



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre's Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John's Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue: In the opening ceremony in a piece titled The Clotilda's Hour: A Resurrection, a storyteller, Ade Olomo Yvette, gives a tribute to the ancestors arriving in the United States on the last known slave ship in 1859.

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Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

Cleveland City Council passes new tax abatement legislation

At a special meeting held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, Cleveland City Council passed legislation that will restructure the City of Cleveland's tax abatement policy.

A press release immediately following the meeting from Cleveland City Council Chief of Communications Joan Mazzolini explains the new policy.

According to the information in the release, the new abatement policy is

scheduled to be in place starting December 31, 2023. Projects with start dates prior to that will be grandfathered in under the current tax abatement policy.

Under the new policy, the City of Cleveland will still be granting 15-year residential tax abatements for single family new construction and renovations, and multi-family new construction and renovations. The abatement deals offered are different depending on

where a residential structure is located and whether the structure is market rate or affordable (defined as affordable to a person with income at 80% of the Area Median Income – the area being the Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor metropolitan area)

Single Family New Construction

In areas of Cleveland classified as Market Rate, the 15-year tax abatement for market rate for single family new construction (3 units or less) will be for 85 percent of the property taxes assessed. (This includes market rate areas that are designated in neighborhoods such as Tremont, Ohio City and Detroit Shoreway.) The abatement will be capped at \$350,000. So, property owners will be tax exempt on 85 percent of the property tax and will pay 15 percent of the property tax for the value of the new construction up to \$350,000. If their property is appraised at over \$350,000, the owner will pay the full rate of property tax on the dollar value that is above \$350,000.

In areas of Cleveland determined to be Middle Markets or Opportunity Markets, residential single family new construction will receive 100 percent fifteen-year tax abatements. In the Middle Market areas, the tax abatements will be capped at \$400,000. In the Opportunity Markets the abatements will be capped at \$450,000.

One hundred percent fifteen-year tax abatements will be offered to single family new construction that is affordable to people with income at 80 percent of the Area Medium Income throughout Cleveland. There is no cap on the abate-

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Cleveland nonprofit hospitals get millions of dollars in property tax breaks. Many are asking, 'Is it worth it?'

by Stephanie Czekalinski
& Michael Indriolo

Nora and David Brown live in a two-story single-family home in Cleveland's Fairfax neighborhood. The modest home on East 100th Street, with a

gabled roof and an enclosed porch, is just a block away from the Cleveland Clinic.

Twice a year, like many property owners in Cuyahoga County, the Browns write a check for property taxes to

support schools and other services.

In 2018, their property taxes jumped about 50%, Cuyahoga County records show. There wasn't much they could do about it, David said. Death and taxes,

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre's Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John's Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue: As part of a ceremonial ritual in the opening ceremony titled The Clotilda's Hour: A Resurrection, (L-R) Venetia Whatley and Sharonda Whatley, members of the Mojuba Dance Collective, hold up pieces of pottery.

Renovation updates for Cleveland Public Library's branches and StoryWalk introduced at Carnegie West

by Bruce Checefsky

Cleveland Public Library (CPL) ranked fourth among America's Star Libraries, earning a prestigious Five-Star rating from the Library Journal, the oldest and most respected publication covering library service. The Library Journal index, published annually, compares U.S. libraries to their peers and ratings work on a scale of five, four, and three stars, based on per-capita usage data. With over 800,000 visitors a year, CPL circulates one of the most extensive collections in the country, close to ten million items.

CPL is funded primarily through the State of Ohio Public Library Fund and local voter-approved property tax levies, other funding comes from grants, fines and fees, and interest on investments. Cleveland voters approved Issue 60 in 2017, costing \$35 per year for a \$50,000 home, for more funding to rebuild and renovate all 27

branches.

A Cleveland Public Library Facilities Master Plan, released in 2019, identified Jefferson, Walz, Lorain Carnegie, Eastman, and Brooklyn branches in Group 1A, scheduled for renovation to begin in March 2020 and be completed by June 2022. The 10-year, \$100 million plan has meeting rooms, after-hours community room access, a 24-hour vestibule with book lockers, a dedicated teen space, gaming areas, and other amenities. The Main Library downtown will get a \$65 million renovation.

Karam Senior Living, a five-story, 51-unit senior living facility for residents making at or below 60% of the Area Median Income, will be combined with the new Walz branch at 7910 Detroit Avenue. The project, developed through a partnership between the Cleveland Public Library

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre's Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John's Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue: This student from Thomas Jefferson International Newcomers Academy was one of the singers in a group from the school performing at Station Hope. (See related photo on page 7)



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre's Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John's Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue: The Born to Dance330 TK Mini's, a dance group from Akron, Ohio, entertains the crowd.



PHOTO BY BRUCE CHECEFSKY

Thursday, June 9th, Cleveland Public Library's Carnegie West Branch StoryWalk, Frank Novak Park, 1900 Fulton Road: Helen Zaluckyj, Carnegie West Branch Children's Librarian, reads selections from the book featured in the StoryWalk, *A Park Connects Us*.

LIBRARIES

continued from page one

and Northwest Neighborhoods Community Development Organization, was supported by a \$1M tax credit from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency in 2021. It marks the second location of the Cleveland Public Library to include apartments in its redevelopment. The planned 11-story Library Lofts building in the University Circle neighborhood features 207 market-rate apartments

above a new, two-story Martin Luther King Jr Branch Library at 10555 Euclid Ave.

The MLK Branch Library is part of the \$39.3 million Phase 1A of the master plan.

With multiple branches closing simultaneously, including Jefferson, Walz, Lorain Carnegie, Eastman, and Brooklyn, access to library programs for neighborhood children this summer is limited and increases the distance to programs from a library that remains open.

Harriette Parks, Chief of Public Services, said the Cleveland Public Library is open and available to everyone, either in person or online. While temporary closures are inconvenient, they are necessary to meet community needs. The library system is prepared to meet the needs of children who have increased distance from an open library.

"Cleveland Public Library is taking our services to the people. Our goal is and has always been to meet people where they are. Patrons are provided with options, whether online, at a nearby branch or other opportunities to experience library services. Working closely with our community partners, Library staff is providing outreach to keep library programs active in neighborhoods affected by branch closures. Outreach activities include visits to schools and daycares, camps, community festivals, and more. There are three mobile libraries in Midtown, University Circle, and Edgewater Beach. Families can visit those locations for books, StoryTime, arts and crafts, and additional programming," said Parks in an email to the *Plain Press*.

Newly renovated neighborhood branches will expand areas for children and have a dedicated teen space, more community rooms, improved technology and accessibility, and 24-hour access to materials with Grab and Go Book Lockers, according to her.

"These enhancements were feedback themes that emerged during meetings with library patrons and neighbors, surveys, focus groups, and open houses. The newly designed branches will reopen in late summer and fall 2022."

Closed since April 2021, the Jefferson branch will reopen on August 29, 2022. The Lorain, West Park, and Woodland branches will reopen on October 10, 2022, while Brooklyn and Eastman will reopen on January 20, 2023. Reopening dates are subject to change.

StoryWalk

The Carnegie West Branch celebrated its first StoryWalk featuring *A Park Connects Us* by picture book author and poet Sarah Nelson. The StoryWalk Project, created by Anne

Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont, in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library, promotes early literacy, physical activity, and family time together in nature.

Nelson explores themes in her books about nature, dramas of childhood, and inspiring, lesser-known moments in history. *A Park Connects Us* is an elegy to urban parks and the many ways they connect us to community and nature

and invites readers to discover how shared green spaces bring us together. The StoryWalk project will continue with different authors and books every few months throughout the year.

Angela Guinther, Carnegie West Branch Manager, introduced the StoryWalk project to adults and children gathered near tables with free fresh pizza and ice cream. She

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ARTS/THEATER

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK will perform the play "Hamlet" at Lincoln Park, 1200 Starkweather, on July 8th at 7 p.m.

CRIME STOPPERS

REWARDS UP TO \$2,500 for tips about crimes that lead to an arrest. Tipsters remain anonymous. Call in a tip at: 216-252-7463. Send a web tip to: www.25crime.com

DONATIONS

BLOOD AND PLATLET DONATIONS NEEDED BY RED CROSS: By scheduling and keeping appointments in July, donors can help provide for those in immediate need of lifesaving care. To schedule an appointment to donate, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). As a thank-you for helping, all those who come to give June 30-July 10 will receive an exclusive Red Cross recycled cotton tote bag, while supplies last. Donors can schedule an appointment at: **Warzel Blood Donation Center**, 3747 Euclid Ave., Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays: 12 p.m. – 8 p.m.; **Cleveland State University Recreation Center**, 2420 Chester Avenue, 7/12/2022: 10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; and **MetroHealth Medical Center**, 2500 Metrohealth Drive, on 7/13/2022: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

EDUCATION

PreK ENROLLMENT: Cleveland children that will be 4 years old by September 30th are eligible to enroll in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's FREE Preschool Program. To enroll call 216-838-0110.

PROJECT ACT: What homeless parents need to know about student education. ProjectACT@Cleveland-MetroSchools.org. Call 216-838-0210 or 1-800-961-1990. ClevelandMetroSchools.org/ProjectACT.

EMPLOYMENT

WEST SIDE CATHOLIC CENTER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, 3135 Lorain Avenue: Eight-week work readiness program 9 a.m. – Noon. Breakfast and lunch available. Assistance in securing childcare and transportation. Re-entry job seekers welcome. Guaranteed employment options. Individualized personalized support. State of the art, automated interview/feedback program. Accepted by Cuyahoga County as a certified employment provider for SNAP/TANF requirements. For more information contact Workforce Development Program Manager Frank Johaneck at 216-631-4741, ext. 167.

WEST SIDE CATHOLIC CENTER CULINARY ACADEMY, 3135 Lorain Avenue: Eight-week program. Upon successful completion, the future chefs will receive the ServSafe certificate. Engaging learning opportunities with in-depth classroom studies and hands on development of basic kitchen skills. Interaction and practical experiences with multiple food service operations including Ohio City Pizzeria, West Side Catholic Center Resource Center and various restaurants. Students receive a paid stipend. For more information contact Workforce Development Program Manager Frank Johaneck at 216-631-4741, ext. 167.

ELECTION

PRIMARY ELECTION will be continued on page 7

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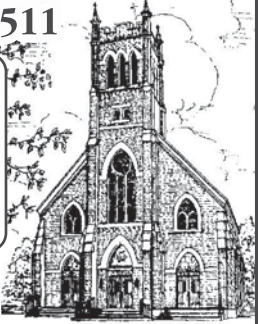
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German service..... 9:00 am

English service.....10:30 am

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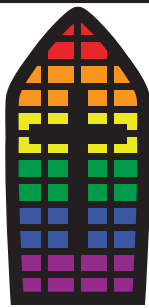
8:30 AM (Interpreted for the Deaf)

11:00 AM (Fully Signed for the Deaf)

CONFESSIONS

Saturday:

3:30 – 4:00 PM



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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SUNDAY: 9AM AND 11AM

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CONFESSION:

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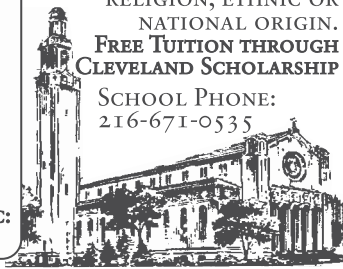
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Local and state politicians show more empathy to developers than to Cleveland’s children

by **Chuck Hoven**

Cleveland’s new tax abatement policy set to start on January 1, 2024, while better than the current policy, does little to address the glaring need to substantially increase the flow of property taxes to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Rather than eliminating tax abatement citywide or at least stopping it in hot real estate markets like Ohio City, Tremont and Detroit Shoreway, Cleveland City Council and the City Administration tweaked the tax abatement reducing tax abatement from 100 percent to 85 percent in the hot real estate markets and placing an abatement cap of \$350,000 on single family housing in those neighborhoods.

COMMENTARY

While the changes should help increase revenue to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), – the

changes are weak. They should have been more substantial. The changes cater more to developers than meeting the needs of Cleveland’s children in a city with the highest child poverty rate in the nation. Cleveland City Council members and the administration should be ashamed that they did not stand up to developers and do more for Cleveland’s children.

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District and the children CMSD servers are the biggest losers when property taxes are abated. Fifty-five percent of the property taxes go to fund the schools in Cleveland; 19.59 percent go to Cuyahoga County; 15.27 percent go to the City of Cleveland; 7.56 percent go to the Cleveland Public Library System and 2.58 percent go to the Cleveland Metroparks.

At the May 10th Cleveland Metro-

politan School District (CMSD) Board of Education business meeting, CMSD Chief Financial Officer Derek M. Richey made it clear that once federal dollars from COVID relief funds and the American Rescue Plan Act are depleted, the school district will have to go to the voters to ask for passage of a levy. He said this will be necessary in order for CMSD to continue programs it believes make a difference in improving educational outcomes for Cleveland students. Cleveland taxpayers that are not receiving an abatement will be asked to increase their taxes to make this possible.

Richey also said he expects that CMSD will lose an estimated \$3 million to \$4 million a year because of a new state law -- House Bill 126. The new state law prevents School Districts from challenging at the County Board of Revision property tax appraisals unless the value of the property has been reduced by more than a half million dollars and 10% of the property’s value. Other public entities such as the Library System, Metroparks, City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County are also prevented from defending their interests at the County Board of Revision. The same is not true of property owners and developers – they can take their property tax

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PHOTO BY BRUCE CHECEFSKY

Thursday, June 9th, Cleveland Public Library’s Carnegie West Branch Story-Walk, Frank Novak Park, 1900 Fulton Rd: Angela Guinther, Carnegie West Branch Manager, introduces the StoryWalk project to adults and children gathered near tables with free fresh pizza and ice cream.

How to address lead paint and other conditions in rental properties

by **Tonya Sams**

When housing conditions are endangering your family, it’s easy to become overwhelmed by worry and fear.

One common problem is the presence of lead in older homes. Most homes built prior to 1978 used paint that contained lead.

Children exposed to lead poisoning may suffer from learning and behavioral issues and may have trouble paying attention.

If you are a homeowner concerned about lead, learn about assistance programs by contacting your public health department.

If you are a renter and your rental property was built before 1978, contact your landlord to find out if they have ever conducted a lead check. If you notice peeling paint or large areas of bare dirt near your home, or if your child has tested positive for lead poisoning, send a dated letter to your landlord requesting repairs. Keep a copy of that letter for yourself.

If your landlord has not made the repairs within 30 days, you can file a request in housing court to order the landlord to do so as soon as possible. Another option is “rent deposit” or “rent escrow”. You cannot legally withhold rent because repairs have not been completed, but rent escrow is a way to put financial pressure on your landlord. This process allows you to pay your rent to the court and protects you from eviction.

To use the rent deposit option, you must be current on your rent. A landlord cannot retaliate against you (for example, by evicting you) if you have properly deposited your rent payments with the court. One important thing to note is that you could lose the right to sue your landlord for damages caused by lead poisoning if you use rent deposit.

Once you start to deposit your rent in court, you may continue to do so until an agreement is made between you, your landlord, and the court about when and how the funds can be released. Landlords can request the funds be released to them if their tenant did not tell them

repairs were needed OR if the landlord was not given enough time to complete the repairs.

Once the landlord files an application to release the funds, the application

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22

CLARK FULTON TRIENNIAL

126

Cleveland artists

16

Cleveland galleries

6

Cleveland neighborhoods

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre’s Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John’s Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue: Darnell Weaver, a member of the Mojuba Dance Collective, plays the viola during the performance of *The Clotilda’s Hour: A Resurrection!*

LOCAL AND STATE POLITICIANS

continued from page 3

assessments and challenge them with no restrictions.

Richey says his assessment of the millions of dollars the school system will lose because of this law is based on the record of challenges in previous years. State politicians, like our local politicians, are catering to developers and property owners at the expense of our children.

Anyone that spends substantial time in a Cleveland School or regularly attends CMSD Board of Education meetings realizes the importance of funding our schools. At the May 24th Board of Education meeting, it was clear from testimony of security guards that the lack of funds to increase pay results in a serious recruitment deficit and not enough security personnel in our schools. This impacts the safety of both students and staff.

Cleveland schools also don’t have anywhere near the resources of many of Cleveland’s suburban school systems

– resulting in the continued flight from the city of families with school aged children.

Despite the great needs of our school system, our local and state politicians continue to deprive the schools of resources and cater to developers. Why is this happening? What steps can we take to change this? Is this a result of campaign contributions from developers to our politicians?

What is motivating our politicians to act in such a callous manner? If campaign contributions are influencing the decisions of politicians, the solution may be to level the playing field. Perhaps a statewide referendum to limit yearly campaign contribution from any individual, business, or corporation to \$20 a year would make politicians less susceptible to the influence of developers and wealthy property owners and make them more likely to address resources needed for children living in poverty.

LEAD PAINT

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becomes a complaint, which starts the process of a civil lawsuit against the tenant. The landlord is required to send a copy of the complaint to the tenant.

If a civil lawsuit has been filed against you, you can file an “answer and counterclaim” against the landlord. An “answer and counterclaim” is your response to the landlord’s civil lawsuit. You have 28 days after the landlord filed the complaint to respond.

Within 60 days of the initial filing of the landlord’s civil lawsuit, both parties must appear in court for trial. The court will then decide what happens to the funds.

More information is available in Legal Aid’s “Lead Poisoning: Know Your Rights, Remedies & Resources” and “How to Rent Deposit when Housing Conditions are a Problems” brochures at www.lasclev.org: go to the “Get Help” tab, then click on “Legal Information and Resources.” From here, click on “Housing” and then “Repairs.”

Legal Aid may be able to help you if you are facing unsafe housing conditions or have questions about rent deposit. Call 888-817-3777 or visit lasclev.org/contact for more information.

Tonya Sams is the Development and Communications Assistant at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

TAX ABATEMENT

continued from page 3

ments in this category.

For people wishing to build a new house in their neighborhood to age in place, Cleveland City Council created a 15-year 100 percent tax abatement throughout the city that is capped at \$450,000.

Single Family Renovation

Single Family market rate homes being renovated anywhere in Cleveland are eligible for 100 percent 15-year tax abatement on the value added by the rehabilitation. The abatements are capped at \$450,000. For home renovations that are deemed affordable to families with income at 80 percent of the Area Median Income, the same 15-year 100 percent abatement applies. There is no cap for affordable home renovations.

Multi-Family New Construction

New construction of multi-family units (four units or more) in areas determined to be Market Rate would receive an 85 percent fifteen-year tax abatement and would be required to set aside 25 percent of the units as affordable to persons making 80 percent of the Area Medium Income.

New construction of multi-family units in areas determined to be Middle Market would receive a 90 percent fifteen-year tax abatement and would be required to set aside 15 percent of their

Neighborhood Leadership Development Program & Community Development Corporation Leadership Program seek applicants

If you are passionate, committed and dedicated to taking an active role in improving your community, you may be excited by, and ready for, one of two valuable leadership development programs. NLDP and CDCLP are programs of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation. Both programs are at no cost to participants.

The Neighborhood Leadership Development Program (NLDP), for 15 years, has offered community engagement leadership training for residents of Cleveland, and its inner ring suburbs, who are working on projects in the City of Cleveland and who are determined to make a positive impact on their communities.

The Community Development Corporation Leadership Program (CDCLP) launched, and will soon be graduating, its first cohort. CDCLP is the Cleveland area’s only leadership program specifically designed for Community

Development Corporation Executive level leadership.

Both programs are currently seeking applicants for their 2022 cohorts.

NLDP and CDCLP are designed to help emerging neighborhood leaders reach their potential by expanding their knowledge base and personal development through education, coaching and ongoing interaction with their peers and other leaders. Participants, as well as graduates of both programs, have ongoing access to the services of a Program Coach who will give advice and support tailored to the needs of the participant.

The programs cover topics such as organizational and program planning, marketing and communications, program fundraising, board governance, conflict resolution and more. NLDP and CDCLP participants and graduates are a diverse group with many interests who are working on a wide variety of issues that positively impact Cleveland’s

neighborhoods.

Both programs hold their in-person sessions at Trinity Commons at 2230 Euclid Avenue.

NLDP sessions take place from 8:30am to 4pm on Saturdays, CDCLP sessions take place from 8:30am to 5pm on Thursdays.

The application period is now open!

The deadline for NLDP applications is August 14th. For additional information on NLDP and to view the curriculum and online application, visit www.nldpcleveland.com or call 216-776-6167.

The CDCLP deadline is August 4th. For additional information on CDCLP and to view the curriculum and online application, visit www.cdclp.org or call 216-776-6172.

Think you have what it takes? Apply to make a difference!



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre’s Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John’s Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue, Opening Ceremony: *The Clotilda’s Hour: A Resurrection!*: AdeOlomo/Sister Yvetta gives a tribute to the ancestors who arrived to the United States on the last slave ship in 1859, while dancers Samara Steele, Lafonshey Jones, Chelsey Harris, Serene Hameed, Chris Sims and Marisa Hugley sit on the steps of St. John Episcopal Church and listen to the story.

units as affordable to persons making 80 percent of the Area Median Income.

New construction of multi-family units in areas determined to be Opportunity Markets would receive an 85 percent fifteen-year tax abatement and would be required to set aside 5 percent of their units as affordable to persons making 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

New construction of multi-family units that have made all their units affordable to people making 80 percent of AMI would be eligible for 100 percent fifteen-year tax abatements citywide.

Multi-family Renovation

All rehabilitation or remodeled multi-family buildings citywide would be eligible for 100 percent fifteen-year tax abatements on the value of the improvements in the property. Rehabilitated or remodeled buildings in Market areas would be required to set aside 25 percent of the units as affordable to persons making 80 percent of AMI. Those rehabilitated or remodeled buildings in Middle Market areas would be required to set aside 15 percent of the units as

affordable to persons making 80 percent of the AMI. Rehabilitated or remodeled buildings in Opportunity Market areas would be required to set aside 5 percent of units as affordable to persons making 80 percent of AMI.

Rehabilitated or remodeled multi-family units that have all of their apartments affordable to persons making 80 percent of AMI would be eligible for the 100 percent fifteen-year tax abatement citywide with no additional set asides required.

General rules

To qualify for tax abatements all new and rehabilitated residences would be required to meet City of Cleveland green building standards. Owners of all the multi-family residential buildings are also required to enter into Community Benefits agreements with the City of Cleveland Community Development Department. The Community Benefits Agreement may waive the affordable housing set asides in the event the owner makes a voluntary payment into an affordable housing fund in accordance to a table set by City ordinance. Any use

of rental properties for limited lodging or short-term rental would make the owner in violation of the Community Benefits Agreement.

The complete ordinance – number 482-2022 -- was passed at a Special Meeting on May 25th according to the City Record (May 27th City Record) as “an emergency ordinance establishing three areas encompassing the entire City of Cleveland as Community Reinvestment Areas under Section 3735.65 et seq. of the Ohio Revised Code, and making certain findings and determinations in connection with Community.”

The ordinance also calls for the Department of Community Development to provide a report on the tax abatement policy 18 months after January 1, 2024. The Director of Community Development is also required to “track the demographics of the applicants and occupants of housing developments that utilize the residential tax abatement.”

The new tax abatement policy passed by a vote of 15-0. Councilpersons Jasmin Santana and Brian Kazy were absent.

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Composting directly in the garden

by Melinda Myers

Don't toss those imperfect lettuce leaves, onion tops and strawberry tops into the trash. Instead, convert them into compost right in the garden.

Worm and pile composting are great ways to manage these scraps. But if these methods aren't for you, try trench composting. This centuries old technique is low effort and effective. The process is basically invisible, eliminates the need to turn a pile of plant debris, requires minimal space and doesn't smell.

Simply dig a 12-inch-deep trench between the rows of vegetables, in the pathway, or in any vacant spot in the garden. Be careful not to damage the plant roots. Add about four to six inches of kitchen scraps, mix with soil and cover with at least eight inches of soil that you removed from the hole. Covering with this much soil helps prevent animals from digging. Repeat until the trench is filled with plant debris and covered in soil.

Just like other composting methods, use plant-based materials only. Do not add meat, dairy and fat that can attract animals and rodents. And this is no place for perennial weeds like quackgrass, annual weeds gone to seed, or invasive plants that can survive the composting and take over the garden.

You can also trench compost one hole at a time. Just dig a hole in a vacant space in the garden, toss in the materials, mix, and cover with soil. I grew up with this method. After dinner or once we had a bowl full of kitchen scraps, we were sent to the garden to dig a hole, dump, and cover.

For those that want to rotate plantings as well as compost, you may want to try one of these two methods. Plant in wide rows and trench compost

in the pathway. Next year, move the garden to the path location and make last year's garden the path. You will be rotating your plantings while improving the soil.

Or designate separate adjacent areas for planting, paths, and composting. Next year, rotate so last year's composting area becomes garden, the garden becomes the path, and the path is the new section for trench composting. In three years, you will have rotated crops and improved the soil in all three areas.

Start by contacting your local municipality to make sure there are no restrictions on any type of composting. Then get out the shovel and dig your way to healthier soil and a more productive garden.

Editor's Note: Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the recently released Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD instant video series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre's Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John's Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue: Three members of the Ohio City Theatre Project interact with the crowd. The group staged a popup performance titled *Central Concern*, written and directed by Pandora Robertson. (A satirical look at the history of the American real estate profession and how it championed property values at the expense of civil rights.)

Former Near West Side mail carrier sends greetings from his hike on the Appalachian Trail

While doing a 50 mile stretch on the Appalachian Trail with her partner Nicholas Morganti, Samantha Maloy encountered a former mail carrier from the Near West Side of Cleveland. The mail carrier named Eric, said he had delivered mail to the building in which she worked at 1212 W. 25th Street. Eric, who has the trail name "Hypo," said

he quit his job after tax season and is attempting to hike the entire 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail. The trip takes the average hiker about five months to complete. Hypo told Maloy that he started his hike going northbound at Spring Mountain in Georgia on April 21.

Hypo then asked if Maloy and her partner wouldn't mind taking a picture of him, to show a few friends of his from his mail route. See proof of Hypo,

happy and healthy, hiking the Appalachian Trail, a little over a month into his journey on *Plain Press* website at: <https://plainpress.blog>.

Hypo's mail route was near the Lorain Avenue and Fulton/Clark area where he did a 15 mile loop each day. He said he thought that would be enough

training for the Appalachian Trail but he was surprised by the challenge. He also said running into Maloy and Morganti gave him motivation to keep going. "Hypo" told Maloy he has many friends along his mail route and wants everyone to know he's in good spirits and he thinks about them often!

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Billboard on the Southeast corner of W. 25th and Detroit Avenue: This billboard on top of the former Royal Castle building sends a message from Laborers Local Union 860 about unsafe conditions at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court facility on Quincy Avenue. The Labors Union provides more information seeks signatures on a petition on its website at J4JCW.com. The former Royal Castle building and the billboard are owned by Tony and Bobby George. A June 9th article (*Crain's Cleveland Business* by Michelle Jarboe titled *Land-swap deal could resolve eminent domain fight atop Irishtown Bend*) says the Port Authority is willing to allow the Georges to keep the Royal Castle building and the money-making billboard and swap land the Georges own east of the building for land the Port Authority owns north of the building that the Georges can use for parking. The Port Authority wants the land east of the building so it can stabilize the hillside above a proposed Irishtown Bend Park.

CLEVELAND NONPROFIT HOSPITALS

continued from page one

after all.

But their neighbor, the Cleveland Clinic, which owns property worth billions across the county, pays taxes on only a fraction of it.

An Ideastream analysis of Cuyahoga County fiscal records shows that the clinic owned at least \$2.4 billion in tax-exempt property countywide as of 2018 assessments. If that property was taxable, it would contribute about \$84 million to government coffers annually.

The Cleveland Clinic continues to grow its main campus

"My husband calls it Emerald City because at night it lights up down there with the glass and the structures of the buildings," said Nora Brown, gesturing toward the Cleveland Clinic's main campus barely visible beyond the trees that line her street. "As you can see, they're building all around us ... they're making their own world."

Since 2008, the Clinic has built the 330,000-square-foot Glickman Tower and the 10-story Sydel & Arnold Miller Family Pavilion. The system also

expanded its Health Education Campus and earlier this year, announced \$1.3 billion in capital projects, including two on the main campus.

If those buildings were owned by a for-profit entity, they would generate property taxes used to support local schools, government services and libraries, according to the county fiscal office.

But because it's nonprofit, the Cleveland Clinic gets to keep that money.

Clinic officials argue, however, that the system contributes a substantial amount of money to the local economy despite its tax-exempt status.

"Any and all surplus funds from operations are invested back into our health system to support patient care, research, education and long-standing charitable efforts," a spokesperson wrote in an email. "The property taxes we are legally exempt from each year help to fund the equivalent of approximately 1,500 Cleveland Clinic jobs in Cuyahoga County."

And Clinic officials pointed out the health system does pay some property tax.

"In 2019 and 2020, Cleveland Clinic

paid more than \$5 million each year in property taxes in Cuyahoga County ... for space in our buildings that we rent or lease, including food and retail space," a spokesperson wrote in an email.

There are several other nonprofit hospitals that also receive tax breaks in Cuyahoga County.

University Hospitals own at least \$797 million in property, county records show. Their property taxes could contribute about \$28 million to county coffers each year.

Do tax breaks for nonprofit hospitals continue to serve the public good?

The Clinic and other nonprofit hospitals enjoy the benefit of these tax breaks thanks to laws dating back hundreds of years that were set up for nonprofits such as schools, churches and public charities, said Greg LeRoy of *Good Jobs First*, a nonprofit think tank that tracks government subsidies.

"The idea was that these are institutions that don't make a profit... They're there for public good and therefore the public supports them to the degree that they don't pay property taxes," said LeRoy. "The trouble is in today's economy, especially in sectors like health care... a lot of nonprofit hospitals don't act that differently than for-profit hospitals."

The difference between small hospitals that fought the Spanish Flu a century ago and today's glittering research juggernauts isn't lost on the property tax payers in the Fairfax neighborhood.

Nora Brown questioned the fairness of paying more taxes on her \$23,000 dollar house than the Clinic might pay

for an entire building worth a hundred million dollars.

"I feel it's unfair," said Nora Brown. "It's wrong. But you know what? The system is just so corrupted and backwards now."

"I feel it's unfair. It's wrong. But you know what? The system is just so corrupted and backwards now."

-- Nora Brown
Fairfax Resident

The Browns aren't the only ones wondering whether the government is still striking the right deal with giant nonprofits even as they acknowledge the benefits associated with having the research giants in town.

"We are all incredibly fortunate to have institutions like the clinic and University Hospitals in our midst. They provide incredible services to the people," said Jim Rokakis, a former Cuyahoga County treasurer. "We're fortunate, but again, that doesn't mean that we should continue to cut these huge tax breaks without expecting something big in return, right?"

What do communities get in exchange for tax breaks? It's complicated.

Clinic officials say the health system has the numbers to show it's making good on that deal to give back, but industry analysts say hospitals count expenditures that, while acceptable to the IRS, may not actually benefit local communities at all.

In 2020, the Cleveland Clinic says it spent \$1.31 billion for community benefit on subsidized care, community health improvement, unreimbursed care for patients with Medicaid, financial assistance, education and research.

But some industry analysts say hospitals often overvalue the benefits they actually provide their immediate communities.

In 2019, the Cleveland Clinic along with other Northeast Ohio hospitals, received more in tax breaks than they spent on charity care or community investments, according to a recent report by the Lown Institute, a think tank that studies hospital systems.

That year, the Cleveland Clinic had the fourth largest tax-break-to-community-benefit-spending deficit in the country, according to the report. It received \$611 million more in tax breaks than it spent on charity care and community investment.

Other area hospitals that also receive tax breaks have deficits, according to figures provided by the Lown Institute.

University Hospitals' deficit was more than \$175 million and the Sisters of Charity Health System, which runs St. Vincent Charity Hospital, received \$24 million more in tax breaks than it spent on charity care and investments, the data showed. MetroHealth, which is a publicly owned health care system, was not included in the data.

The Lown Institute says it compares how much a hospital system spends on charity care and community investment to the value of the tax breaks it receives.

The Clinic, however, has challenged Lown's methodology, calling it flawed and not in line with how the IRS categorizes community benefit, officials said in a statement.

Lown "excluded categories of research, education, and Medicaid shortfall — all have a direct impact on the health of the community," a spokesperson wrote. "Medicaid is a program which serves low-income patients and provides access to quality care for them."

Both the American Hospital Association and the Catholic Health Association of the United States, who represent hospitals, have also been critical of Lown's report.

There were good reasons to exclude research and training expenditures in the analysis, said Dr. Vikas Saini, president of the Lown Institute.

That's because there is no way to measure whether what a hospital is researching actually benefits a local community. In addition, taxpayers already fund a federal program that pays hospitals to train new doctors, Saini said.

The research group does take into account how much care hospitals provide to Medicaid patients, but unlike the IRS, Lown does not include what's known as the "Medicaid shortfall," the difference between what Medicaid will reimburse for a procedure and what a hospital charges the government for that procedure.

"There's a lot of good that comes out of the hospitals," Saini said. "But this is very much about trying to understand... what can we see that is directly beneficial to the community?"

Editor's Note: *This is the first part of a three-part series that examines the impact of nonprofit hospitals in Northeast Ohio and their effects on our community. Part II of the series will be published next month. METHODOLOGY: Ideastream Public Media used data from the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer to calculate the size of nonprofit hospitals' property holdings in the county. The dataset is not comprehensive. The numbers presented in this article are estimates based on Ideastream's analysis of publicly available data. The data provided to Ideastream Public Media reflects values as of Cuyahoga County's 2018 assessments. It does not include properties for which nonprofit hospitals are currently seeking exemptions. The data provided by the county does not necessarily list a hospital's current hospital system affiliation. In those cases, hospital properties were identified through Ideastream research. This project is part of Connecting the Dots between Race and Health, a project of Ideastream Public Media funded by The Dr. Donald J. Goodman and Ruth Weber Goodman Philanthropic Fund of The Cleveland Foundation. This article was provided to the Plain Press by the online publication The Land, a local news startup that reports on Cleveland's neighborhoods and inner ring suburbs. The Land delivers in-depth stories that foster accountability, inform the community, and inspire people to take action. The Land can be accessed at <https://thelandcle.org>.*

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Students say farewell to Clark School with a return date in August of 2025

On May 27th Students from Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Clark School were outside enjoying a plastic climbing wall and other activities in the play area in front of the school at 5550 Clark Avenue. The celebration was somewhat of a farewell to current school building, and to the play area with its tar covered surface where students were seen daily playing outside during the school year. Beginning next school year, the Clark Pre-K to 8th Grade students will be going to the site of the former H. Barbara Booker School at 2121 W. 67th (near Lorain Avenue) so a new school can be built on the site of the current Clark School

The Clark School will be built in the area between W. 53 and W. 56th on Clark Avenue and is expected to be completed

in time for the 2025-26 school year.

Other changes are also underway in the immediate neighborhood. The City of Cleveland's Clark Recreation Center at 5706 Clark Avenue announced they are closing for renovations.

Cleveland City Council also introduced legislation earlier this year authorizing the City of Cleveland Director of Public Works to apply for a grant from the National Park Service to build a new playground in the area between Clark Recreation Center and the new Clark School.

If all is successful, students will return to a new Clark School in the 2025-2026 School Year and potentially see a revamped recreation center and a new playground as well.

COMMUNITY BOARD

continued from page 2

help on August 2, 2020 from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. for candidates for Ohio House, Ohio Senate and State Central Committee. To view a sample ballot visit www.443vote.us. Early voting is available at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, 2925 Euclid Avenue: weekdays from July 6-22 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Weekdays from July 25 – 29 from 8 a.m to 7 p.m.; Saturday July 30: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday July 31, 1-5 p.m.: and Monday August 1 from 8 a.m-2 p.m.

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RECESS GAMES AND FOOD FOR ALL AGES: July 6, 2-5 p.m. at Dudley Triangle, 2082 W. 73rd Street. July 20, 2-5 p.m. at W. 100th Street and Macon Avenue.

GARDEN WALK
GARDEN WALK: Free self-guided tours of neighborhood gardens on July 10 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Find details at gardenwalkcleveland.org, or begin at Labyrinth Garden at W. 65th and West Clinton Blvd., or at 1308 W. 111th Street.

GRANTS
NEIGHBOR UP ACTION GRANTS: FUELING PEOPLE POWER: Neighbor Up Action Grants fuel the power of neighbors to make the change they want to see in their communities. Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000, and are meant to spur small, grassroots community projects. Grants may be used for a wide variety of projects, and groups are encouraged to think in new ways about what will work in their communities and with whom they might partner. Neighbor Up funds projects in Cleveland and East Cleveland. And thanks to support from the Funders Collaborative on COVID Recovery, we're also able to offer funding for pandemic recovery proposals to groups in Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties. Pandemic recovery includes work that: reduces social isolation and improves mental health; connects with, and mentors youth; or finds innovative ways to increase vaccine uptake in census tracts with low vaccination rates. Grant applications are reviewed, and

funding decisions are made by a committee of Cleveland and East Cleveland residents. Visit neighborupcle.org to join a virtual Grantseeker Workshop. No registration required. **Grantseeker Workshops will be held at the following dates and times:** Thursday, July 21 at 1 p.m.; Monday, July 25 at 6 p.m.; and Thursday, August 4 at 6 p.m. **Grant applications for the next round are due August 15.** Sign up at online grants portal at neighborupcle.org. For more information contact Nicole Hatcher at 216-361-0042 or by email at nicoleh@neighborhoodgrants.org.

THE URGENT ART FUND: SPACES, 2900 Detroit Avenue, announced that the final application cycle in 2022 for **The Urgent Art Fund** is open now. Jurors will award 4 project-based grants of \$4,000 to artists and collectives living and working in Cuyahoga County. Projects should be politically, culturally, and/or socially responsive. Applications are due August 5th. The Urgent Art Fund is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture through the Support for Artists grant. Contact SPACES at: contact@spacescle.org or via gmail.mcsv.net.

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, May 28th, 2022; Cleveland Public Theatre's Station Hope 2022; on grounds of St. John's Episcopal Church, an authenticated stop on the Underground Railroad, at 2600 Church Avenue: Students from the Thomas Jefferson International Newcomers Academy sing a song called "One" about "how we work together as one through life's struggles – and together we are stronger!" The song was written and directed by Sheela Das. Teacher representatives: Ms. Walter, Ms. McComb and Ms. Finch. Performed by: John McGrail, Angelique Anucrite, Christina Baraka, Neema Kingage, Bibisha Kashindi, Chanceline Uwiduhaye, Enock Tulinayo, and Sheela Das.

LIBRARIES

continued from page 2

said the selection of Nelson's book, released in March 2022, was a joint effort. *A Park Connects Us*, displayed behind plexiglass mounted at a height tall enough for children to read, is installed near the sidewalk that circles the library building.

"StoryWalk promotes childhood literacy, family time, and being outside."
-- Angela Guinther
Carnegie West Branch Manager

"This project was made possible by advocacy at City Hall, from Councilman McCormack and the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects, with generous funding from the Thomas H. White Foundation," she said, then added, "Teamwork makes dream work."

Helen Zaluckyj, Carnegie West Branch Children's Librarian, read selections from the book.

"A park invites us, spreads out its arms, and welcomes us in whoever we are. A park greets us with Good Day! Buongiorno! Namaste! ¿Cómo estás! How ya doin', man! And gives a grin, a hug, a nod, a wave - shouts, You want to play?"

"Whoever we are, however, we are, a park holds us and heals us, and loves us, and needs us," Zaluckyj ended with applause.

"StoryWalk promotes childhood literacy, family time, and being outside," said Guinther as the crowd dispersed. "Those things foster healthy families and community. As librarians, we always want people to read and write."

Ward 3 Councilman McCormack praised Guinther for her work with the community and connecting people.

Inclusive and public amenities make for strong and equitable communities, he said.

Sarah Frye, a resident of Ohio City, stood close to the stairs leading to the library with her daughter, eating ice cream and holding a copy of *A Park Connects Us*. The library connects people to so many resources, she acknowledged. "It's the people's library," said Frye.

Her daughter leaned into her, shyly hiding her face.

"I get to read," she said.

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