



## CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

**Monday, December 6, 2021 Minutes**

### **CITY COUNCIL**

7:50 – 9:41 p.m.

President Stein presiding

Roll Call:    Present: Cobb, Hart, Moore, Seren, Stein, Ungar  
                  Absent: Russell

Council Member Russell was not able to attend the meeting in person but was available throughout the meeting via Zoom.

Staff present: Hanna, Himmelein, Niermann O’Neil

### **Approval of the minutes of the Council meetings held on November 1, November 8, and November 15, 2021**

Minutes were approved without any objections.

### **Matter of Record**

#### **Personal communications from citizens**

Odies Grant has lived in Cleveland Heights for 36 years and raised six children here in the city. He plans to be at every Council meeting until the issue with the height of the curb in front of his house is addressed. There is no curb and it is dangerous for the children. Mr. Grant said a car even hit the pole in front of his house years ago. The house across the street has a high curb and that is what he has been trying to get in front of his own house for years. He said he’s worked with Council Member Russell in the past and she is a natural leader that gets things done. He believes Cleveland Heights needs someone like Council Member Russell who will advocate for those who live on his side of Mayfield Road. He hopes that she is elected as President or Vice President of Council and encouraged others to help make this happen.

Lenora Cruz-Price is resident and local business owner in the Taylor and Noble areas. She was among those chosen to speak on behalf of the Noble Taylor residents in regards to the five million dollars from the American Rescue Funds earmarked for those areas. Ms. Cruz-Price also wanted to voice her support for Council Member Russell’s bid for

either President or Vice-President of Council in the upcoming year. She is aware that citizens don't get to vote on who is appointed to these positions but she feels Council Member Russell represents diversity and the "All Are Welcome" message of Cleveland Heights. Ms. Cruz-Price had some recommendations for Council as far as utilizing the American Rescue Funds in the Noble Taylor area including: lighting and cameras for safety, better ventilation for businesses, better signage, replacement windows, business grants, and housing grants.

Gary Ballard was also chosen to speak on the behalf of the Noble Taylor residents regarding the American Rescue Act funds. He has lived in Cleveland Heights with his family for twenty-seven years. Tonight, he is presenting the combined recommendations of the Noble Taylor residents and the business owners. There is a separate list of recommendations from each community that will be presented at a later date as members of the community continue to meet with Council Member Russell. The first recommendation is additional lighting and cameras for safety. Additional lighting will hopefully deter criminal activity. Those who do not live in this community do not understand the fears and struggles that the residents live with every day. They would like the lights to be strategically placed on street corners, main street sidewalks, parking lots, and near local businesses. They also recommend doorbell cameras for residences, especially for seniors. Other recommendations include improved ventilation for businesses, window replacement, improved signage, business grants, housing grants, and a neighborhood resource center. Mr. Ballard also wanted to offer his support for Council Member Russell's bid for President or Vice-President of Council.

Don McBride has lived in Cleveland Heights for thirty-six years and has been active in neighborhood projects, primarily through Noble Neighbors. He is going to focus on quality of living as opposed to the safety aspect that the previous two speakers addressed. One of the things discussed at the meetings was neighborhood beautification. Perhaps establishing a fund that could be used to pay students to help the residents who are no longer able to do yard work or other kinds of tasks. They would also like to see murals painted on utility boxes. Another recommendation is for the money to be used to upgrade or expand the numbers of playgrounds and parks in the area. They also suggested providing internet access for those who need it but cannot afford it. All of these recommendations have come from the residents of Noble and Taylor neighborhoods. There will be further research and discussion to determine how the ARPA money can be used and what is feasible.

Laura Marks is a Cleveland Heights resident whose family has lived here for over 150 years. She is thankful to Council Member Russell and Council for allocating funds to two neighborhoods that have been neglected. She attended the neighborhood meetings where they shared ideas about how to improve their neighborhoods. During these

meetings, Ms. Marks was struck by how the allocated funds would still not be enough to provide what is needed in those neighborhoods. Even ten times that amount would still not be enough. She encouraged Council to consider those who live north of Mayfield. Ms. Marks was specifically asked to talk about the idea for adding solar roofs to the neighborhood schools and Noble library. After doing some research, she does not think the ARPA funds can be used for that however she is hopeful there are other ways of obtaining funding for this project. She said if the City spent two million dollars on solar roofs for those buildings, they could get six million in return over the next thirty years. Essentially, there would be a Purchase Power Agreement between the City and the schools. The City could allocate the money coming in from the electric bills to go into the Noble and Taylor neighborhoods. She thanked President Stein and Council Member Ungar for their years of service.

President Stein and Council Member Hart thanked everyone for coming and speaking on this topic. Council Member Hart said she looks forward to receiving Council Member Russell's full report on everything so they can hold a Finance Committee meeting and discuss allocations.

Tiana is the daughter of Odies Grant and she wanted to voice her support for Council Member Russell and her bid for President or Vice-President of City Council. She met Council Member Russell through her father and finds her leadership to be inspiring. She wants to highly advocate for Council Member Russell to be chosen as Council President. She received more votes than any other council member in the last election. She is also the only incumbent who lives on the north side of Mayfield. The north side of Mayfield needs this representation and it would keep the Council balanced. Diversity and balance need to be seen at the top. She believes Council Member Russell has the experience and her work in the community speaks for itself.

Adam Fleischer is a resident and business owner in Cleveland Heights. He wanted to voice his support for the Cedar Lee Meadowbrook project. Anyone who has spent a lot of time in Cleveland Heights understands what a special community this is. Unfortunately, he feels that we are being left behind. There are developments happening throughout the Cleveland area and it is impacting the community. As a merchant, business is okay but not thriving. This is not sustainable long term. Mr. Fleischer said he picked up a friend from the airport on a Saturday evening and they drove through Ohio City, Little Italy, Coventry, and Cedar Fairmount and there were people walking around everywhere. When they got to Lee Road, he could count on one hand how many people were walking around. When he entered his business at 7:30pm on a Saturday, there were only five customers. Even if they move forward with the project today, it will be at least two years before they see the benefits. More businesses will close in the area if nothing is done soon.

John Foreman, President of Cleveland Cinemas, supports the Cedar Lee Meadowbrook development project. Cleveland Cinemas owns the Cedar Lee Theatre and they've struggled financially since the beginning of the pandemic. Prior to the theatre being closed due to the pandemic, Mr. Foreman operated the theatre for forty-five years and has invested a lot into it. He thanked City Council for waiving the admission tax that is placed on every ticket sold since the theatre reopened. Prior to that, the theatre has paid forty to fifty thousand dollars a year in these taxes. Business owners and customers are also grateful to Council for approving free parking in the city parking lots. Most of the local businesses have similar stories as Mr. Fleischer and Mr. Foreman. They are all struggling and many of them support the Cedar Lee Meadowbrook project. The prospect of having more people move into the area within walking distance of their businesses is exciting and appealing. This is a great opportunity for this neighborhood and Cleveland Heights. He urged Council to approve the development agreement with F&C tonight so the project can move forward.

Destiny Burns is the owner of CLE Urban Winery on Lee Road. She lives and works in the Cedar Lee district and she is strongly in favor of the Cedar Lee Meadowbrook project. She requested that Council proceed with approving the development agreement with F&C at tonight's meeting. No delays, no excuses. The future of the Cedar Lee business district depends on tonight's votes. The development plan includes a lovely park that will be maintained by the developer. The park that people have signed a petition for has no funding and will need to be maintained by the City. Perhaps those who signed the petition did not know this nor did they realize how much the business owners in the area have struggled and sacrificed to stay in business. The local business owners are exhausted and need help. She said its important for the community to understand how important this development project is to their survival. She urged Council to vote yes tonight on passing the Cedar Lee Meadowbrook development agreement legislation.

Tony Cuda wanted to speak about the legislation pertaining to the City Administrator and Assistant Clerk of Council positions. As an incoming new council member, he would like to see Council establish itself as an independent, separate power. He would like Council to hire their own Clerk of Council. Mr. Cuda would like to know if this can be done through an ordinance or if it can only be done through a charter amendment. He would like the new council to tackle this issue and asked that there be no new hires until that time.

John Fleshin said he saw a recent diagram and was happy to see that most of the green space was maintained. He is grateful and appreciated that Council listened to his concerns.

Alan Federman has been a resident of Cleveland Heights for nearly seventy years. He attended a previous meeting and spoke about having a vaccine mandate for restaurants and bars. He emailed the Council and Council Member Hart suggested that he speak to the restaurateurs in the area to find out what their thoughts were on the subject. He said he spoke to many of the business owners in the area and wanted to discuss his findings with Council tonight. COVID cases have increased since the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting he attended. He had read studies about long haul COVID and was surprised to find that people with mild symptoms were just as likely to have long haul COVID as those who had a severe case. He had mixed reactions from the eight business owners he spoke to about the proposed vaccine mandate. He said this would improve business because customers would feel safe going to restaurants who have a mandate in place. Mr. Federman said doing this would cut the cases by fifty percent and hopes that Cleveland Heights seriously considers this as an option.

Joanne Segal is a resident and small business owner in the Cedar Lee neighborhood. She said her business survived the pandemic but she is struggling like so many others. She requested that Council pass the legislation tonight authorizing the City Manager to sign the development agreement with F&C.

Walter Theme lives in the Cedar Coventry area and supports the Cedar Lee Meadowbrook development project. He supports the development because it is good for business, fills a hole in the district that has been there for a decade, wanted by the existing businesses in the district, will add residents, taxpayers, and vibrancy to the City, and it will be good for the environment. He has heard other people speak about how having a park would be good for the environment but he believes that if the development isn't built in Cleveland Heights, it will be built elsewhere. Mr. Theme asked that the City please sign the development agreement.

Luke Quintrell is at tonight's meeting on behalf of the Georgian Apartment Company and the Owners Apartment Company. His last appearance at a council meeting was on October 11<sup>th</sup> when he asked if Council could arrange a meeting to discuss the Nottinghill sewer project. In the spirit of thankfulness and gratitude, he wanted to thank City Manager O'Neil, Public Works Director Collette Clinkscale, Assistant Public Works Director Joe Kickel, and Tony Ferrone for resolving the fence issue. Weather permitting, it should be completed this week.

President Stein thanked Mr. Quintrell for coming back and providing Council with an update.

Tonja Phillips has resided in Cleveland Heights for twenty-nine years and lives on Caledonia. She is here tonight because she needs help with her neighbors. She has had to call the police on them. She has neighbors who take out their trash the day after trash day and they leave it there. It ends up being all over the street because of the wind blowing. The neighborhood has changed since she first moved to Cleveland Heights. They race up and down the street, there are fights, and she doesn't believe the young kids at the nearby school are safe. She thinks there should be a police presence near the school. Ms. Phillips said there is a school zone in front of her driveway that people speed through. She also said a tree was removed from her tree lawn two years ago and the stump was left. She has called the City about this but nothing has been done. The people she has spoken to said they forgot. However, the City has not forgotten about her garage. She removed the garage because there was a gaping hole in it and she doesn't think she should be forced to have a garage if she doesn't want one. She cannot afford to replace the garage nor can she get a loan to help pay for a new garage. She said she is called to Court all the time because of her garage.

President Stein informed Ms. Phillips that legislation was recently passed that may help her with her garage situation. He advised her to provide her contact information to City Manager Niermann O'Neil to help resolve these issues. He said they will be in contact with her this week.

Catherine Osborn thanked the City and the Cedar Lee Meadowbrook development team for soliciting and incorporating community feedback throughout the development process. They were asked to provide feedback in March, before F&C were even selected. They were invited to attend open houses over the summer, submit comments to Council and on the City's website, and join meet & greet events this fall. The trees in the green space at the end of Cedarbrook will remain and the green space will be extended. Pedestrian paths will be maintained. There will also be a developer maintained public space at Lee and Meadowbrook. This is something no other plan can feasibly provide. Ms. Osborn believes the economic and sustainability benefits of this project make it crucial that Council approve the development agreement today.

Laverne Butler has lived in Cleveland Heights for more than fifty years. When she first moved to Lownesdale Road, the street was comprised of homeowners. Now, it is mostly renters and Section 8 renters. She would appreciate if Council would focus on the obligations of these renters. She's had to call the police and they come out and give verbal warnings. Her street has become an eyesore and if Ms. Butler tries to sell her house, she worries she won't get anything for it because of her neighbors and the slum landlords. She agrees with the prior commenter, Ms. Phillips, that there should be a police presence at Caledonia school. She feels like she doesn't get the same benefits as other Cleveland Heights residents because of where she lives. She lives in Cleveland

Heights and pays taxes but her school district is East Cleveland and that is another reason why it would be difficult to sell her home.

President Stein asked City Manager Niermann O'Neil to note that the Caledonia school needs a police presence.

Diane Hallum said she appreciated the previous public comments especially the one about coming to the City and offering solutions. She said when she came to the City eleven years ago, she tried doing that and tried to get equity for her side of Cleveland Heights. She said she failed because no one cared to hear what she had to say. Solving problems requires mutual respect and cooperation and that has not been her experience with the City. She said she has yet to hear back from the City regarding her October 18<sup>th</sup> complaint. Ms. Hallum said the fence issue that the owner of the Georgian Apartments had was quickly resolved and Council Member Hart even drove out to look at the issue herself. When Ms. Hallum brought up the dangerous conditions at the Denison playground, no one from Council came to look at it for themselves. She feels that they don't care about those who live on the north side of the City.

Cindy Evans lives in the Caledonia neighborhood and loves her nearly one-hundred-year-old house. However, she feels that the residents in the Caledonia area are not treated like the rest of the residents in the City. Her fellow residents on the other side of Cleveland Heights are fighting to save Horseshoe Lake and to keep green space. However, she finds it difficult talk about green spaces when her own neighborhood lacks decent sidewalks and curbs. The nearby businesses are also in poor condition and police visibility is lacking. Ms. Evans said she is afraid on New Year's Eve because there are a lot of people in the area shooting off their guns. She said she has called the police and they never respond in person to check out the situation. She said trash is another issue in her neighborhood. People put out their trash after garbage day and it sits out on the tree lawns. She would like to see those people penalized for not following city ordinances. Ms. Evans said Council Member Russell offered the idea of having additional trash collection days for the depressed areas in the City since there are more renters in those areas. She thinks this is a wonderful idea. Ms. Evans voiced her support for Council Member Russell to be President of Council in this upcoming year. She also thanked Council Member Moore for responding to a recent email.

Joanne LNU said in the November 2021 election Council Member Russell received the most votes cast for the Cleveland Heights City Council election. Out of the thirty-three precincts, Council Member Russell received the majority of votes in twenty-one of these precincts. She is very impressed with how Council Member Russell listens to the residents and the legislation she has worked on, especially the legislation allocating ARPA funds to neglected neighborhoods within the City. Furthermore, Council Member

Russell has spent a lot of time working with the school district, educators, and school children. She also appreciates that Council Member Russell is the only incumbent council member who lives north of Mayfield.

Patricia Frost-Brooks is a retired educator and has lived in Cleveland Heights for thirty-six years. She also wanted to voice her support for Council Member Russell's bid for either President or Vice-President of Council. She believes Council Member Russell has made connections and built bridges during her time on Council. Even the pandemic did not stop Council Member Russell from staying active in the community. She believes Council Member Russell has a vision for the City of Cleveland Heights and she's spent a lot of time engaging with the residents and business owners in the community. She has been an advocate for social and racial justice. She's also raised awareness regarding the importance of the U.S. Census as well as worked on legislation to allocate five million dollars to the distressed neighborhoods in this community. Ms. Frost-Brooks said Council Member Russell also held the "You Talk, I Listen" sessions in which she listened to the needs and concerns of community members. Ms. Frost-Brooks believes the residents of Cleveland Heights need diversity of neighborhoods represented in the positions of President and Vice-President on Council. She believes Council Member Russell is a phenomenal council member and should be entrusted with one of these positions.

Fran Mentch wanted to speak on behalf of "People for the Park" and said that they have nothing but respect, admiration, and affection for the small businesses of Cleveland Heights. She said it is unfortunate that there is a perception that there is conflict between their group and the small business owners because that is not the case. She wanted to point out that the park they've proposed is only 1.07 acres so the remaining 4 acres can be developed. Ms. Mentch said the following comments are her own personal opinions and do not represent "People for the Park." She said if the council members vote to accept the F&C development agreement this evening, they are locking the residents into an imprudent, ill-considered, and risky financial arrangement. She said the financing for the project will impact funding for the schools. Ms. Mentch has several questions about the development agreement and would appreciate any corrections if she is incorrect with any of her statements. Because the City is leasing the land to the developer for \$10 per year, will the developer not pay property taxes on the land? Does the Community Reinvestment Act provide the developer with 100% tax abatement on the building for fifteen years? Is the City paying \$725,000 to buy the land on Cedar that now houses the former beauty school and veterinary clinic? Won't this \$725,000 be rolled into a TIF and essentially given to the developer so Cleveland Heights residents will never see this money again? Shouldn't these costs be included on page 82 of the document, on the chart entitled "Estimate of City Costs?" Can you provide taxpayers with a clear explanation of this thirty-year TIF and its implications? Can this be explained tonight?

Ms. Mentch also recommended a document explaining this be provided with the agreement because residents do not understand what the TIF is.

President Stein said that this is personal communications from citizens and not a back and forth discussion with members of Council.

Ms. Mentch requested that her questions be addressed in the future. She said the developer will end up owning the parking garage after paying fifty percent of the remaining debt. However, for this to occur municipal bonds must be converted to private bonds and the attorney costs of doing this is not reflected in the “Estimate of City Costs” section of the agreement. She believes this only benefits the developers. Shouldn’t these costs be paid for by the developers? Doesn’t the change in the financing of the garage still increase the overall cost by \$160,000? Won’t F&C own the garage for a total payment of \$1,000,800? The cost of the garage in 2007 was \$4,950,000. She is not sure of the cost to the taxpayers for building the garage and would appreciate that information. Shouldn’t these costs be included on page 82 of the document? Won’t the developer be able to buy all five acres of City land for \$10 in year forty? The developer will rent the land for thirty-nine years for \$10 a year and for an additional \$10, gets to purchase five acres. This works out to be \$80 per acre. Ms. Mentch does not believe this legislation should be considered to be on third reading. Since there is only one more meeting before the new form of government begins, she believes this should wait until January. What message is this sending to the residents of Cleveland Heights who voted for the new form of government if this is passed tonight? What message is this sending to all of the registered voters who signed the petition for a park on the 1.07 acres that will be put on the ballot? She cautioned them about the language used in the agreement because the City might be liable if they promise the land to the developers and the petition succeeds.

### **Report of the City Manager**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **Report of the Clerk of Council**

Nothing to report at this time.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ORDINANCE NO. 155-2021 (AS), *First Reading*.** An Ordinance amending Section 183.01, “Public Hearing,” of Chapter 183, Political Influence by Corporate Entities, of the Cleveland Heights Codified Ordinances to the date of the public hearing that is to be held annually;

Introduced by Vice President Seren

**Legislation Introduced**

Vice President Seren explained that this legislation changes our Democracy Day from a winter date to a summer date which will make it more convenient weather-wise for people to attend.

**RESOLUTION NO. 156-2021 (AS), *First Reading***. A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Arthur J. Gallagher & Company for continuation of its protected liability self-insurance program for the City; and declaring an emergency.

Introduced by Vice President Seren

**Legislation Introduced**

**ORDINANCE NO. 145-2021 (AS), *Second Reading***. An Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 20-2021, “Wage and Salary Ordinance,” providing for salary schedules, position classifications, and other compensation and benefits for officers and employees of the City, to add a salary schedule, position classification, and other compensation and benefits for a City Administrator and Assistant Clerk of Council.

Introduced by Vice President Seren, Seconded by Council Member Ungar

Roll Call:                   Ayes: Hart, Moore, Seren, Stein, Ungar, Cobb  
                                  Nays: None

**Legislation Passed**

Vice President Seren explained that this legislation adds the City Administrator position, that was created by the Charter change, to the “Wage and Salary Ordinance.” This position essentially is a replacement for the Vice City Manager position in the classification. This legislation also creates an Assistant Clerk of Council position that would allow the City’s default Clerk of Council, the Finance Director, to attend to her duties as the Finance Director and allow a designated person to attend to the Council duties. Since there is no emergency clause, this legislation would go into effect after thirty days.

**ORDINANCE NO. 153-2021 (AS), *Second Reading***. An Ordinance amending various sections of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Cleveland Heights in furtherance of the transition from the Council-Manager to the Mayor-Council form of government; and declaring an emergency.

Introduced by Vice President Seren, Seconded by Council Member Cobb

Roll Call:                   Ayes: Moore, Seren, Stein, Cobb, Hart  
                                  Nays: None

**Legislation Passed**

Vice President Seren explained that they contracted and received a report that provided a systematic exploration of the City's Codified Ordinances and included draft changes that would change the references of "City Manager" to "Mayor." The new government will start in January and the codifies those changes.

Council Member Ungar thanked Law Director Hanna and his team, including outside counsel, for all of their work on this project.

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Nothing to report at this time.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**ORDINANCE NO. 157-2021 (F), *First Reading*.** An Ordinance authorizing the execution of a Property Schedule to a Master Tax-Exempt Lease/Purchase Agreement between U.S. Bancorp Government Leasing and Finance, Inc., as lessor, and the City, as lessee, for the purpose of acquiring an aerial ladder fire truck including related equipment and appurtenances, and declaring an emergency.

Introduced by Council Member Hart

**Legislation Introduced**

**ORDINANCE NO. 158-2021 (F), *First Reading*.** An Ordinance to amend certain subparagraphs of Ordinance No. 127-2020 (F) and subsequent amending ordinances, relating to appropriations and other expenditures of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021; and declaring an emergency.

Introduced by Council Member Hart, Seconded by Council Member Moore

Roll Call:                   Ayes: Seren, Stein, Ungar, Cobb, Hart, Moore  
                                  Nays: None

**Legislation Passed**

Council Member Hart said this legislation has no impact on the budget. Anything that has an increase is accounted for by either a settlement or an increase in income of other types.

**ORDINANCE NO. 139-2021 (F), *Third Reading*.** An Ordinance to make appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, for the period of January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022; and declaring an emergency.

Introduced by Council Member Hart, Seconded by Council Member Cobb

Roll Call:                   Ayes: Stein, Ungar, Cobb, Hart, Moore, Seren  
                                  Nays: None

**Legislation Passed**

Council Member Hart said this legislation is for the budget for the next fiscal year. However, they will most likely make amendments to this budget since there will be a new administration and new council members will want a say in how certain funds are allocated.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**RESOLUTION NO. 159-2021 (MS), *First Reading*.** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the County of Cuyahoga to perform certain services to help maintain the City's sanitary and storm sewers; and declaring an emergency.

Introduced by Council Member Moore, Seconded by Council Member Hart

Roll Call:                   Ayes: Ungar, Cobb, Hart, Moore, Seren, Stein  
                                  Nays: None

**Legislation Passed**

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**RESOLUTION NO. 154-2021 (PD), *Third Reading*.** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Development Agreement with F&C Development, Inc. concerning the "Cedar-Lee Meadowbrook" development; and declaring an emergency.

Introduced by Council Member Ungar, Seconded by Vice President Seren

Roll Call:                   Ayes: Cobb, Hart, Moore, Seren, Stein, Ungar  
                                  Nays: None

**Legislation Passed**

Council Member Ungar does not believe there is any reason for Cleveland Heights to be left in the dust when it comes to development when compared with other cities in northeast Ohio. He appreciated the comments from Ms. Burns and Ms. Segal earlier during the public comment portion of the meeting. He believes it is time to act and this is a wonderful, transformative project that represents major investment in this neighborhood and business district. Council Member Ungar says those who describe it as a "ill-considered, high risk" proposal haven't done their homework. He said many of these people do not live in the district nor do they frequent the area. He strongly supports this project and thanked the development partners for their willingness to make a fifty million dollar bet on Cleveland Heights. F&C has been a great development partner at the Top of the Hill project and he sees no reason to believe that they will treat Cedar Lee Meadowbrook any differently. There has been a lot of public engagement with this

public and there will continue to be more opportunities for additional engagement. Council Member Ungar cannot wait to see this project unfold. He thanked City staff and the residents for all of their work and input.

Vice President Seren thanked City staff for negotiating this deal. He does not believe having a well-designed park space is a bad idea but, in this case, it is not the best idea out of the ideas that have been presented to Council. Right now, the City needs growth in order to be competitive in the region. There are other cities in the region that are doing quite well and part of that is due to embracing progress. Those in Cleveland Heights understand that it is important to balance progress with preservation. Vice President Seren views this project as an opportunity to initiate progress and is confident that the end result will be a benefit to the City.

Council Member Hart said she will be voting yes on this legislation tonight. This is an investment in our business district and will have a positive impact on the entire city because it will increase the tax base and lower the tax burden for residents. She is pleased that the proposed amount of green space was increased and is pleased with the plan. She encouraged residents to get involved in the design process and attend Planning Commission meetings. Council Member believes this development project will be great for the community and she plans to vote yes.

Council Member Cobb said the City has been trying to develop this area since the early 2000s. There was a project in 2005 that ended up getting cancelled and the City proceeded with spending five million dollars to build a parking garage. They hoped a developer would take an interest in the area. There were a couple of developers in 2006-2007 but neither of those projects went forward. The community and the merchants in the area need this project to go forward. Council Member Cobb said he will be voting yes on this legislation tonight.

Council Member Moore said she ran on a platform of environmental sustainability because she believes that public representatives have the responsibility to make every decision through the lens of environmental sustainability. The impact on future generations must be considered. In an urban/suburban context, environmental sustainability demands many things and not all of them align perfectly. She believes we need to protect green spaces, prepare for a growing population, and increase walkability/lessen our dependence on cars. All of this must be done while providing a good quality of life for those in the community. Council Member Moore also cares a great deal about the local economy and believes we need to grow and diversify our local economy to ensure our community is secure and resilient in the face of larger economic fluctuations. There is no perfect development agreement that checks all the boxes on everyone's wish lists. However, governance in Cleveland Heights requires thoughtful and discerning compromise. Council Member Moore believes this project will be good for the community and appreciates that the firm used to design the project, City Architecture, is part of the community. She appreciates that they continue to be open and responsive to community input and priorities. She is also grateful to local advocates for their vision, dedication, and perseverance. Council Member Moore believes if this

project is done well, it will meet our needs, uphold community values, and help us reach larger City goals.

President Stein is excited to see the Top of the Hill project being built as well as the Metro building at Severance. He believes this project will also be good for Cleveland Heights. He considers this to be a big win for the community.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Council Member Cobb said there is nothing to report at this time.

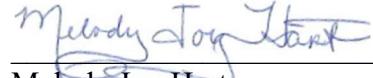
Council Member Ungar agrees with the praise he has heard tonight for Council Member Russell but wanted to point out that he also feels the same way about the other members of Council and the new council members who start in 2022. They represent everyone in the community and he believes the City is in very good hands.

## **Report of the Council President**

Nothing to report at this time.

**NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL: MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021**

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melody Joy Hart  
President of Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Himmeltein  
Clerk of Council