



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Monday, April 22, 2024; Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless response to Supreme Court Case on homelessness, Franklin Circle Church, 1688 Fulton Road: Josiah Quarles, Director of Organizing and Advocacy for the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, explains why advocates for the homeless are concerned about the Grants Pass vs. Johnson case before the United States Supreme Court.

# Plain Press

Cleveland’s Westside Newspaper

## Advocates rally to oppose criminalization of homelessness

by Chuck Hoven

Thirty Clevelanders responding to a call for a National Week of Action to oppose the criminalization of homelessness held a rally outside of Franklin Circle Church on Fulton Road on Monday April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Homeless advocacy groups calling for the National Week of Action are the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), the National Homeless-

ness Law Center, National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

The call for the National Week of Action came in response to the United States Supreme Court beginning hearings on the case of City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Johnson. A case that the Nation Low Income Housing Coalition calls it “the most significant case about the rights of people experiencing home-

lessness in decades.”

In describing the court case, NLIHC says, “The court will decide whether communities that failed to address the need for affordable housing and shelter can punish unhoused people for sleeping outside with tickets, fines and arrests, even when there are no other safe or adequate housing or shelter options available.”

The local action was organized by the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH). Josiah Quarles, NEOCH Director of Organizing and Advocacy, explained the Supreme Court case, called for local efforts to prevent criminalization of homelessness and urged action to insulate Cuyahoga County from the impact of a possible negative decision by the Supreme Court.

NEOCH Deputy Director Kait McNeeley said NEOCH opposes the criminalization of homelessness and instead calls for more compassionate response which includes increasing the availability of affordable housing and supportive services. She hoped the Supreme Court will rule that criminalizing homelessness is unconstitutional because it violates the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment guarantee against cruel and unusual punishment. She said, if the Grants Pass challenge succeeds, people facing one of the most traumatic points in their lives would have their circumstances criminalized and force them into even

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PHOTO BY MARYANN ROSENBERG

Monday, April 1, 2024; Dyngus Day Cleveland celebration, Happy Dog’s street stage (W. 54<sup>th</sup> to W. 58<sup>th</sup>) and Gordon Green: Rowan Wilson is ready to celebrate Dyngus Day.

## Policy Matters urge tax policies for the people

by Bruce Chechfsky

Ben Stein, communications director at Policy Matters Ohio, held a webinar to celebrate Tax Day and discuss the tax code in Ohio. As recently as April 2023, over 2.9 million Ohioans struggled to pay basic household expenses while burdened with taxes.

According to Policy Matter Ohio, the regressive tax structure disadvantages black and brown people in Ohio due to the labor market and educational siloing. In Ohio, lower-income households pay the largest share of their income in total state and local taxes. They pay a disproportionate share of sales and excise taxes. The bottom 60% pay more taxes than before 2005, while the top 1% pay an average of nearly \$51,000 less.

State legislators, if they choose, could revise the state tax code for all Ohioans and not just the wealthy, said Stein during his introduction.

“The whole point of collecting taxes is to fund the big collaborative projects that benefit everyone,” he said.

Stein quoted Bailey Williams, a researcher focusing on tax policy and tax investments, by adding, “We recognize the importance of public education by funding schools; public safety by fund-

ing our firefighters; and vibrant communities by funding parks, libraries, and protections for our water, air, and soil.”

Republican lawmakers have been busy taking away parental and transgender rights and announcing plans to end the state personal income tax and the commercial activity tax. One proposal would replace the current tax bracket structure with a flat tax rate. Another proposal would eliminate the state income tax.

House Bill 1, which the Speaker of the Ohio House, sponsored by Representative Adam Mathews (R-Lebanon), aims to flatten the income tax rate, something both House and Senate Republicans are hoping to accomplish in this general assembly. Ohio currently has four tax brackets ranging from 2.765% to 3.99%. H.B. 1 eliminates these tiers, instead setting a flat 2.75% rate for all Ohioans. House Republicans and Republicans in the Senate are supporting the bill; Democrats are not convinced. The legislature must seriously consider the consequences of lowering the income tax rate for everyone.

As of 2023, Alaska, Florida, Nevada

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PHOTO BY MARYANN ROSENBERG

Monday, April 1, 2024; Dyngus Day Cleveland celebration, Happy Dog’s street stage (W. 54<sup>th</sup> to W. 58<sup>th</sup>) and Gordon Green: Sign promoting some of the ethnic Polish meats available at the festival – parowki, kielbasa, and serdelki.

## Pilot aims to transform community response to mental health crises

by Abe Kurp

Residents of some Cleveland neighborhoods will soon have access to a new tool to help people struggling with their mental health.

It’s a pilot program called Care Response, a 24/7 crisis response service that will deploy teams of two unarmed people, instead of police, to respond to some mental health and addiction crises. The new program is being created by the

Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County with help from Frontline Service and the Cleveland Department of Public Health (CDPH).

When the pilot launches, tentatively later this summer, residents in the 44102 and 44105 zip codes will be able to access the service by calling 988. This will connect them to a local dispatcher who will assess the situation and, if

necessary, send out a Care Response team.

Angela Cecys of CDPH said they chose these zip codes for the pilot after looking through first responder call data through the year 2023.

“We found that zip codes 44102 and 44105 had the highest number of mental health, substance abuse, and overdose

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PHOTO BY MARYANN ROSENBERG

Monday, April 1, 2024; Dyngus Day Cleveland celebration, Happy Dog’s street stage (W. 54<sup>th</sup> to W. 58<sup>th</sup>) and Gordon Green: Stephanie Sadlon and Sheila Coyne celebrate Dyngus Day.





PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Monday, April 22, 2024; A sign sponsored by the Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County promotes calling 988 for mental health and addiction crisis services.

MENTAL HEALTH PILOT continued from page one

calls in the city,” she said. “44102 on the west side – and 44105 had the highest on the east side.” The Care Response teams responding to these calls will include one licensed social worker and one peer support specialist, which is a person with lived experience of mental illness or addiction who is in recovery and has received special training to help others facing similar problems. The teams will be trained to confront a variety of crisis situations, including someone talking about suicide or about

harming themselves or others, someone overusing alcohol or other drugs, or someone experiencing extreme symptoms of depression, anxiety, or other mental illnesses. At this time, they will only respond to crises involving people who are 18 or older. Rick Oliver, the director of Crisis and Trauma Services at Frontline, also stressed that these teams will not handle emergencies where the person in crisis is in immediate danger of causing harm to themselves or others, such as apparent drug overdoses and active suicide threats. In those cases, he said, residents should continue to call 911.

At a community meeting about the program on March 28 at Michael Zone Recreation Center, Cleveland City Council Member Jenny Spencer – whose ward includes part of the 44102 zip code – asked about how this pilot is different from some other similar programs that already exist. For example, the Cleveland Police Department has co-response units, which are teams of one police officer and one social worker that respond to mental health crises. Oliver stressed that the Care Response units will not have police officers. “Our goal is to not involve law enforcement,” he said. “That’s the whole goal of Care Response: to get a behavioral health response to a behavioral health situation.” Another similar program is Frontline’s own Mobile Crisis Team, which Spencer said she has on speed dial in her cell phone. Oliver said one of the biggest differences with this pilot will be response time. He said the Mobile Crisis Team covers the whole county and is lucky if they can respond to a call that same day. With Care Response, though, the goal is to have teams responding within an hour. He said the pilot includes five teams of two that collectively will cover both zip codes, 24 hours, 7 days a week. “Most of the time there’s only going to be one team available, so our response time is going to be dependent on how many calls we get and the work that they’re doing,” Oliver said. “Again, this is a pilot. Our goal is to demonstrate that



this is an effective model here in Cleveland, and then we can hopefully tap the city for more funding and more staff to do more and expand the program.” One of the residents at the meeting, Timothy Sommerfelt, a paramedic and 17-year veteran of Cleveland EMS, asked about how the Care Response teams would handle situations that involve medical problems. He said national best practice in other cities where the Care Response model has been implemented is to include an EMS professional on the team. Oliver said his teams do receive training about recognizing when to call for medical personnel, but he acknowledged that they do not have medical credentials and can’t provide that kind of care themselves. Another resident at the meeting, who said he is a returning citizen with a felony record, asked about what the Care Response teams will do to make someone like himself feel comfortable

and safe. In particular, he highlighted this county’s history of police shootings of unarmed Black and brown people. Oliver said that his teams are focused on mental health and that they do not check people’s criminal records. He added that the crisis response teams under his supervision only refer calls to 911 when necessary. “I monitor every time Mobile Crisis calls the police,” he said. “Of our 1,500 calls a month, it’s about 30 times. It’s a small percentage, and usually it’s not someone that we’ve seen. It’s someone who calls and says they’re doing something right now, and we have no choice. And our goal is to even back that off – to have behavioral health people take that first shot at trying to engage people in distress.” After the pilot launches later this year, it will last for about a year, followed by an evaluation period, when the community will help decide whether to continue or even expand the program.

**ARTS COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER:** The Pivot Art Center (2937 W 25 St.) offers free drop-in art making and gallery exploration for the whole family during open hours: Fridays 2pm-7pm, Saturdays and Sundays 10 am-5 pm. For group visits during open and non-open hours, email [commartsinfo@clevelandart.org](mailto:commartsinfo@clevelandart.org). For a full list of upcoming events, visit [pivotartcenter.com](http://pivotartcenter.com). **FAMILY OPEN STUDIO:** Arthouse Inc. (3119 Denison Ave.) offers a family-friendly, pay-what-you-can art workshop on the third Saturday of each month from 1pm-3 pm. This month’s Family Open Studio will be on May 18. Children are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. Visit [arthouseinc.org](http://arthouseinc.org) to sign up or call 216-398-8556 for more information. **FREE CONCERT:** Presented by Arts Renaissance Tremont, the Verona String Quartet will perform Sunday, May 5

at 4 pm at St. Wendelin Church (2281 Columbus Rd.) For more information, visit [artconcerts.org](http://artconcerts.org). Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. **MADISON ART MARKET:** Come browse local crafts and goods from your favorite artists and makers at this outdoor craft fair from 11 am-5pm on Saturday, May 11 next to Good Earth Farm (9600 Madison Ave). **MUSIC@MAIN:** Baroque music group Les Délices returns to the Cleveland Public Library Main Branch (325 Superior Ave.) for a free concert titled “Sounds of Sancho’s London” with music composed and published by Charles Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780) including Scottish reels, country dances, and parlor songs inspired by Shakespeare. Saturday, May 11 at 2 pm in the Popular North Reading Room. **ST. PAUL’S STREET STUDIO:** Missing a chance to play live music or share poetry in person? Check out the

St. Paul’s Street Studio and join us to share music/spoken word in a peaceful atmosphere of respect. We provide a piano, drums, acoustic guitars, and microphones...and an encouraging circle of listeners. All are welcome! The event is held at St. Paul’s Community Church, 4427 Franklin Blvd from 1 pm - 2:30 pm in the sanctuary. This month’s session is on Saturday, May 11. For more information, contact Ian Heisey at 216-973-1486 or [heisey2140@sbcglobal.net](mailto:heisey2140@sbcglobal.net). **STATION HOPE:** Cleveland Public Theatre presents Station Hope, Saturday, May 25, 7-10 p.m., St. John’s Episcopal Church, 2600 Church Avenue. Free and open to all. Station Hope is a free jubilant community festival celebrating Cleveland’s social justice heritage and exploring contemporary struggles for freedom and equity in the form of short theatrical pieces, storytelling, music, dance and visual art installations on the grounds of St. John’s Episcopal Church, Cleveland’s first authenticated underground Railroad site. **EDUCATION**

**BEGINNERS’ ART FOR ADULTS:** This free, interactive class allows adults to try their hand at visual art in a no-pressure setting. Each week, we’ll explore new materials and techniques, so feel free to join anytime. The library provides all supplies – no experience is required! Please register at [cpl.org/locations/Jefferson](http://cpl.org/locations/Jefferson). The next class will be Saturday, May 18 from 2-4 p.m. at the Jefferson Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (850 Jefferson Avenue). Registration is required. Questions? Call 216-623-7004 or email [jefferson.branch@cpl.org](mailto:jefferson.branch@cpl.org). **FREE BOOKS** for kids ages 0-5: Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of Ohio mails kids one free book each month until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Any child in Ohio between birth and age 5 is eligible for the program. To sign up, visit: [Ohio.imaginationLibrary.org](http://Ohio.imaginationLibrary.org). **FREE CLASSES FOR SENIORS:** Through Program 60, Ohio residents age 60 and older can register for regularly scheduled credit and noncredit courses at Tri-C on an audit, tuition-free, space available basis. Must register in person at an Enrollment Center. [tri-c.edu/program60](http://tri-c.edu/program60), 216-987-6000, [enroll@tri-c.edu](mailto:enroll@tri-c.edu). **SEEDS OF LITERACY** offers free adult basic education and GED classes and one-on-one tutoring. Services are available at both their westside (3104 W 25 St, third floor) and eastside locations (13815 Kinsman Ave). Call 216-661-7950 or visit [seedsofliteracy.org](http://seedsofliteracy.org).

**org** to enroll. **2GEN:** Are you a parent or guardian struggling to find or keep stable, well-paying employment? Do you have a child ages 16-21 who is at risk of delayed high school graduation? 2GEN at Tri-C offers personal and academic support to help adults and their teen children earn a high school diploma or equivalent and an in-demand work credential. For more information: [seleina.tiggler@tri-c.edu](mailto:seleina.tiggler@tri-c.edu) or 216-987-3217. **ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE CHANGE TALK:** The Cleveland Westside Village invites the public to Here Comes the Rain: Climate Impacts in Northeast Ohio, presented by Scott Hardy, PhD of the Ohio Sea Grant College program. Monday, May 6 at 3 pm at the Carnegie West library, doors open at 2:30. Be prepared to leave with greater knowledge of and appreciation for our great lake. **ENVIRONMENTAL HEROES** is a free after-school field science experience for middle and high school students run by Case Western Reserve University’s Leonard Gelfand STEM Center (10900 Euclid Ave). Self-motivated participants will engage in real science with the guidance of experts, collecting and analyzing environmental data in the Lake Erie watershed. Participants will be selected in a competitive application and interview process. Completed applications for the 2024-’25 school year are due June 30. For more information, visit [gelfand.case.edu](http://gelfand.case.edu) or contact Kathryn Kwiatkowski: [Kmk21@case.edu](mailto:Kmk21@case.edu), 216-368-5075. **NUISANCE WILDLIFE TRAPPING:** The City of Cleveland Division of Animal Care and Control offers trapping of “nuisance” wildlife (skunks, groundhogs, opossums, and raccoons) from May 1 through October 31. These animals are euthanized and disposed of, if removed from your property. Traps are loaned for a \$20 refundable fee. (Note: this service does not handle animals trapped in your home. It is your responsibility to handle that situation.) Call 216-664-3069. **RIVERSWEEP:** Join Canalway Partners, dozens of other community groups, and hundreds of volunteers on Saturday, May 4 at 9 am for this annual litter clean-up, to help keep garbage out of our beloved rivers and lake. Various clean-up sites are located along the Cuyahoga River and its tributaries. To pick a location and to sign up to volunteer, visit [canalwaypartners.com](http://canalwaypartners.com). Volunteer spots are limited. When you arrive at your chosen clean-up site, the

site leader will greet you with an event t-shirt and provide cleaning supplies and further instructions. Please only register at one location. Registered volunteers will receive an email invitation to a Thank You Party after the clean-up event. Don’t forget to RSVP to the party! Questions? Contact Canalway Partners at 216-520-1825. **EVENTS BIKE-A-THON:** Join Metro West Community Development Organization and your fellow community members for the Stockyard Neighborhood Bike-A-Thon, on Saturday, May 14 from 10 am-2 pm beginning at Clark School (5550 Clark Ave). Registration begins at 10 am, with a helmet decorating station and other activities, followed by a neighborhood ride starting at noon. Note: All participants under the age of 18 must have a release form signed by a parent. All participants under 8 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Participants aged 10 or under who pre-register online will receive a free helmet. **BIKE FIX-A-THON:** Neighbors have organized this free bike repair event for Friday, May 3 from 4 pm-7 pm at Cudell Rec. Center (1910 West Blvd). Free minor repairs and tune-ups for the first 50 bikes provided by Ohio City Bicycle Co-op. All ages are welcome. Rain or shine! Pre-register at [bit.ly/cudell-fix-a-thon](http://bit.ly/cudell-fix-a-thon). **CLEVELAND MARATHON:** This annual event returns to downtown Cleveland and the near westside on Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19. The 5k, 10k, and kids run will be on Saturday, followed by the full and half marathons on Sunday. To register for the races, learn how to get involved, or see info about road closures, visit [clevelandmarathon.com](http://clevelandmarathon.com). **FREE COMIC BOOK DAY:** At this annual event – held on Saturday, May 4 this year – fans can visit a participating independent comic book store to pick up a selection of free comic books and participate in a variety of free activities. Participating nearby stores include Carol and John’s Comic Book Shop in Kamm’s Corners (17462 Lorain Ave.) and Superscript Comics and Games in Lakewood (13361 Madison). To see a list of the comics that will be available this year or to find other participating stores nearby, visit [freecomicbookday.com](http://freecomicbookday.com). **SENIOR DAY:** The Cleveland Department of Aging will present the

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is a community based nonprofit organization seeking college interns and volunteers to assist with flyer distribution, concession stand, pick up/drop off food donations and other activities!

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HOMELESSNESS

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more unsafe conditions.

NEOCH’s Advocate for Justice Strategy Mike Jones spoke of the barriers individuals who have a criminal record experience when applying for housing. He urged that those that have served their time should be given a second chance and not be subject to housing discrimination.

Pastor of Franklin Circle Church Rev. Richard Hinkelman urged following the example of Jesus Christ in bringing dignity to those whom society has shunned. He urged Clevelanders to “Do something for someone to affirm their dignity and humanity.”

Emily Collins, Senior Advisor to Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, thanked NEOCH organizers for inviting the City of Cleveland to participate in the rally. She said the City of Cleveland stands in solidarity with Cleveland’s homeless population. Collins cited the Home for Every Neighbor initiative announced by Mayor Bibb in February of this year. Collins said the “answer to homelessness is housing.” She said the City of Cleveland is looking at best practices in other cities and she said when adapting new models which she feels Cleveland must focus on housing.

In implementing its Home for Every Neighbor initiative, the City of Cleveland issued a request for proposals that were due in late March for partners who would help to implement the program.

A statement from the City of Cleveland outlines goals for the initiative: *The City hopes this new initiative will rehouse 150 or more unsheltered Cleveland residents within the first 18 months. Once fully implemented, the initiative aims to decrease transition time between unsheltered status and a successful permanent housing placement to 30-60 days, part of which will be accomplished via a “Housing Surge”*

*process. The “Surge” is a 4–6-week process that will consist of various phases including a site assessment and inventory, initial stakeholder outreach to brief on responsibilities, multiple engagement sessions with unsheltered residents, and, eventually, a site clearance/rehousing schedule. The various stakeholders – including a project manager, outreach groups, landlord engagement team, transportation partners, first responders, and others – will have unique roles culminating in a “Surge” week, with the goal of getting unsheltered individuals into safe, stable housing as quickly as possible. The City is hopeful, with external support, to increase housing options as well, which could include: • Building permanent supportive housing units, with at least 25 within the “safe haven” model. • Developing affordable housing units to meet specific needs of those exiting unsheltered situations, with low-barrier accommodations in place. • Development of a full season centralized Navigation Center that will serve as a specialized intake location for short-term crisis response with on-site health services to meet unique immediate needs, while also helping develop long-term sustainable housing plans upon exit*

The City of Cleveland outlines the strategy it will employ to reach these goals:

*The City’s strategy consists of four key components: • Engage – Adopting and implementing an intensive, tailored engagement strategy that will consist of deploying various street outreach teams to targeted areas to connect unsheltered residents with resources and emergency, temporary, or other short-term housing options. • Collaborate – Working with the County’s Office of Homeless Services, and other providers in the Continuum of Care, to facilitate information-sharing, jointly evaluate*



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Monday, April 22, 2024; Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless response to Supreme Court Case on homelessness, Franklin Circle Church, 1688 Fulton Road: Kait McNeeley, Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH) Deputy Director, says NEOCH is opposed to the criminalization of homelessness. She said penalizing people for being homeless would violate the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution which forbids cruel and unusual punishment.

*programs, and make improvements to services based on data-driven results. The City will also leverage public-private partnerships to obtain additional funding, build up programming, and improve workforce and educational opportunities. • Incentivize – Linking housing repair programs with landlord incentives as a recruitment tool to increase participation in*

*rental assistance, utility assistance, hotel/motel vouchers, and other related programs. The City will also work with developers to ensure that certain criteria are met to make projects more accommodating to residents exiting unsheltered situations. • Build – Renovating existing facilities, rehabbing and converting repurposed buildings, and constructing new af-*

*fordable housing units. The City will also explore ways to improve overall services that may be provided during the housing process (e.g. transportation, meal boxes, legal aid, case management, health provider options, childcare, etc.).*

**Editor’s Note:** Those seeking shelter in Cuyahoga County can call 211 for assistance.

Mayor Reaches out to Friends of Cudell Park

To the editor:

On Monday, April 22nd, Earth Day, Mayor Bibb personally called members of the Friends of Cudell Commons Park group to convey that he’s been following what’s going on with Cudell Park and that the Mayor’s Office of Capital Projects (MOCAP) and CMSD are working on a new design for the school that would save trees and greenspace at the park and that they “will be in touch” about setting up a meeting with the community, Ms. Samaria Rice, Councilmembers Jenny Spencer and Danny Kelly, and the teachers and parents at Marion-Seltzer Elementary School.

When asked if Mayor Bibb knew if these plans would save most of the trees and the greenspace at Cudell Park he said that ultimately, he will default to Dr. Warren Morgan and the CMSD School Board but saving trees like the Bald Cypress and others at the northern

end of the park and preserving green space is “important” to him.

The Friends are looking forward to this overdue meeting and are hopeful for meaningful changes to the site plan that preserves the Park and its trees.

We ask all Friends of Cudell Commons Park to keep the pressure on Mayor Bibb and CMSD CEO Dr. Morgan so they know that we will hold them to their words. The community deserves a new school and be able to keep its historic park for generations to come.

Want to show your support? Join Friends of Cudell Commons Park as they speak at City Council this upcoming Monday, April 29th at 7 pm at Cleveland City Hall!

*Friends of Cudell Park*

Clevelanders are right to doubt promises of grandiose development plans

by Chuck Hoven

Cleveland residents have a right to be skeptical when offering their thoughts about tax subsidies in support of big downtown lakefront and riverfront projects. Specifically coming to mind are the Shore to Core to Shore Tax Increment Financing plans put forth by the Justin Bibb Administration and passed by Cleveland City Council and the rehabilitation of the Cleveland Browns’ stadium.

The Shore to Core to Shore Tax Increment Financing proposal put forth by Mayor Justin Bibb’s administration projects raising between \$3.5 billion and \$7.2 billion over the 42-year life of the Tax Increment Financing. If anything is left over after paying interest on

the debt and funding infrastructure for lakefront and riverfront development, the Bibb administration and Cleveland City Council have promised that 35% of the leftovers will go to Cleveland neighborhoods.

With the urging of Mayor Bibb, Cleveland City Council passed Tax Increment Financing (TIF) legislation that

would take all the non-school portion of new growth in the property taxes in a district that includes most of downtown and part of the Near West Side and use it for infrastructure development for projects planned for the lakefront and riverfront. The major proposals put forth by private developers that would

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Saturday, April 20, 2024; 4434 Lorain Avenue: The former Nunn Family Funeral Home, built in 1865, succumbed to a fire on April 10th and has been demolished. The My Place Group, headed by President Chad Kertesz, proposed development, 45 West, called for the building to be one of three buildings that would house 87 apartments.

Local documentary recounts Cleveland’s June 8, 1953 twister

This up-coming June 8, 2024, will be the 71st anniversary of an F-3 tornado that cut through Cleveland’s West Side. 1953 was a unique year for record size tornadoes that killed hundreds across the United States. These monsters devastated major cities

like Waco, Texas, Flint, Michigan and Worcester, Massachusetts. Except for maybe coming across photos of a twister in a book or seeing one in a video, most Cleveland residents have never witnessed an actual tornado before. So, on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1953, around 9 PM

in the evening, when a tornado warning came over the radio and television airwaves, the majority of Clevelanders did not know how to respond. To make matters worse, a Cleveland TV network refused to interrupt the number one watched

television show in America, “I Love Lucy”, in order to notify its viewers about the approaching twister. It wasn’t until the electricity went out in the city that people began to take notice that something out of the ordinary was taking place. However, by that time, it was too late. As the super-cell moved over the city, it began pelting the Cleveland’s West Side neighborhoods with softball-size hail, damaging automobiles bodies and smashing out windshields. Then an eerie silence settled over the neighborhoods as the twister approached, sucking off roofs and twisting 100-year-old trees out of the ground and casting them into the streets.

This system produced several twisters earlier in the day in Western Ohio as it slowly moved northeast towards Cleveland. Air traffic controllers originally spotted the twister over the runways at Hopkins Airport. They watched in amazement as the funnel moved over the City of Linndale towards Cleveland. The tornado then touched down in a new development between West 130 and West 117 Streets, sweeping away whole neighborhoods, including sucking an infant out of its crib and out through the bedroom window.

The next day, it was reported in the newspapers that these newer homes were not properly bolted down to the foundation by the builders, leaving them susceptible

to strong up-lifting winds. The Twister then continued towards West 58 Street, where it damaged many houses and flattened garages. After whirling down Franklin Ave. the twister crossed over the Cuyahoga River and into the downtown area, crashing into a charity festival on Vincent Avenue.

Eventually, the tornado dissipated over Lake Erie after exiting the city near East 55 Street. The following day, that same storm system produced another tornado that killed close to 100 people in Worcester, Massachusetts. What’s also interesting about 1953 is that there was an increase of nuclear testing in the Nevada Desert. Some officials even went on record, saying that they believed that this increase of testing caused some of these giant twisters hitting major cities that year.

A documentary about this Cleveland Tornado will air on Spectrum, Channel 1025, (Cleveland Community Access Corporation) Mondays at 9:PM and Cox Cable on Channel 45 Fridays at 8PM. For more information Call: 440 888-8327 or Email: [Kevin@shockerenterprises.com](mailto:Kevin@shockerenterprises.com) The newspaper clippings are from The Cleveland Press.

The one with the twister was captured in Vermillion, Ohio that same day and was believed to be the same twister that struck Cleveland.

Are prominent citizens still buried at the Old Burying Ground at Pearl-Memphis intersection in Old Brooklyn?

by Lynette Filips

This month we continue to look at the history of the northwest corner of Pearl Rd. and Memphis Ave. which the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) is seeking to “revitalize” with a \$31 million new construction project. It is the most historic section of Cleveland’s Old Brooklyn neighborhood and has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 2005. A picture of St. Luke’s United Church of Christ, one of the numerous historic commercial and institutional buildings on Pearl Rd. (and, also on

Broadview Rd.) included in the Historic District designation, accompanies the online listing of the “South Brooklyn Commercial District”.

While OBCDC pursues funding for a plan to tear down the major portion of this corner to erect a four-story building with commercial space on the first floor, residential space on the upper floors, and a brewery in the church proper portion of the former St. Luke’s, another group of people in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood is still hoping to “Save Our Historic District.”

This fifth in a series of articles will

shed additional light on the history of downtown Old Brooklyn in the hope that someone in authority will realize that adaptive reuse of the existing buildings is superior to tearing down most of them and replacing the demo-ed area with new construction. Adaptive reuse would accomplish the same goals of adding new residential space, updated commercial space, and new socialization space to downtown Old Brooklyn, but it would do so by using the existing historic structures. It is the method which has been employed in downtown Cleveland to put new residential, hotel,

retail, and restaurant space in buildings which formerly housed department stores, banks, and other businesses.

In the first of the four previous articles, I wrote about the legacy of three generations of the Gates family of Millers in Old Brooklyn. Jeremiah, the patriarch, arrived in Brooklyn Township in 1816. He built the original portion of his brick home at 3506 Memphis Ave. in 1820. It is the oldest home in Old Brooklyn and is a City of Cleveland Landmark. Jeremiah’s son Charles’ home has been demolished but his grandson Howard’s home at 4248 W. 35th St. is still standing. Since they are residential rather than commercial buildings, they aren’t included in the National Register’s Commercial District, but they are important components of the area’s historical nature.

In the second of the four previous articles, I wrote about the precursor of Pearl Road United Methodist Church. It was located on the north side of the Big Creek valley where, at approximately the same time, many settlers with the surnames Fish and Brainard (as well as other names) had been settling. In 1814, a group began meeting in each other’s homes for classes in Methodism and in 1818 they organized as Brooklyn Methodist Episcopal Church. It was the first official congregation in Brooklyn Township and the first Methodist congregation in the entire Cleveland area.


In the third of the four previous articles, I wrote about Brighton Methodist Episcopal Church, the initial name of the first Methodist Church south of the Big Creek valley. The Methodist settlers south of Big Creek wanted a church

on their side of the Valley and in 1844 they purchased an existing building in the community and founded Brighton Methodist Episcopal Church. Their surnames included Brainard, Fish, Gates, Hinckley, and Chester. The Methodist Episcopalals dedicated a new church building in the grassy area (in front of today’s Pearl Road United Methodist Church) in August of 1897. That space was remodeled in 1924, soon after a Department of Religious Education had been erected behind it. Everything was dedicated in November of 1924 but in February of 1925, the church was destroyed by fire. It was never rebuilt.

In article three I also began to write about the (Old) Burying/Burial Ground which was located at the corner of Pearl Rd. and Memphis Ave just south of the Methodists’ property. A very early cemetery, it was referred to as an Indian Burial Ground in Kathryn Gasior Wilmer’s book, *Old Brooklyn New, Book II*, written in the early 1980s for the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation. (Perhaps the cemetery originally was an Indian burial ground, but we do not currently have any official documentation about that.) In April of 2022 Historical Society of Old Brooklyn president Constance “Connie” Ewazen contacted local historian William G. “Bill” Krejci because *Buried beneath Cleveland; Lost Cemeteries of Cuyahoga Count* is among the ten books he has authored/co-authored.

In the fourth of the four previous articles, I wrote more specific information about the (Old) Burying/Burial

continued on page 6



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Legal Aid has new tool to protect Cleveland residents and neighborhoods from blight

by Tonya Sams

There is a new tool to help Cleveland improve the conditions of its housing stock.

As properties change hands frequently, there are more out-of-state buyers purchasing homes to be used as rental properties. Absentee owners can easily neglect the buildings, allowing them to fall further into disrepair. To combat this, the City of Cleveland passed a set of ordinances in February, called the Residents First Legislative Package. The new ordinances will hold owners of rental and vacant properties more accountable for the maintenance of their properties.

“It’s easy to buy properties remotely if you are an out-of-town investor,” said Barbara Reitzloff, Supervising Attorney in The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland’s Housing Practice Group. “If the owner is in another city or country, they can buy properties sight-unseen and collect the rent by Cash App. They may never visit the property and try to manage it from a distance. This is bad for the tenants and for the neighborhood near those buildings.”

The new ordinances require owners of rental properties to register the property with the city. The owner must name a Local Agent in Charge (LAIC). If the owner is a person living in Cuyahoga or a neighboring county, the owner may be the LAIC. Otherwise, the LAIC must be a person who lives in Cuyahoga County. This agent is responsible for the maintenance and management of the property.

After registering the property, the owner of residential rental property must apply for a Certificate Approving Rental Occupancy. To be approved the property must be lead-safe, have no serious violations, be current on property taxes, and meet other requirements. If the city grants the Certificate, the property can be rented. If not, it is illegal to rent the property. If the property becomes non-compliant, the city can revoke the certification. The registration and certification must be done annually.

The ordinance also includes a Vacant Property Registry. Owners of vacant properties must register the property yearly, appoint a LAIC, and have the property inspected by the city’s Building and Housing Department. The owner must keep the building secure and the property free from eyesores like graffiti. The owners must let the city know what their plans are for the property. The city can require the owner to pay a bond in case the city needs to secure the property or perform other maintenance.

There are penalties for violating the ordinances.

“The city has more tools to enforce the building and housing codes. The ordinance expands the city’s ability to write tickets or violation notices,” said Barbara. “The city can issue criminal code violations to the owner and or even the LAIC. The city can collect fines that can be converted into a civil judgment and then a lien can be put on the property.”

If you have quick questions regarding tenant rights and rental housing, call Legal Aid’s Tenant Info Line at 440-210-4533 or 216-861-5955. Need more help? Call Legal Aid at 888-817-3777 during normal business hours or by applying online 24/7 at [lasclev.org/contact/](https://lasclev.org/contact/).

*Tonya Sams is a Development & Communications Manager at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland*



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, April 20, 2024; 3279 W. 58<sup>th</sup> Street: This house in the Stockyard neighborhood was severely damaged by fire over three months ago.

City Council approves funds for May Dugan refugee program

At its April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Cleveland City Council approved providing the May Dugan Center \$50,000 in funding to provide services to refugees arriving in Cleveland. The funds will be used by the HIAS program (formerly the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) which is “the Jewish humanitarian organization that provides critical services to refugees, asylum seekers, and others from 23 countries around the world.”

HIAS is the oldest refugee resettlement organization in the world and has had a presence in Cleveland for almost 100 years and recently affiliated with May Dugan. The refugees are specifically se-

lected and supported by the State Department to come to the United States, and these refugees enter the United States with full legal status.

May Dugan is expected to resettle 200 people in 2024. Once at full capacity, it will receive up to 500 people to Cleveland each year. Specifically, the May Dugan team assists people from the time they arrive at the airport through their first 90 days in Cleveland. They help the refugees secure housing, obtain food and household items, enroll in schools and English classes, find employment, and otherwise integrate into the United States.

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<sup>1</sup>Actual monthly payment for above example is based on 252 month term and is \$52.95 at a fixed APR of 2.99%. Rates effective as of 2/1/2024 and are subject to change. <sup>2</sup>Fixed APR is 2.99%. Homeowners insurance required. Flood insurance required, if applicable. Maximum LTV 85%. Minimum loan amount \$1,000. Maximum loan amount \$9,900. 21-year term. A Third Federal Home Repair Loan is available as a first or second lien on owner-occupied primary residences and can be the only HELOC on your property. \$0 annual fee and \$10 minimum monthly payment. Borrowers must meet certain income, geographic and other requirements to qualify. Product features subject to change without notice. ©2024 Third Federal.





PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, April 20, 2024; 9926 Lorain Avenue: Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center (ASC3) and PC's For People, housed at 9926 Lorain Avenue, joined with Westtown Community Development Corporation to host a Digital Diversity Dialogue on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Digital Diversity Dialogue luncheon tackles digital divide in Cleveland

by Chuck Hoven

The Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center at 9926 Lorain Avenue hosted a Digital Diversity Dialogue luncheon on April 24<sup>th</sup> billed as “a gathering of thought leaders and organizations dedicated to advancing Digital Equity and Inclusion in Cleveland.” Those in attendance came from a variety of nonprofit and government agencies. The speakers offered an update on Cleveland’s efforts to provide low-cost internet access to residents throughout the city. They also received an update on the failure of Congress to continue to fund the federal Affordable Connectivity Program through which 40% of Cleveland residents received internet access, often at no cost, due to a \$30 monthly subsidy from the United States government. Residents signed up for the Affordable Connectivity Program’s internet access may start receiving bills within the next month. Those facing problems with continuing access can call the Digital Navigational Hotline at 216-307-6990.

Ashbury Senior Computer Commu-

nity Center (ASC3) Executive Director Wanda Davis shared some of the history of ASC3 and its efforts to bring its services to the West Side of Cleveland. The organization which started on the East Side of Cleveland in 2002 has served over 9,000 students. It has helped 2,800 people to adapt to using broadband for the first time and has helped to provide 2,200 individuals with new or refurbished devices. ASC3’s Board of Directors’ President Shaletha Mitchell said ASC3 is engaged in the “challenging but rewarding work of bringing Clevelanders into the digital space.” She stressed the importance of internet access in the digital age. In its new West Side home at 9926 Lorain Avenue, ASC3 is sharing space with PCs for People, which has partnered with ASC3 for the past five years. PCs for People’s Director Bevin Bowersmith said the organization provides affordable devices for individuals that meet income requirements. The organization receives corporate donations of technology and offers a wiping service

to remove the donor’s data from the devices. ASC3 offers 8-week computer and internet skills classes and a free computer upon completing the classes. The organization also provides custom classes to meet the needs of various organizations. Rose Zitiello, Executive Director of Westtown Community Development Corporation offered a little history of the Lorain Station neighborhood where the ASC3 office is now located. She stressed the importance of the work that ASC3 ad PCs for People were doing in the neighborhood and told those in attendance that Westtown would be moving to the upstairs of the building at 9926 Lorain Avenue on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Director of Connecting Your Community Bill Callahan shared some of the history of introducing neighborhood residents to using computers. As Executive Director of the Stockyard Area Development Corporation in 1994 operating out of the old Gilbert School Building on W. 58<sup>th</sup> in the Stockyard

neighborhood, Callahan said the federal government was implementing the Welfare to Work program and many residents were being told they needed computer skills, specifically being able to use a spreadsheet to get a job. To help, Callahan said Stockyard Area Development Corporation began to obtain donations of computers, offering 10 hours of computer classes and a computer for residents to take home for \$40. Callahan noted that now, 30 years later, the 44102-zip code, in which he worked in in 1994 and that ASC3 now has its office located, is on the top of a national list of areas where there are high numbers of residents without internet access. He said 44102 has about 19,000 households and about 7,000 of those households have no desktop or laptop computer in the home. An equal number don’t have internet access, he said. Callahan emphasized that the task of bringing people into the digital age “is not one of those things where you can say let’s do a program and we will have it fixed.” City of Cleveland Digital Inclusion Manager Ricardo Reinoso spoke of the City of Cleveland’s use of federal Emergency Broad Band funds provided through the federal Affordable Connectivity Program to partner with the nonprofit organizations to help residents access the internet. He said the City of Cleveland is also using \$20 million in American Rescue Act program funding to work with Digital C to provide fiber and low-cost internet to every block in the City of Cleveland. He said by June of 2025, Digital C should be rolled out citywide. Reinoso said that City of Cleveland plans call for replacing all computer labs in Cleveland recreation centers with new ones by next year. He suggested that on days when the recreation centers are being used as heating or cooling centers because of weather conditions, the City should open the computer labs for 24-hour use. Cleveland Foundation Chief of Technology and Platform Solutions Leon Wilson said he sees improving digital access for residents as a three-legged stool: access to affordable devices, digital literacy training and affordable broadband internet. When he met folks from PCs for People in St. Paul Minnesota, he asked what it would take to get them to come to Cleveland. He also noted that Cleveland is lucky to have two nonprofit internet service providers – Digital C which has the contract to connect most of Cleveland to the internet for \$18 a month, and PCs for People

which already has a contract providing the Old Brooklyn neighborhood with internet access for \$14 per month. Director of Community Outreach and Education for Digital C Ladonna Norris said that engineers working for the program say they are ahead of schedule and are confident that the entire City of Cleveland will have access to high quality internet for \$18 per month within the next 14 months. Norris said she is a resident of 44102 and will be signing up for the \$18 a month internet service as soon as it gets to her street. She said she is currently paying \$80 a month for internet service. Norris said residents can text, call or email Digital C to see when their block will be getting service. She said you can even sign up to get contacted when your neighborhood has access. Digital C’s phone number is 216-777-3859. The Digital C website is [www.digitalc.org](http://www.digitalc.org) Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Information Technology Officer Curtis Timmons said during the pandemic CMSD was able to provide 20,000 computers to our students and created hotspots in the community for families that didn’t have internet access in their homes. Timmons expressed concern that there wasn’t a sustainable model for keeping the households where students live connected to the internet. He said, the money that allowed families to connect to the internet has dried up already. Speakers at the Digital Diversity Dialogue offered resources that residents and community organizations can explore to learn more about efforts to close the digital divide in Cleveland. Some of the resources to explore are Connect Your Community’s website at: [www.connectyourcommunity.org](http://www.connectyourcommunity.org). The site offers updates on news about efforts to provide digital access. Greater Cleveland’s online digital skills learning site: <https://cleveland.digitallearn.org> The National Digital Inclusion Alliance that has a list serve, offers information on digital advocacy efforts and can help answer questions such as the availability of digital learning classes in other languages at [www.digitalinclusion.org](http://www.digitalinclusion.org). Leon Wilson of the Cleveland Foundation urged organizations or individuals interested in getting involved in closing the digital divide in Cleveland to get involved with the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Coalition. He described the organization as a loosely managed group that comes together to discuss national, state, and local policies related to digital access.

OLD BURYING GROUND continued from page 4 Ground which I had had gleaned from Bill Krejci. He has been researching this former burial ground for another

book he’s working on and is sharing his research with me for this series. Thanks to Bill I could report that the (Old) Burying/Burial Ground ran along today’s Memphis Ave. to the end of today’s Greenline Building; then behind

today’s St. Luke’s Church building to the side wall of St. Luke’s educational annex; then along St. Luke’s sidewalk to today’s Pearl Rd.; and then along Pearl Rd. back to Memphis Ave. Bill also supplied me with the names (and dates of transfers) of all the owners of the property on which this first public cemetery in Brighton was located, beginning with Warren Young on whose farm the cemetery land was originally, and ending with the Western Reserve Association of the United Church of Christ (in May of 2013). This month I will continue to discuss the Old Burying/Burial Ground. It closed in 1836 when Brookmere Cemetery was established on August 23rd of the same year, and the deceased in the Old Burying Ground were to have been exhumed and reburied in Brookmere Cemetery. Based on his headstone research at Brookmere, Bill has given me the names of five people who’ve obviously been reinterred. Because the dates of their deaths preceded the establishment of Brookmere Cemetery, we can conclude that: eighteen-year-old Sherrod Ross, who died in 1824; six-month-old William Ozias Case, who died in 1830; fifty-one-year-old Thaddeus Ross, who died in 1830; seventy-four-year-old Amos Brainard, who died in 1832; and twenty-five-year-old Lucien Snow, who died in 1835 were reinterred at Brookmere from an earlier burial place which was probably the (Old) Burying/Burial Ground. Amos Brainard was a veteran of the Revolu-

tionary War. Although no burial stones at Brookmere Cemetery have been located for them, by looking on the *findagrave.com* website, Bill has also learned about three other people whose deaths preceded the establishment of Brookmere Cemetery but who are recorded as being buried there. They are: Manoris Akin, who died in 1819; Martha Akins Brainard, who died in 1820; and Jabin Brainerd, who died in 1828. All three were probably initially interred in the Old Burying/Burial Ground. The biggest question at this point, though, is – “After the establishment of Brookmere Cemetery, were any of the people interred in the Old Burying/Burial Ground left behind at the time of the transfer of bodies to Brookmere?” Here’s how local cemetery researcher and author Bill Krejci responded to that question – Since being contacted by Lynette for the March article, I decided to take another look at deaths that occurred in and around South Brooklyn prior to 1836. After a few days, I had compiled a list of more than thirty individuals, whose names do not appear in any of the surrounding cemeteries. Their surnames include a preponderance of Brainards, plus Akin (Akins/Aiken), Beebe, Cooper, Cushman, Mason, Nason, Vaughn, Winfield and Young. There’s a very good likelihood that they were originally laid to rest in the Old Burying Ground on the northwest corner of Memphis and Pearl. It’s also possible they were moved

to Brookmere, but it may also be that their graves remain undisturbed on that corner lot. Two years ago, while researching veterans of the Revolutionary War who were buried in Cuyahoga County, I stumbled upon one Richard Cooper, whose death notice in “The Cleveland Whig” newspaper stated that he died in Brooklyn on February 28, 1836, at the age of 91. According to his service record, Cooper enlisted on May 14, 1778, at Haverstraw, New York in the 5th Regiment of the New York Line. He was honorably discharged three years later at Jockey Hollow in Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey. He served at the Battle of Fort Montgomery and was in the Battle of Hogback in Tioga County, New York, while participating in General Sullivan’s expedition. He also fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, and was present at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia on October 19, 1781. Following the War, Richard Cooper settled in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, but in 1834, to be with his son James, he relocated in Brooklyn, Ohio, where he died two years later. As no specific area of Brooklyn Township was named in his death notice, establishing a place of burial seemed like an impossibility. But in taking a second look at his service record, I discovered a name on his pension papers that finally answered that question. When Cooper transferred his pension payments from continued on page 8



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Monday, April 1, 2024; Dyngus Day Cleveland celebration, Happy Dog's street stage (W. 54<sup>th</sup> to W. 58<sup>th</sup>) and Gordon Green: This sign welcomes guests to the Dyngus Day Cleveland celebration.

DEVELOPMENT PROMISES continued from page 3

benefit from this public infrastructure have come from the Cleveland Browns' owners – the Haslams- - and the Cleveland Cavalier's owner Dan Gilbert.

Mayor Justin Bibb and Cleveland City Council also are negotiating with Cleveland Brown's owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam over the future of the City of Cleveland owned stadium on the lakefront. The Haslams are reportedly asking for \$600 million in public subsidies toward the cost of a \$1.2 billion renovation of the Browns' Stadium. The current stadium is less than 30 years old.

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

The City of Cleveland administration and Cleveland City Council have promised that if anything is left over after spending TIF revenue on the Shore to Core to Shore Plan, that 35% of the leftovers will spent in Cleveland neighborhoods. Is this promise just to appease Clevelanders and their City Council representatives to get the funds to support projects for the developers of the lakefront and riverfront, or is it a promise that has some substance?

This seems like something out of the past. Millions of dollars in federal Urban Development Action Grants and tax abatements were given to downtown development projects with a promise that they would create a future revenue stream for the City of Cleveland. That revenue stream never occurred. Recall some of these projects – urban renewal, the Medical Mart, tax abatements to downtown bank headquarters, financing of Gateway and the Cleveland Browns' stadium. When Cleveland Economic Development Director Tanisha Jackson tried to collect on some of the economic development loans the City of Cleveland had made to developers that weren't living up to the terms originally set, Mayor Bibb fired her.

Can we expect the promises of funds for Cleveland neighborhoods to be fulfilled? A look back at promises made in the past would be a good place to start examining the prospects of promises being kept. Veteran Cleveland journalist Roldo Bartimole's recently published book, *Power: Who Governs Cleveland*, points out some of the promises made by Mayor Michael White when trying to pass the "sin" tax to support the Gateway development and a new stadium for the Cleveland professional baseball team and a new arena for the Cleveland professional basketball team.

Referring to Mayor White, Roldo Bartimole says, "In his campaign to sell the 'sin' tax, he made promises of 16,000 permanent jobs and tax revenue for the neighborhoods. He promised he'd allow no tax abatement to be given to the stadium and arena and that the Cleveland schools would benefit with \$15.6 million in 'additional taxes'."

Roldo goes on to say that a year after the vote for the sin tax, Mayor White went down to Columbus and successfully lobbied the State Legislature to award a permanent tax exemption to the stadium and arena. This meant no money to the Cleveland's public schools, or the neighborhoods would come from property tax revenue from the new Gateway complex. Most Cleveland residents voted against the passage of the sin tax; however, the vote was county wide, and most Cuyahoga County's suburban residents voted for the tax to assure its passage.

In his book, Roldo Bartimole lists many of the past low or no interest loans, tax abatements, Tax Increment Fi-

ancing, and many other subsidies that went to downtown interests. He shows that in periods when no tax abatements were awarded, development occurred downtown at a rate like that subsidized by tax abatements.

In 1995, the City of Cleveland was in danger of losing its professional football team, the Cleveland Browns. While the City of Cleveland owned the old Municipal Stadium, Cleveland Brown's owner Art Modell secured all the revenue from its use. Having lost a major tenant when the baseball team moved to the new Gateway complex, Modell was clamoring for an upgrade to the stadium which he said would bring additional revenue needed to make the

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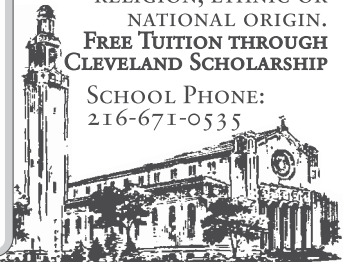
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OLD BURYING GROUND

continued from page 6

Pennsylvania to Cuyahoga County, he had to swear a statement saying that he was the identical person named in the pension file. That statement was witnessed and signed by Richard Vaughn -- Justice of the Peace, resident of South Brooklyn and owner of the lot that contained the Old Burying Ground. Since his death occurred six months before the establishment of Brookmere Cemetery, and he was apparently residing in South Brooklyn, it's likely that Richard Cooper was laid to rest in that little patch of grass on the corner of Memphis and Pearl. And it's possible that it remains his place of repose, as well as the final

resting place of many other early inhabitants of South Brooklyn, who never made that final journey to Brookmere.

The reason Bill Krejci thinks that it's likely that Richard Cooper is still interred at the Old Burying/Burial Ground is that Richards's son James moved West shortly after his father's death and wouldn't have been in town at the time arrangements were being made for bodies to be moved to Brookmere Cemetery.

Next month I expect to be discussing the congregation which was the precursor of St. Luke's United Church of Christ, followed by the other historical structures in the vicinity, before delving into more recent changes in ownership and plans for the corner.

Browns solvent.

Cleveland Plain Dealer articles from 1995 describe the dire circumstances facing the City of Cleveland during that period. Cost overruns for building the Gateway complex left the project with a \$28 million dollar deficit. The Cleveland Municipal School District had been taken over by the State of Ohio because it too was running a huge deficit. A reform School Board that Mayor White had helped to elect was powerless as an administrator approved by the State of Ohio, Richard Boyd, ran the School District. It was a sore point for many Cleveland residents that promised revenue from the stadiums never went to the school system and that huge tax abatements and tax increment financing for downtown interests deprived the schools and neighborhoods of much needed revenue.

Scrambling to come up with revenue, the White administration proposed a 12% parking tax of which 10% would go to stadium renovation and 2% would go to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to restore extracurricular

activities that had just been drastically cut by the State of Ohio overseers. The parking lot owners pushed back and threatened to put the issue on the November ballot.

With a deadline set by Art Modell for the City of Cleveland to come up with \$154 million for a major renovation of the Municipal Stadium, the White Administration in hopes of adverting a levy campaign, lowered the proposed parking tax to 8% and proposed two other taxes, an increase in the City of Cleveland's admission tax from 6% to 8% and an increase in the motor vehicle lease tax from \$4 to \$6. In doing this, White promised that in addition to funds raised for stadium repairs, the funds raised by these taxes would provide \$2 million per year to the Cleveland Municipal School District for sports and extracurricular activities.

From accounts in the Plain Dealer archives, it is unclear why Mayor White chose the \$2 million dollar amount. Given the pushback from the broken...

**Note: article continued online at <https://plainpress.blog>**

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Tues, Weds, Thurs. from 9am until 2pm  
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Wednesdays 1pm to 3pm  
1st Saturday of the Month  
10am to 12pm Clothes \$1 a bag

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Saturdays: 6:45am, 8:45am & 4:00pm  
Sundays: 7:30am, 9:30am  
Traditional High Mass in Latin 12pm every Sunday  
Italian/English Mass at 9:30am every third Sunday of the Month.  
Confessions: Saturday 3:00-4:00PM & Sundays before the 9:30am & 12:00pm  
Eucharistic Adoration, Tuesdays 9:00am-6:30pm

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