal offense," Judge Groves wrote in her decision. "RTA police

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PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

continued from page one

spent \$511.7 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). ARPA provides economic assistance for American workers, families, small businesses, and industries. Participatory Budgeting Cleveland (PB CLE), a grassroots coalition of individuals and groups, asked the city to set aside \$30.8 million of ARPA funding to spend in direct consultation with the residents of Cleveland through participatory budgeting practices. Participatory Budgeting Cleveland came up with \$30.8 million based on the poverty rate of Cleveland, which is 30.8%, the highest poverty rate of any big city in the United States.

During the initial advocacy stage, PB CLE held a series of house parties across the city to brainstorm, develop, and submit policy suggestions. People brainstormed ideas ranging from funds for a restorative justice program in the criminal legal system to housing cooperatives and direct cash payments to residents. The public nominated and then voted on which projects they would like to see funded.

Last month, the PB CLE coalition held a Zoom meeting to discuss strategies to bring participatory budgeting to Cleveland. Jennifer Lumpkin, assisting in the process as a grassroots organizer, hosted the Zoom meeting and said the mission of PB CLE is to empower residents to get involved in how to spend public funds.

"While we work with the mayor and city council, we want to empower residents to decide where to spend public dollars," said Lumpkin.

Following a breakout session midway through the meeting, Joe Gaston, a resident of Cleveland, felt that social issues such as mental health and poverty need to be a priority. Millions of dollars are pumped into

the system every year. Yet those dollars do not help the most vulnerable residents. The money usually benefits home and business owners, he said.

"There is no real priority in addressing homelessness. I have not heard talk about increasing addiction services," said Gaston. "The ideas we have tend to be lofty. I am shocked that we have not addressed our social ills. I have a problem with us ignoring these issues."

There are no provisions for participatory budgeting or a commitment to use ARPA funds despite PB CLE having met Mayor Bibb and City Council members to discuss the issue. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, but whether PB CLE will impact the 2022 budget remains uncertain. PB CLE meets every week with senior members of the Bibb administration to explore the process and is asking City Council to go public with their endorsement. A steering committee will soon release an implementation guide to show details on how PB could work in Cleveland. Organizers are hopeful that ongoing meetings and conversations will lead to resident input with spending decisions. Once the ARPA funds are gone, PB CLE may need to rely on the mayor and City Council to budget for participatory budgeting practices.

Despite reservations, Cleveland City Council Finance, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee voted 7-2 in favor of the \$1.8 billion annual budget proposed by Mayor Bibb.

The budget includes a 25% increase from \$2.7 million to \$3.6 million in the Office of the Mayor. Top officials and staff members will earn between \$140,000 and \$190,000 a year under the new budget. The Community Police Commission budget is \$2.1 million, or 75% more than last year. That increase includes more than \$1 million for community grants, as required by Issue

24. The Cleveland Division of Police was increased by 6% to \$223 million.

Ward 16 Councilman Brian Kazy was one of two City Council members that voted against the budget. Ward 16 stretches from the City of Lakewood border near W117th Street to the City of Brook Park. Kazy has been in office since 2015.

"There were several things that I do not agree with regarding the budget," Kazy said in an email reply to the *Plain Press*. "The biggest is the \$62 million revenue expenditure shortfall and uncertainty of businesses asking for income tax revenue back because of the state legislation for people who worked from home. Plus, the fact that 32 union contracts need ratifying this year. The numbers do not add up."

The revenue shortfall involves a bill passed by The Ohio House last year that allows people working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic to seek refunds for income taxes they paid to the cities where their offices are. House Bill 157 gives commuters the option to file for a local tax return for their home city if working remotely outside the boundaries of Cleveland. The Greater Ohio Policy Center, which advocates for investments in cities and towns, estimated in September 2020 that Ohio's six largest cities got 88% of their funding from income taxes and could lose \$306 million if commuter revenue disappeared.

Ward 8 Cleveland City Councilman Michael D. Polensek, who has served the Collinwood neighborhood consecutively since 1978, also voted against the budget.

"We should not be spending money like a drunken Russian sailor," said Polensek. "I have been around long enough to know that we have to be mindful of expenses. I represent people that cannot afford to pay their property taxes. Why are we paying city executives \$190,000 a year and lifeguards \$10 an hour?"

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Thursday, March 17, 2022; The Edna House for Women, 2007 W. 65th Street: The Edna House for Women staff members: (L-R) Program Administrator Mara Sankin, Advancement Coordinator Sarah Murphy, and Executive Director Jenn Lasky. The Edna House for Women staff are offering free coffee and copies of The Edna House Newsletter to those attending St. Patrick's Day Mass at St. Colman Church. The Edna House for Women, which provides a safe place for women recovering from addiction, is located in a century old house that once served as a convent for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph that taught at St. Colman School. Renovation is underway in the former St. Colman School to expand the program with 10 additional suites, a kitchen/dining room, and a communal space. The renovation is due to be completed this spring.

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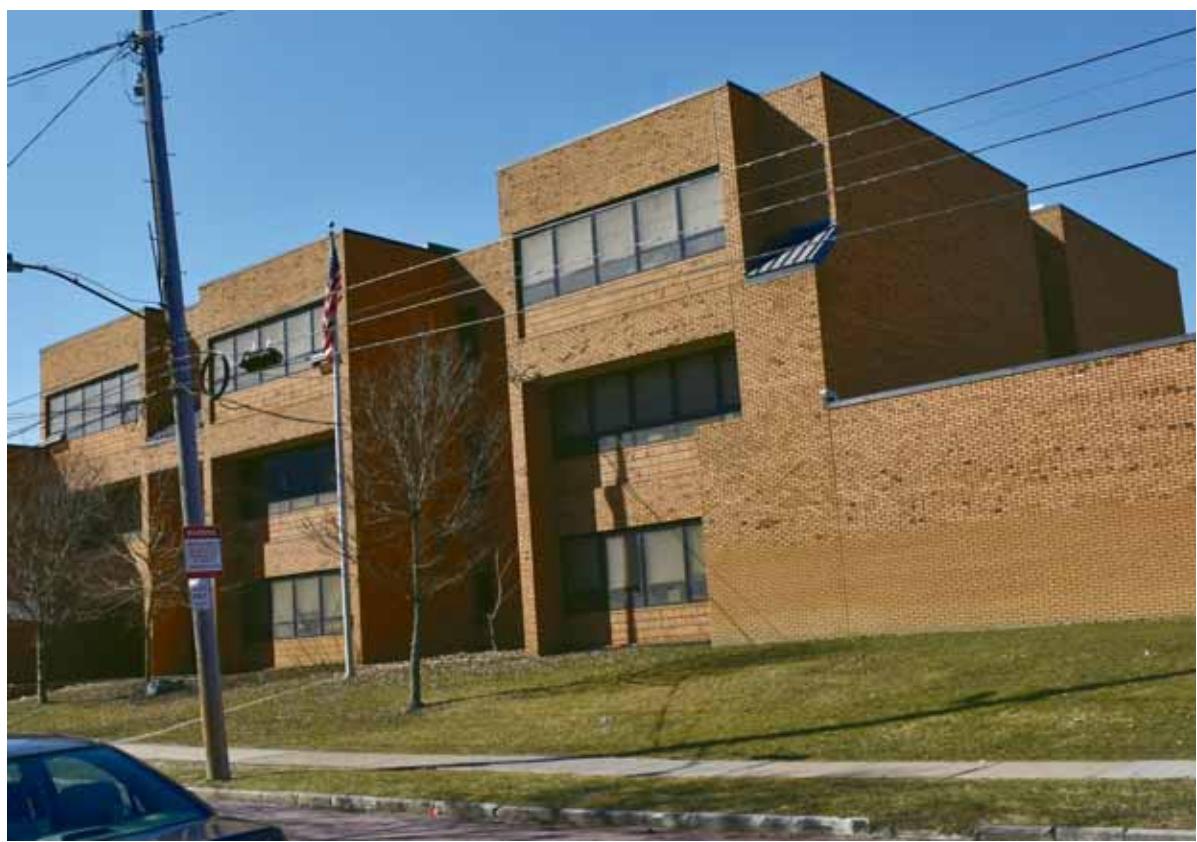


PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Thursday, March 17, 2022; Marion Champlin Seltzer Elementary School Building, 1468 W. 98th Street: The Cleveland Metropolitan School District plans to build a new school next to the current building on land that sits behind Cudell Recreation Center. Once the new school is completed, plans call for the current building to be demolished.

AREA SCHOOLS

continued from page one

ners put forth would extend the curb cut on Franklin Boulevard all the way to W. 69th Street.

Other suggestions to alleviate the congestion, which residents say involves cars double or triple parked on Franklin Boulevard, included having someone outside to manage the situation and encouraging more students and staff to walk, bicycle or ride public transportation to school.

Planners proposed keeping the bus and van drop-off on Bridge Avenue, adding additional staff parking spaces on the W. 65th side of the building, and enhancing the play area near the reading garden at W. 65th and Franklin.

Plans call for reprogramming of the

building, making some rooms smaller for specialized classes or services. The refurbished building will be able to house both more students (up to 1,100 students) and more school staff (120 staff).

The renovation of Gallagher School will involve repair or replacement of damaged brick and mortar, updating heating and electrical systems, roofing and foundation work, and new windows and exterior doors. Other suggestions involved redesigning the school entrance while possibly adding a canopy that will bring it closer to Franklin Boulevard.

Architects from TDA said that the Ohio School Facilities Commission now requires each classroom now have some windows that open to help provide air circulation.

Residents and stakeholders were invited to offer input on the school plans via an online survey to be found at www.ClevelandMetroschools.org.

www.ClevelandMetroschools.org under the heading Segment 8 Capital Improvements.

Clark School

Plans call for the Clark PreK-8 School to be replaced with a new school on the grounds of the current school. Architects from TDA said the design work on the new school will take about a year. Construction of the new school is expected to be completed in time for the 2025-26 school year. During construction, plans call for students to attend the former H. Barbara Booker School at 2121 W. 67th Street. Renovations at H. Barbara Booker to accommodate Clark students are already underway. Plans call for students from Clark PreK-8 School to begin next school year (2022-2023 school year) at H. Barbara Booker.

Clark School currently houses 608 students.

The proposed plan for the new Clark School calls for a T shaped building with the top of the T on Clark Avenue containing the academic classrooms. The stem of the T will go north of the academic wing and contain administrative offices, dining area, gym and music and dance room.

Plans for the new school involve new parking areas and play areas. PreK staff parking and student drop off and pick up area will be from a parking lot with an entrance on W. 53rd Street. The PreK playground will also be on that side of the building by the Pre-K classrooms. The remainder of the students will enter on the main entrance of the building which will be on W. 56th Street. Buses will be able to go through a staff parking lot on the south end of W. 56th Street to drop off students. The main entrance on W. 56th Street will be directly across from Train Court. Planners say that City of Cleveland plans for nearby Clark Recreation Center have the potential to someday make Train Court a pedestrian court that links Clark School to Clark Recreation Center. The design of the school entrance hopes to take advantage of that possibility. Directly north of the entrance is a play area which is next to the school cafeteria.

Architects from ThenDesign Architecture (TDA) asked residents to offer their input on the exterior look of the school through completion of an online survey at www.clevelandmetroschools.org. They would like input on how the main entrance is designed, the color of the brick and the overall look of the building – whether residents would like a modern or more traditional design.

Marion C. Seltzer School

The community meeting to discuss the building of a new Marion C. Seltzer School was held at the school at 1468 W. 98th Street on March 15th. Cleveland Metropolitan School District Communications and Engagement Specialist Darrielle Snipes moderated the meeting. Architects from Then Design Architecture explained their planning and design process for the new PreK-8 School on a site just north of the current building. Students will remain in the current building while the new building is being built.

The new building will be roughly 76,000 sq ft and will be designed to house 450 students. The design of the new building will start this summer. Construction of the new building will be from 2023-2025, with the new building scheduled to open for the 2025-2026 school year.

The design of the new building has the academic area on the north end with the administrative offices and main entrance of the building just south of the academic area with the main entrance to the building on W. 98th Street. The art and music rooms are directly behind the administrative offices. The gym and a separate dining area are on the south side of the main entrance with the ability to open that area separately from the rest of the school. Play areas for both the PreK and the rest of the student body are on the rear of the building adjacent to Cudell Recreation Center's property. Plans call for a 60-space parking lot just south of the school with an entrance on W. 98th Street. On the site of the current school, plans call for a multipurpose soccer field to be built.

Current plans call for parent drop off and bus drop off on W. 98th Street. There is also an area designated for parent pick-up in the Cudell Recreation Center Parking lot near the Tamir Rice Garden.

A representative of residents on W. 98th Street expressed some concerns to the *Plain Press*. Some residents would prefer that the existing school be renovated instead of building a new school. If that is not possible, they would like the trees planted when Cudell Tower was constructed to be preserved when the new building is built.

Residents say pick up and drop off on W. 98th street causes major disruption, blocking of driveways and unacceptable levels of car exhaust. They would like to see all pick up and drop off moved to the Cudell Recreation Center parking lot.

Residents would like to make sure the new building will be American Disability Act accessible. They also would like to see more signage or speed bumps to deter traffic from going the wrong way on the one-way W. 98th Street.

Other concerns were expressed about how construction would be staged and how that will impact both W. 98th Street residents, students, and the fully functioning school during construction. Students would like to see a drinking fountain on every floor.

Residents and stakeholders were asked to go online to take a survey indicating some of their preferences for design of the schools. The survey is available at www.clevelandmetroschools.org.

Lincoln West High School

A community meeting to discuss plans for a new Lincoln West High School was held on March 12th at Lincoln West High School, continued on page 5

Have you had a stroke or mini-stroke?

Researchers at University Hospitals are seeking participants for a research project designed to help African-American men learn about stroke risk factors and how to best take care of their health after a stroke.

If you are an African-American man 18 years of age or older, and you've suffered a stroke or mini-stroke within the last five years, you may be eligible for this study.

Participants will be compensated, and virtual intervention sessions will be available.



Call 440-656-2267 to learn more.

 University Hospitals
Cleveland Medical Center

TRANSIT ADVOCATES

continued from page 3

officers are decorated with the color of law, and therefore, prohibited from such conduct under the Fourth Amendment. RTA's fair enforcement policy encourages arbitrary and abusive police practices."

Despite the court ruling, RTA has continued issuing citations, with transit police giving out more than 772 citations since 2017, according to RTA Traffic Summary Reports. Over 90% were at Public Square and Tower City.

Fare evasion of public transport systems is a global problem often resulting in revenue and service quality reduction, and a deterioration in user perception of safety and security, according to a report published by *Sustainability*, an international, cross-disciplinary, scholarly, peer-reviewed, and open-access journal. The report examined fare evasion causes and consequences on the public bus system in Santiago, Chile. Revenues generated by transit ticket sales are vital as a source of income for transport companies and make significant contributions to keeping the system financially viable. The report states that, in general terms, most transit users have a negative view of the bus system. They feel the system does not contribute to the community welfare and perceive a lack of safety. Demand for public transport access is considered a social right that allows for social inclusion.

"Fare evasion is a small portion of the RTA budget," said William H. Nix, President of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 268, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. "Fares help to ensure that people on the busses and trains are using it for transportation, rather than a free place to

sleep. It is also a safety issue, as confronting the public about fares can lead to assaults. There does need to be a stronger presence by the transit police."

RTA transit operators are routinely required to check fare cards, Nix added.

A review of the RTA Bus Operator Handbook states that it is the responsibility of operators to collect and record fares, both cash, and non-cash. Refusing to pay, or not paying a fare to any degree, is a crime and therefore unacceptable. While each situation may be different, the operator must be prepared to assess each unique set of circumstances and choose the most appropriate course of action. According to the handbook, "we [RTA] are attempting to build long-term relationships with our customers and being too rigid may prove to be penny-wise and pound-foolish."

India Birdsong, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, discussed the future of the Cleveland public transit system at The City Club of Cleveland last February. During the question-and-answer segment of the program, Chris Martin, a member of the grassroots transit advocacy organization Clevelanders for Public Transit (CPT), and an RTA rider, asked whether the RTA ambassador program will hire unarmed civilians and social workers trained in crisis prevention to engage in fare enforcement.

"Our transit police division is drafting the transit ambassador program," Birdsong said. "We do not want to replace the police fare enforcement with the ambassadors. We want the ambassadors to assist riders with transit to become more comfortable with it. We are also looking at gaps in our current systems and upgrading technology to re-

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Friday, March 18, 2022; Lincoln West High School, 3202 W. 30th Street: The Cleveland Metropolitan School District plans to tear down this building and build a new school on the site. Construction is expected to begin in 2024 and be completed in 2026. The new building will be significantly smaller than the current school and will not have a pool or auditorium.

is to the south of the main entrance and the administrative offices are to the north of the entrance. The current main entrance is on W. 30th street, which is one-way north.

A 135-space parking lot will be on the north end of the building where bus drop off will also occur. The parking lot will have entrances from both W. 30th and W. 31st street. There will be a service drive and service parking space which will come off the W. 30th street entrance to the main parking area. This will have nine parking spaces as well as the trash bins. The building is approximately 500 feet long, with a corridor running the length of the building. An activity field is planned for the southeast corner of the school site. The activity field will be below ground level and will have steps accessible from W. 30th Street.

The new school will not have a pool or a dedicated auditorium like the present school. The dining area will have a stage and serve as both a cafeteria and auditorium. The swim team will go to Cudell Recreation Center to practice.

To offer input on plans for the new Lincoln West High School visit www.clevelandmetroschools.org or attend Councilwoman Jasmin Santana's Ward 14 meeting on April 28th from 6-7 p.m. at The Family Ministry Center, 3389 Fulton Road.

AREA SCHOOLS

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3202 W. 30th Street. Construction for Lincoln West High School is expected to begin in 2024 and to be completed by August of 2026. During the construction, beginning in August of 2024, students from Lincoln West High School will attend school at the former Garret Morgan School at 4016 Woodbine.

The Lincoln West High School building currently houses two schools, the Lincoln West School of Global Studies and the Lincoln West School of Science and Health. Currently the School of Global Studies has 355 students, and the School of Science and Health has 267 students. The School of Science and Health has a relationship with MetroHealth Medical Center and plans call for continuing that relationship. The current Lincoln West High School building is roughly 260,000 square feet. The proposed

new building will have roughly 100,000 square feet of space. The new school will be designed to serve a minimum of 600 students.

The architect from TDA said the current school is three stories with one story below grade. When the school is demolished, the land where it now sits will be bowl shaped. Plans for the new school call for two floors. One floor with the gym, dining room, and shared space and some classrooms will be below grade in the bowl. The architects said the cost to fill the bowl would be prohibitive – about \$4 million, thus the choice to have one floor below grade.

Academic classrooms for the two schools as well as specialized rooms for labs, art, music, and physical education will be on two floors. One floor will be below grade and one floor on ground level. All academic classrooms will have some windows that open.

The plans call for the main entrance of the building to be on W. 31st which is a one-way street going south. The academic area



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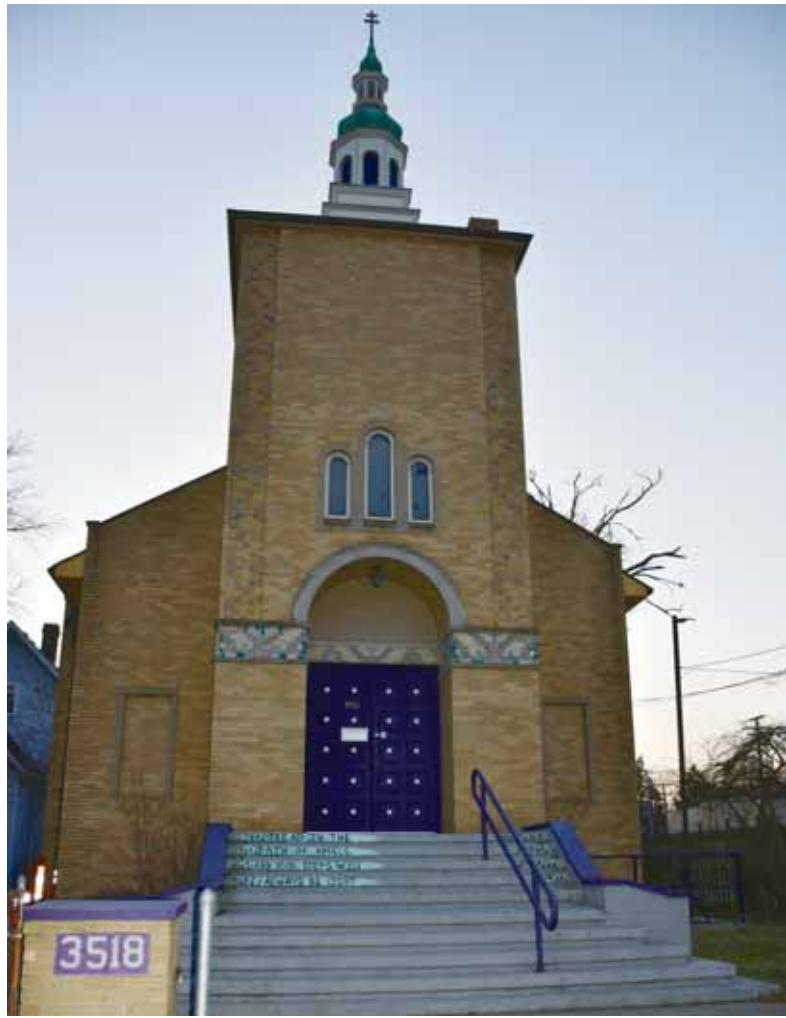


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Sunday, March 19, 2022; St. Nicholas Belarussian Orthodox Church building, 3518 Scranton Road, SW: A proposal by neighborhood resident Bob Gardin seeks to save this building from demolition. MetroHealth Medical Center proposed to demolish the building as part of a plan to create a neighborhood park. Gardin's proposal calls for buildings on the site to be incorporated into the park for possible community use. The building was last used by EarthAngels as a wholistic health center.

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METROHEALTH PARK PROPOSAL TABLED

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Nicholas Byelorussian Orthodox Church into the park to provide park amenities in the church. Committee Member John Rakauskas supported exploring moving the St. Nicholas Byelorussian Orthodox Church to another site.

The update to the plan proposed creating a 3.5-acre park space that would lie between Scranton and W. 25th Street just south of South Point Drive. MetroHealth's proposal for the park involved demolishing two buildings on the site of the proposed park – the former St. Nicholas Byelorussian Orthodox Church at 3518 Scranton Road and the Farnsworth house at 3517 W. 25th Street.

A counter proposal from the Jones Home Historic District Committee presented to the Near West Design Review Committee by committee member Bob Gardin called for saving the two buildings and incorporating them into the design of the park. Bob Gardin and Alan Forman produced a document in 2019 on behalf of the Jones Home Historic District that was submitted to the MetroHealth Transformation Planning Committee in 2019 calling for incorporating buildings on the site as part of the park. The proposal includes a history of the two buildings researched by Jones Home Historic District member Alan Forman. The historic district lies directly across W. 25th Street from the two buildings. In the chat of the virtual meeting people discussed possible uses for an indoor community facility in the park.

In presenting a case to the Near West Design Review Committee for approving the park proposal and demolishing the two buildings, MetroHealth President and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Akram Boutros said he sees the park as a down payment to the community on a promised future 12-acre park that would be completed after the outpatient buildings are demolished several years from now. The outpatient buildings currently occupy a large portion of the proposed parkland for

the future park.

In the immediate future, MetroHealth has offered to build a 3.5 acre portion of the 12.5 acre park. Boutros said the timeline MetroHealth was pursuing would have the proposed 3.5-acre portion of the park completed for the August 2022 opening of MetroHealth's new Glick Center.

A diagram of the proposed 3.5-acre park shows some benches and tables, some trees, walking paths, and a grass field that Boutros says could be used to pitch a tent for events. The Cleveland Public Power substation remains in the drawings with MetroHealth planners saying they will try to negotiate with the City of Cleveland for its possible removal.

MetroHealth planners said this design would be temporary and the park's space would be modified when the entire 12-acre park was ready to be designed. The entire 12-acre park would be between W. 25th to Scranton from MetroHealth Drive to the southern end of Scranton near I-71. The entire park is expected to be completed in 2024. Boutros said the deed to the park would be registered with Cuyahoga County as permanent park space. The completed park would be maintained and policed by MetroHealth Medical Center, Boutros said.

Boutros said that plans for the park had already been approved as part of the Clark-Fulton Together neighborhood master planning process. Boutros said over 400 people in the neighborhood had voted for the park. He said at no time did the plans for the park presented to the community have structures on it.

Near West Design Review Chair David Jurca noted that three neighborhood ambassadors who were part of the neighborhood planning process wrote in the chat that the demolition or possible incorporation of the buildings into the park had not been discussed as part of the planning process. One said that whenever the demolition of the buildings was brought up, it was put on the back burner during the

master planning process.

Boutros countered that because residents had approved having a park and diagrams showed there were no buildings in the park, they had approved the demolition. Bob Gardin said this was misleading. He said of course people are going to say they want a park. Gardin said, "It is not an all or nothing situation."

Gardin noted that all the buildings on the site – the Farnsworth house, and two churches and their parking spaces only take about 6% of the total 12-acres proposed for the park. He said you need parking for a trailhead if people come to the park to walk their dogs, for example. Gardin noted that residents wouldn't want park visitors to be parking on neighborhood streets. Gardin cited churches being included in the campus at Case Western Reserve University and being reused in the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood. Gardin said of MetroHealth planners, "They never made an attempt to repurpose the buildings or even offer that option to the community."

Boutros said MetroHealth does not have any interest in using the buildings. They will remain as is. Gardin proposed seeking requests for proposals for reusing the buildings after the rest of the 12-acre park is complete. Boutros said MetroHealth paid a half million dollars for the St. Nicholas Byelorussian Orthodox Church building. Boutros said no one wants to pay that price and reuse the building.

Prior to the vote to table the proposal for the park, the Near West Design Review Committee discussed and voted on a resolution from committee member John Rakauskas that would approve the creation of the temporary park in the area from South Point Drive up to the boundaries of the lots for the two buildings. This would leave time for the community to weigh in on the fate of the two historic buildings at some future point as well as the other church south of those buildings at the same time in the future. When asked, Boutros said if the entire 3.5-acres were not approved as is for the temporary park, MetroHealth would wait until the entire 12-acres were ready to be converted to parkland at the end of the process. Boutros said, "I could use more parking space, and we will just keep it as is."

After Boutros' comments, the committee voted down Rakauskas' proposal by a 5-4 vote.

At the end of the meeting after the proposal for the park was tabled, MetroHealth staff asked the Near West Design Review Committee to schedule a special session be held within a week to keep MetroHealth on schedule for the proposed August completion of the park. The committee discussed the possibility of a special session and decided that it would not be appropriate.

Some committee members reasoned that MetroHealth should be given time to come up with a thorough plan that explains the reasons that demolition is necessary, seeks community input, examines other possible uses for the buildings on the site, and better explains design and programming for the park.

The MetroHealth Park proposal did not appear on the agenda of the next scheduled meeting of the Near West Design Review Committee on March 23rd. The next meeting of the Committee is on Wednesday, April 6th.

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TRANSIT ADVOCATES

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duce fare evasion."

Several years ago, Clevelanders for Public Transit issued a policy platform titled Fair Fares: A Campaign for Better Transit. CPT believes HealthLine and Red Line riders have been subject to indiscriminate fare enforcement by armed law enforcement officers resulting in innocent men, women, and children entering the criminal justice system. Fare evasion should be a civil offense, not a criminal offense, argued CPT.

In 2019, Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack prepared legislation to decriminalize fare evasion but never introduced the legislation to City Council.

A Fare Evasion Decriminalization Meeting was held again in February on Zoom.

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At the introduction to the meeting, Chris Martin said policing on American transit consistently discriminates against Black and Brown riders. Bob Ross, a Cleveland resident, said transit riders want to feel safe.

"People want to use public transit. They also want to feel safe," said Ross. "Will people feel safer with ambassadors instead of transit police?" he asked.

Martin suggested the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), a rapid transit system serving the San Francisco Bay Area, as a model policing program for Cleveland. The BART Police Department launched the Ambassador Pilot Program in 2020 to increase the presence of uniformed, unarmed, non-sworn personnel to boost BART's visible presence on trains. The pilot program included 10 ambassadors who received de-escalation and anti-bias training. The Transit Center (TC) presented BART and its Board of Directors with the Award for Innovation in Public Safety at the TC Frequencies awards ceremony in New York later that same year.

Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb served on the Greater Cleveland RTA Board as an appointee of Cuyahoga County for several years leading up to his election. Bibb pledged to change the RTA Board during the campaign by replacing long-time RTA trustee Valerie McCall with Lauren Welch, a routine RTA rider who works for the Say Yes to Education Cleveland scholarship program. The mayor abandoned his efforts after discovering that he did not have the legal authority to remove McCall. Jeff Sles-



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Thursday, March 17, 2022; St. Patrick's Day Mass at St. Colman Church, 2027 W. 65th Street: A youth continues to play his tin whistle as members of the West Side Irish American Club emerge from St. Colman Church following the morning mass.

man, a vocal advocate for a car-free Cleveland, and recommended by Clevelanders

for Public Transit for a position on the RTA Board, was nominated by Bibb to serve on

the RTA Board. Cleveland City Council has not voted to approve the nomination.

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