



# CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

**Wednesday, March 24, 2021 Minutes**

**CITY COUNCIL**

6:30 – 9:28 p.m.

President of Council Stein presiding

Roll Call: Present: Dunbar, Hart, Russell, Seren, Stein, Ungar  
Excused: None

Staff present: Boland, Butler, Clinkscale, Freeman, Hanna, Himmelein, Lambdin, McRae, Mecklenburg, Niermann O’Neil, Smith, Trupo, Zamft

President of Council Stein stated that this meeting will solely focus on the MetroHealth expansion which will help them provide vital services to the community while adding over 100 well-paying jobs. There are over 100 comments with repetition and some inaccuracies regarding the removal of trees. In order to put in the critical ambulance drive, Metro will be using .73 acres of the 7 treed acres of their own property. They’re committed to being environmentally sensitive and have an arborist who will work with our city forester. Metro will make a brief statement afterwards to clarify some of the information.

**Personal communications received from citizens (via electronic mail)**

Mary Trupo, Jim Lambdin, Susanna Niermann O’Neil, and Amy Himmelein read the following public comments. These appear exactly as submitted.

**Name** Susan E. Squires 1

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**Public Comment** I became aware only recently that MetroHealth is proposing to remove almost 1 acre of mature trees in the Severance area for PARKING! I strongly appose this!!

We are all aware of the need for restoration of the green canopy in Cleveland Heights. The removal of precious older trees for PARKING which is already available is NOT OK.

Please insist that MetroHealth further investigate how to utilize close by paring spaces that are currently going UNUSED.

DO NOT allow destruction and removal of important mature forest when there ARE other viable options!!!!!!!!!!!!

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**Name** Sue Janssen 2

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**Public Comment** Save Millikin Woods! They are an irreplaceable Cleveland Heights treasure.

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**Name** Gabriella Lonardo 3

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**Public Comment** It was brought to my attention that the destruction of almost an acre of trees in the Millikin woods adjacent to Severance is being considered by CHCC. It is my belief that Metro hospital should use the vast parking lot at Severance to serve their needs. Why would old growth trees get cut down to create additional parking when there are several spaces across the street? I was born in Cleveland Heights and have remained here for several reasons. One reason being the balance of green space to developed space. I urge you to protect our existing greens spaces to help maintain an environmentally conscious city.

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**Name** Jodi and Ernie Molner 4

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**Public Comment** We strongly oppose allowing any of the wooded area adjacent to Severance to be clear cut for additional parking. There is adequate parking available at that location, directly across the ring road. MetroHealth should be instructed to make appropriate arrangements with the property owner for use of spaces, if needed. Safety measures could be put in place for employees and patients who need to cross the street. Employees and patients at MetroHealth's main campus, at University Hospitals' main campus, and at Hillcrest all have to deal with busy streets, far busier than the Severance ring road, on a daily basis. If Metro is concerned that future development could remove the availability of those parking spaces, they could use the money earmarked for destruction of the forest and installation of parking spaces to instead purchase a portion of the existing parking lot, thereby protecting their use of the spaces. If needed, they could fence it off and even install a pedestrian bridge.

Excess parking at Severance is an eyesore, and drivers of semis have claimed it as parking space for their rigs - they should be directed to one area in an unused space (maybe all over by Walmart).

Destroying more of the tree canopy for parking spaces which may or may not be used, creating another impervious surface, and further contributing to water run-off, is an unsound, ill-considered idea, when so much unused asphalt is close at hand.

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**Name** Gus Kious 5

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**Public Comment** I'm writing to you as one of a significant number of Cleveland Heights residents who are opposed to the clear cutting of the woods behind Metro Health's facility to make way for 80 parking places.

You know the arguments (trees give oxygen/trap carbon and they reduce water runoff compared to asphalt). I would urge caution with clear cutting the woods. Once they are gone, it's forever.

Rather, let's put in a temporary crossing light to the ample parking spaces across the road for employees. It could be lit and flashing for safety. It also is temporary in the sense that severance development is under review.

The Council should table this for 30 days during which MetroHealth, City Council, development department, and city residents can have a joint meeting to discuss alternatives to clear cutting the woods to create new parking spots.

If Cleveland Clinic and UH could inconvenience their employees by parking them remotely while creating better solutions why can't MetroHealth and Cleveland Heights?

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**Name** Janet Kramer 6

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**Public Comment** I recently learned of plans to destroy old growth forest adjacent to the Severance lot for MetroHealth's use as a parking lot and want to voice my strong opinion against this decision. It is beyond foolish. It is short-sighted. It represents an unnecessary creation of more impervious asphalt at the expense of life-protecting trees. Trees are not expendable any more. They clean the air, they cool the atmosphere, their root systems filter the water. Study after study demonstrates the health-giving and safety-promoting virtue of trees. For your reference:

<https://www.state.sc.us/forest/urbben.htm> and <https://www.southernforests.org/urban/benefits-of-urban-trees> and <https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ppp3.39> among many more.

The one study that was done to supposedly justify the need for more parking lot spaces for the MetroHealth expansion proved the exact opposite. There is no need! For your reference:

<https://www.clevelandheights.com/DocumentCenter/View/8990/MetroHealth-Parking-Memo?bidId=>

I suggest you look outside the bubble of your narrow-minded council and consult environmental experts, advocates for keeping the trees, who could propose alternatives to destroying old growth trees before you make your preposterous, one-sided decision. Once old growth trees are killed, there is no reversing that decision. I've been reading several proposed solutions to the so-called risk of people having to cross the Severance Circle road. Creating a cross-walk with blinking yellow lights is a viable one – like on Lee Road both near Cedar and by Boulevard School. Or put

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in a stop light that turns red upon a pedestrian's press of the button – as the one at Taylor & Washington has been for years. I believe a bridge or tunnel probably would cost too much and have its own inherent risk, such as a wheelchair bound person navigating stairs or steep ramps. Someone mentioned changing the actual path of the Severance Circle road. That would not be that difficult or expensive. Direct Severance Circle to dip closer towards the current strip mall buildings, thus allocating the additional 80-or-so parking spots to the Metro side of the road. Those parking spaces are always unused anyway!!! If they currently belong to the owner of Severance, then negotiate a long-term lease! Or require the new MetroHealth Behavioral Health building to have underground parking. Or build a parking garage on one of the lots to increase the number of parking spaces. There surely is more than one viable solution that does not involve killing valuable trees.

The dilemma requires creative, outside-the-box thinking, and I suggest you take the time required for due diligence to come up with a more satisfactory solution. The rushed and hushed nature of this decision appears to be a front for vested interests. And frankly, it stinks! I urge you to vote “no” on this proposal as it stands.

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**Name** JoAnn Melaragno 7

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**Public Comment** I have learned that Metro wants to cut down trees at Severance Center to add additional parking. I feel there should be another way to supply more parking with so much vacant space available at Severance. I oppose the cutting down of mature trees for this purpose.

We are the city of trees!

Please do not approve the plan!!!

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**Name** Wendy Kocovsky 8

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**Public Comment** We are strongly opposed to cutting down trees to create more parking for the Metrohealth facility at Severance Center.

The world does NOT need more parking lots or larger parking lots.

There is a huge parking lot directly across the street from their facility which could be used instead. Surely arrangements could be made to do so. If this is deemed unworkable by Metrohealth, move the road so that their existing parking lot extends into what is now the street.

It is unconscionable that that the planning commission and our elected council members would agree to this.

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**Name** Tom Kocovsky 9

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**Public** Stop the war on trees

**Comment**

CH is missing a golden opportunity. Severance is thousands of square feet of available parking space and medical/office space. Retail is not coming back. Have Metro take over substantial parts of severance for medical functions. Doctors and other medical services will follow. The former shopping center can become thriving medical center.

Since the lock down, I've been walking the dog twice a day for about 5 miles a day (weather permitting) . I've been listening to the symphony of chain saws cutting down trees. The trees are why we moved to CH. I don't think I've seen a single replacement tree planted in the past year. CH is starting to look like one of those undesirable new development communities that was plunked down in a cornfield. We need to maintain the trees we have and replace the loss. CH needs to initiate a 2 for 1 replacement requirement. We so far behind, it's the only way to again become a tree friendly community.

The parking lot at Severance is getting scary. There are semis parked all over everywhere. To drive across the parking lot puts me in fear of being t-boned by a vehicle coming from between the trucks or trailers. I'm ready to start driving further, out of CH , to avoid that parking lot.

Encourage Metro to build the extra facilities in the semi parking lot and connect the complex by covered skyways/walkways like the CCF main campus on Prospect. The complex could eventually connect to the old Walmart and other retail space. Creating a magnificent med complex.

Cutting down trees for short term gains is going to kill the long term viability of CH. We are the green city by the blue lake. There are concrete jungles all around vying with each other to be cheaper, not better, not greener. This will compromise the character (and future) of CH.

If the city does capitulate, require Metro to replace each lost tree with 2 or 3 trees of 2.5 to 3 inch caliper. From what I've seen, too many home owners will not give the tree lawn trees a drop of water in a drought. There are dead tree lawn trees all around. They need to sponsor a youth program to drive water carts around watering the stressed tree lawn in the summer along with a tree planting youth program. Yes, mechanized machinery can dig to plant faster, but CH youth needs the opportunity to work.

Deny the cutting down of treed areas and require the asphalt jungle to be repurposed into useful space.

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**Name** Lynn Mentch 10

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**Public Comment** I'd like to submit a public comment regarding MetroHealth's plans at Severance Circle.

City Council Members, please do not approve the destruction of the woods to make room for more parking. There is plenty of unused parking at Severance. I've been a resident of Cleveland Heights for over 30 years and have walked around Severance hundreds of times. It is not dangerous to cross the street and there is more wildlife living there than most people realize. There is no reason to allow this.

There is also a lot of confusion around when this will be discussed and why the public comments were already taken down for the March 22nd meeting.

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**Name** Rebecca Horter 11

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**Public Comment**

1. The Cleveland Heights Master Plan's sustainability goals include protecting and expanding the tree canopy, especially at Severance. Approving the project as it is, with no stipulation to save the trees directly violates the city's stated policies.
2. The trees in this mature legacy forest are irreplaceable.
3. Trees filter air and stormwater and reduce runoff. They produce oxygen, cool the air and sequester carbon. Their presence increases the value of our real estate.
4. The trees slated for destruction constitute the densest and healthiest part of the forest.
5. These woods have suffered from years of reckless development, with the demolition of one small segment after another. Further destruction will degrade them as an ecosystem, depriving our community of the benefits ecosystems provide.
6. This ecosystem is a vital asset to our city and should under no circumstances be destroyed or degraded.

These few old growth forests that remain must be preserved at any cost. Cleveland Heights has been designated a tree city and the existence of these trees play a major impact in keeping our planet green and healthy. This is important for animal and human physical and mental health.

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**Name** Michael Wendorf 12

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**Public Comment** Please save the trees and nature at severance. This land is precious for life. We don't have much of it left and we need to protect it. There is a giant parking lot empty across the street. I alittle walk is health. Please Vote down the removal of an acre of 100 year old trees and its wildlife for more parking space.

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**Name** Raymond Lesser **13**

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**Public Comment** There are 700 acres of mostly unused parking lot across the street from the metro health center at severance. There is absolutely no reason to destroy an acre of mature forest to build yet another acre of parking. I'm sure that the city of Cleveland Heights and the MetroHealth authorities can figure out a way to buy or lease a part of the parking lot that already exists at severance. The city can easily facilitate this happening and build the necessary and traffic signals. Please vote against this project until the necessary adjustments can be made.

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**Name** Joanne Siegel **14**

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**Public Comment** Please do NOT allow MetroHealth to cut down ANY trees to make way for a parking lots! There is a gigantic lot across the road from them. They can lease out space, and IF necessary, put in a crosswalk and a light. There is absolutely no need to destroy any landscape to do this.

I am not against their expansion plans, or development in general, in Cleveland Heights. But, there is NO logical excuse to allow the destruction of mature trees IF there is a reasonable alternative.

There IS definitely a reasonable alternative! The study done determined that there is absolutely no need for additional parking spots, even with the expanded services. They suggested that the two lots that they already have should be better maintained. The stripes need to be redone so patrons can tell where the parking spots actually are, and they suggested that employees park in the lots further away from the building. They even recommended clever markings reminding them that the longer walk will have health benefits.

It seems to me that City Officials wish to allow the hospital to cut down the trees to make room for more parking spots, that also will not be maintained. What then? Give them even more spots? According to the study, they do not even project a need to use ANY of the spots across the road!"

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**Name** Penny Allen **15**

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**Public Comment** I urge you not to approve the MetroHealth plan to raze 40 acres of mature forest from the Severance property for parking. We need to preserve these tracts of mature woods wherever it's feasible in our communities for their value in sequestering carbon, holding runoff, providing bird nesting and wildlife habitat, easing the "heat islands" of surrounding buildings and asphalt, and providing the mental-health benefits of being able to view green space. There's no reason to lose more of those benefits when there is already plenty of parking space at Severance Center that could be made convenient with a stoplight and crosswalk.

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**Name** Edward Kalafat **16**

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**Public Comment** As a resident of the Milikin Neighborhood and a 61 year resident of CH I am asking (more like demanding) that City Council does not grant Metro Health the right to cut down the remaining trees on the severance site ,near them, but instead uses the acres of open parking already present and unused to fit Metro Health’s Parking needs.

The idea of destruction of these of trees is ludicrous, and unnecessary.

Plenty of unused blacktop already exists in that area.

So yes in fact I demand City Council denies this proposal.

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**Name** Patricia Hanavan **17**

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**Public Comment** I support the building of MetroHealth's new addition and behavioral health center. It's a much-needed facility. However, I hope that Council will NOT approve the removal of the woods at the edge of the property. Cleveland Heights needs more, not fewer, trees. Surely nearby parking could be provided by leasing from Severance Center.

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**Name** Elizabeth Mather **18**

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**Public Comment** Please require MetroHealth to utilize existing paved area for their needed parking at Severance Town Center rather than cutting existing tree cover. The tree cover in this area is part of the reason we choose to buy a house in this neighborhood. Also, at a time when many efforts are underway to expand tree canopy coverage to counteract urban heat island effects and to reduce storm drainage and to function as a carbon sink, it is necessary to consider the cost benefit to the neighborhood and our environment when accepting or rejecting this issue. Please be forward thinking and preserve this tree cover. It may not be ecological pristine, but it serves far more uses intact than a parking lot would.

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**Name** Sunniva Collins **19**

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**Public Comment** MetroHealth Proposed Expansion at Severance: the removal of nearly an acre of trees to create approx. 80 parking spots east of the proposed building is not acceptable to me as a life-long Cleveland Heights resident. It has always been a point of pride to live in a community that values our mature trees and canopy. It's embedded in our logo, and reflected in many of the names of our

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streets and parks. The environmental impact of this aspect of the development needs to be addressed.

I urge that other alternatives be evaluated and considered. Surface parking is a wasteful reason to remove more trees. So much of Severance has already been paved over, and it's not even being used! Isn't there a way to lease, rent or purchase parking that's already been developed?

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**Name** Carla Rautenberg 20

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**Public Comment** All over the world, people park their cars and cross a street to get where they're going every day of the week. Even people living in Cleveland Heights do this. To cut down mature trees forming part of a small but important forest system that absorbs stormwater and buffers adjacent residential areas from commercial activity is ecologically wrong. To do so in order to create additional parking for a facility sitting on the edge of acres of unused parking surface is a product of unhealthy thinking.

To get to work, to get to school, to go their doctors, and yes, to visit their loved ones in the hospital, people commonly park and walk across streets—even heavily traveled streets, which the Severance ring road is not. The addition of a traffic signal and a painted crosswalk could make it even safer to cross that street, where necessary, on foot.

I am disappointed in the lack of common sense demonstrated by Cleveland Heights city staff, the Planning Commission, the Board of Control and our City Council. It seems the new Planning Director was placed in an impossible position—these bizarre parking plans apparently were “baked in” to the design for the MetroHealth expansion before he arrived on the job.

The overwhelming sentiment in Cleveland Heights is FOR the MetroHealth Behavioral Health expansion at Severance. Certainly, I concur. And it is not MetroHealth's job to protect Cleveland Heights' environment. That is city government's job, and in this case, the job was not done right.

However, MetroHealth, which has been a hero in developing its headquarters neighborhood on the near west side, could wear the hero's cape once again, if it so chooses. It could commit to work with the Cleveland Heights Planning Director, Namdar (which owns the Severance Center property), and some resident experts in sustainable development to meet future parking needs without destroying part of our tree canopy.

This would be good stewardship on the part of all involved. And that's what we need now.

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**Name** Thomas Morgan 21

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**Public Comment** With all the vacant land in an empty shopping mall, you think it's best to cut down a woods for parking? What utter nonsense during global warming! Hello, is there anyone in there?

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**Name** Sara Prentice Manela **22**

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**Public Comment** I am greatly disturbed by the proposed removal of natural habitat and tree cover as part of Metro Health's expansion. We already have so much displaced wildlife in Cleveland Heights, and the obvious solution is to utilize some of the available parking already sitting empty at Severance. Please consider a solution that reduces our unused empty paved spaces and preserving our forests.

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**Name** Judith Hulse **23**

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**Public Comment** Cleveland Heights must establish it's place as a "green" community by leaving its trees and natural spaces alone. Commercial development can happen in a manner that respects nature first and foremost. We have everything to gain. Do not remove the Millikin Woods! Take care of them.

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**Name** Rebecca Slifer **24**

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**Public Comment** Please keep trees. Removal of this asset is irreversible and irresponsible. Cleveland needs every tree we have.

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**Name** David Narosny **25**

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**Public Comment** Most Heights residents are happy to have the expanded medical facility presence at Severance. However, we can ask the architects to use a little bit extra effort to design what's needed on existing non-forest land. Once natural resources are gone, they are gone forever. Save the trees.

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**Name** Karen Katzman **26**

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**Public Comment** I urge you to not allow the trees around MetroHealth Severance Campus to be cut down for their expansion. There are hundreds of existing paved parking spaces on the Severance Center property that could be acquired for MetroHealth's expansion parking needs. Let's keep that old growth area

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as is, it is an asset to the community and residents. There is really no need to cut down the trees as paved parking already exists.

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**Name** Sam Barker **27**

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**Public Comment** Cleveland Heights is known for its beautiful large trees and forested areas. But, if we do not protect them, they will slowly disappear, bringing with them the unintended consequences of concrete sprawl, urban heat, loss of animal life, etc. Please protect the Millikan woods and require a sensible evaluation by the city and metrohealth to seriously explore options to use nearby underutilized parking.

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**Name** Michael Morse **28**

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**Public Comment** Regarding the Metro Health Severance Expansion Plans  
Just as the mental health of a person depends on their physical health, the mental health of a community depends on the health of its physical environment. In this time of worldwide environmental crisis, cities everywhere are working to improve their environments by protecting, expanding and adding to their urban forests. This is a critical factor in making the city attractive to new residents and retaining existing residents. Cleveland Heights, as a “Tree City USA” community should be a leader in this effort. We must make every effort to avoid, reduce, and reverse the environmental impact of any development in our city.

Public boards and meetings are conducted for the purpose of informing and protecting the public. We require that the public be given time to understand and respond to information presented in a meeting before any vote for approval may be given. I reject the “emergency declaration” for this project. An emergency is something like a tornado, blizzard, or pandemic. Meeting a developer’s construction schedule is not an emergency.

While I support the Metro Health expansion in general, I am sure it can be accomplished without destroying a wide section of trees on the borders of the parking lot. The proposal to remove the trees on the north side of the parking lot, and to remove a 40ft wide swath of trees on the east side of the parking lot is exactly the opposite of what our community should expect in any development. The damage does not stop there because the “landbank” provision enables even deeper penetration of the forest at a future time if someone decides more parking is needed. Our city officials should not accept this aspect of the proposal and should require a better solution instead.

We are not talking about scenery here. These trees are part of the continuous corridor of urban forest stretching from South Taylor to the Millikin School and Metro Health properties, and from there north to Mayfield Road. This ecosystem includes the one of the last remaining sections of the Dugway Brook watershed that has not been buried by urban development. This is a treasure we should cherish and preserve, not vacant land to be paved over. It is well known that a

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continuous canopy of forest, including a mix of mature and young trees if vital to protecting our air, our water, and the physical and emotional health of our community. Metro Health's plan to put a few saplings in traffic islands and a grassy field is no substitute for protecting the existing forest.

I emphasize that I support the intentions of Metro Health to expand its facility. This must be done in a way that does not damage our environment.

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**Name** David Shimotakahara & Pandora Robertson **29**

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**Public Comment** Dear Mayor Stein and members of our City Council,  
The expansion of Metrohealth's facility at Severence Circle might make sense to the City of Cleveland Heights for many business and service reasons, adding resources to the community. However we add our names in questioning why that needs to be done at the expense of the irreplaceable natural resource of the green belt of Severence Woods, that the City is also entrusted to steward. We ask - if in assessing the impact of this development, what other options have been seriously and properly considered and if so, is there is another way forward that advances all interests? If not - why not?

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**Name** Merrie Frost **30**

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**Public Comment** Please do NOT cut down trees for a parking lot for Metro. Use the parking across the street. Put a light in and a crosswalk. Even a walking bridge would work, like the library has. Thanks!

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**Name** Jill Levin **31**

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**Public Comment** There is a global climate emergency, no longer debatable as we are already seeing the impact on weather and wildlife. We must do everything we can to protect ourselves as a species and as residents of this city, which includes preserving green space to improve the quality of the air around us and to allow for increased rains to have areas of absorption. The ecosystem, too, benefits from preserving the area as is.

It is short-sighted and irresponsible to cut down existing trees to create another paved area., particularly when it is not needed given the available parking space,

There are other solutions to the issue of getting patients safely to where they need to be: a clearly defined crosswalk; shuttle busses or cars to transport for those who cannot walk the distance, etc.

Remove the possibility of cutting down the trees and you will find creative and workable

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solutions that don't further damage our already endangered environment.

We rightfully expect and demand responsible creative solutions from those in charge of this project. It impacts ALL of us.

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**Name** Moshe Koval **32**

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**Public Comment** I'm very concerned about the proposal is to cut down a swath of healthy young forest of native species appropriate to their important hydrologic and ecologic niche, and then come back in and replant the now clear-cut, denuded area with a handfull of red maple and a bunch of non-native evergreens, at least one of which (the arborvitae) our local deer consider deer M&Ms. How can this, in any sense, be considered a good 'landbanking' practice?

Or good landscaping practice....

The area in question is part of the headwaters of a already hugely compromised local stream, the Dugway. Whatever is done to any headwaters is paid for, literally, further downstream. This stream is already severely compromised through burying and culverting. When is enough?

Our native oaks and maples play an important role in our hydrologic systems by absorbing and holding huge amounts of water in their root systems during our wet periods....without the need for so called drainage "improvements". The best landbanking process for this parcel would be simply to leave it alone.

The fact that there is so much unused impermeable surface already in severance which can be converted into additional parking instead of deforesting our local disappearing wetland just makes this proposal even more frustrating.

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**Name** Kathryn Michaels **33**

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**Public Comment** Please don't tear down any more trees. There is so much unused space at Severance Circle. There's no need to develop more land. Get creative and take back some of the already dead space.

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**Name** Marty Bergman **34**

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**Public Comment** I add my objection to destroying tress in our Tree City USA. I have read many good options from our residents that could work. One option I did not see is to build a parking garage, using the existing property. This would also allow for a safe enclosed sheltered walkway for staff and visitors. Please review and consider all options.

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**Name** Alice Kessler **35**

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**Public Comment** In regards to the new Metrohealth development, please utilize the existing parking lots at Severance Circle, INSTEAD OF clearing out any of the forested area.

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**Name** Angelo Nicoletti-Eaton **36**

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**Public Comment** In regards to the metro health center, please on behalf of the people that live here utilize the 99% abandoned severance center and parking! Please do not destroy more of the little woods we have left out of convenience! This is one of the features that defines our neighborhood!

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**Name** Elizabeth Nicoletti Eaton **37**

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**Public Comment** It would be a terrible shame to lose more green space in an area that has an over abundance of parking spaces that are never used. Cleveland Heights has limited areas where a person can admire our trees. Please do not let them destroy this space. There has to be a way to utilize the thousands of parking spaces across the street. To gain roughly 80 parking spaces is not worth the detrimental impact of removing more trees in our community.

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**Name** Elizabeth Clough **38**

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**Public Comment** I am in complete support of Metro Health expanding their services to include behavioral health services. I am not in support of the city granting them permission to remove trees on the Severance property to create additional parking. There is currently an expansive parking area across the street at Severance Mall that is greatly under utilized. Surely Metro Health should be given permission to utilize the existing parking lot. The City of Cleveland Heights and its residents have a long history of valuing and nurturing green space in the city. Please vote against this request and assist Metro Health with obtaining parking in the existing lot. Thank you for your stewardship and attention to this matter. Beth Clough

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**Name** Nancy Falkner **39**

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**Public Comment** In this time of climate change, preserving our trees and ecosystems is more important than ever. Severance Center has become a virtual wasteland of asphalt and empty stores. Why not save the trees and make a Circle Drive detour to wind through the empty parking lot. Then Metro Health Center could easily have ready made treeless parking adjacent to their building and preserve a precious forested part of the city. Please think about the future and not the immediate need. SAVE the TREES!

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**Name** Nathan Holstein 40

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**Public Comment** Please find an alternative to destroying more of our natural spaces for the Severance MetroHealth addition. There's bound to be another option rather than deforesting more of the Forest City.

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**Name** Jana Friess 41

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**Public Comment** No, no, no to business as usual - it's time to use common sense. In the vast wasteland that is Severance Town Center, surely there is adequate available space for almost unlimited parking. Get a minivan to transport people, if necessary, but don't add to the devastation of the Forest City!

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**Name** Kevin Horter 42

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**Public Comment** In this moment we are facing unprecedented and very real threats of climate change. Deforestation is a proven cause of global warming. I grew in Cleveland Heights and have lived all over the country and have always felt pride in that we are a community that cares for our natural resources and protects the environment. In recent years, we have decided that development and in my opinion over-development with short term gains, has sent us down a road in which we as a community are turning our backs on the environment and our future generations at a time when the stakes are higher than ever. You can argue that this is a small piece of land and will have limited effect. But this is not true and is part of a larger pattern of eradicating a huge part of what has made this community so special— our trees. We as community need to reverse course on the trend of placing a premium on short-term profit at the expense of our forests, i.e. Oakwood, Legacy Village and now with this proposal. There are other viable options here that would spare our beautiful trees. I encourage you to consider each one of those precious trees and the ecosystem that they support. Please think in the long term and what our own legacy will be when it comes to turning the tide of climate change. This is absolutely not the path we should continue

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on. It is not the environmentally-minded Cleveland Heights that I grew up in, and that I decided to return to.

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**Name** Nidia Perez **43**

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**Public Comment** Please save our trees in Millikan woods/surrounding Severance town center.  
There is so much empty space at Severance Circle for parking . It would be a crime to take down any trees.  
Please consider the environment,  
One of the reasons why I bought my house in the Heights 30 years ago was because of its preservation of trees.

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**Name** Bob Kloos **44**

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**Public Comment** I am grateful that MetroHealth is expanding services in my zip code. I am disheartened that hundreds of trees will be sacrificed in the process. My sister worked in Public Relations at Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene OR. When they built a new 1 million + square foot facility, one of the most appreciated amenities on the grounds was a stand of Douglass Fir trees that enclose 50% of the hospital perimeter. "The trees were healing," she said. Please consider an alternative to removing some of our city's "old growth forest." Certainly parking can be relocated easier than trees. Thank you.

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**Name** Rebecca Roark **45**

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**Public Comment** Please keep the woods intact. It is a magnificent habitat for beautiful animals that enrich our lives.  
Please don't be short-sighted.

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**Name** Blayne Murray **46**

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**Public Comment** Please do not cut down the trees in Millikin woods for the MetroHealth project. There is plenty of parking near there already and the woods are an important wetland area.

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Name Joan Spoerl 47

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Public Comment To members of City Council,

My dear brother John, who died of Covid in January, suffered terribly due to severe mental illness and a decades' long struggle with drug and alcohol addiction and periodic homelessness in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He also loved nature, trees and plants which brought him solace. So while I am pleased that MetroHealth will be bringing much needed services to our community to ease the suffering of others, I write now to express my dismay at the plan to destroy 40 feet of the Millikin Woods.

The research on the benefits of mature trees is clear -- for the watershed, air quality and even mental health. The research is also clear on how cutting off one part of the forest negatively impacts the remaining forest. And again, research is clear that older, more mature trees are the most beneficial.

With the watershed issues facing our immediate Cleveland and wider Lake Erie community, we simply can't afford to do this. When I visit Severance, what do I see? Concrete and parking lots, mostly unused. There is absolutely no reason to add more parking spots for this facility with the abundance of impervious surfaces already available.

I urge you to reject this proposal to cut any trees. Why the haste on this decision? Be creative and consider the other options so readily visible when one visits Severance Center.

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Name Richard Thompson 48

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Public Comment Work with MetroHealth to come to a compromise, please don't chase another business looking to expand out of CleHts.

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Name Catalina Teba 49

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Public Comment The destruction of Millikin Woods as part of Metrohealth's expansion should be avoided- there is plenty of empty eye sore areas in Severance, and those areas already commercialized should be used instead. I oppose destroying Milliken Woods.

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Name Aaron Manela 50

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Public Comment Regarding RESOLUTION NO. 28-2021 (PD)

While I applaud the expansion of MetroHealth's behavioral health expansion, I am against further deforestation of Cleveland Heights's open spaces without offset. The deforestation of Severance, and along Warrensville Center with the Walmart and adjacent complexes, has left wildlife - deer and coyote and woodchucks and the bird and smaller animal populations - nowhere to go but the backyards of citizens.

I would urge the council to either require MetroHealth to buy parking spaces across the street in the hundred-plus acres of parking, and set up a light and crosswalk, or offset the deforestation with reforestation, also across the street where the hundred-plus acres of parking are.

On a related note, I urge the council to take the abandoned and failed commercial blight that is the East side of Severance where Walmart and other enterprises used to be under eminent domain and re-green it as parks and open space for both wildlife and citizen use.

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Name Eric Friess 51

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Public Comment Wildlife resides in the wooded area near expansion plans for new MetroHealth facility. The area is already an ocean of asphalt. Pave paradise to put up a parking lot, should not be our legacy for this region.

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Name Sonya Miklowski 52

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Public Comment I am against removing mature forest/wooded areas surrounding the MetroHealth campus at Severance. There is so much unused space that is already cleared and paved. There should be a solution to MetroHealth's increasing needs for parking that utilizes the existing parking without removing trees. We in Cleveland Heights value our trees and green spaces and removing almost an acre of trees for parking when there is unused parking that is easily accessible is not within this community's values. Other options need to be explored. A footbridge or a designated crosswalk with a pedestrian controlled stoplight could be employed. This area already has so many vacancies and an excessive amount of paved parking for the amount of actual traffic/visitors to Severance. More is just uncalled for. We do not need to lose more of our precious tree cover. Please do not allow this.

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Name Toni Thayer 53

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Public Comment Regarding the proposed MetroHealth expansion at Severance and the question of parking: The idea of clearing the Millikin woods in order to build a new parking surface next to the empty expanse of Severance parking is horrendous and in direct contradiction of the city's sustainability goals. Approving the project as it is, with no stipulation to save the trees, directly violates the city's stated policies, and council needs to act on this matter. We can do better than this. The woods are a vital and already compromised ecosystem. They are an asset to our city and their protection is an investment in our future. They should not be destroyed for any reason, but especially not for a parking lot, of all things. The nearby existing empty expanse of concrete and blacktop is already a grave problem for our community. Figure out a way to use it for MetroHealth. Be creative in thinking about traffic patterns and crosswalks. Yes, it may be temporary should -- as every resident of the Heights hopes and prays -- Severance ever be redeveloped and that space claimed for some vibrant purpose. However, in that event, the city and MetroHealth would have ample lead time to plan for and even partner with a new developer. In 10 years, in 20, in 50, which do we want to be known for? Thriving natural resources, including protected mature trees and a robust tree canopy, which contributes to air and water quality among many other benefits, or an endless expanse of blacktop? Parking is a temporary issue. It is not worth clear cutting 100-year-old trees. Our entire planet is facing climate crisis. This is real and permanent. You have before you a local opportunity to contribute to a better way forward by being good stewards of our land and resources. Take this opportunity.

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Name Carolyn Freer 54

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Public Comment Please SAVE the trees in Millikan Woods. We need to keep all of trees and we need to keep Planting new trees. Thanks. Resident of Cleveland Hts for 76 years. Keep all trees, please.

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Name Nicole Pritts 55

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Public Comment Good Afternoon,  
I urge you to reconsider deforesting the Milliken Woods for additional parking spaces for MetroHealth:  
  
-There are acres of underutilized adjacent parking spots and multiple options (corsswalk, pedestrian bridge, etc.) for making these spaces safely accessible.  
  
-It is my understanding that an analysis indicates that, with better maintenance, the existing parking spaces are adequate for MetroHealth patients and employees, even with expanded services

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-The value of mature forest is priceless and irreplaceable; landscaping with new plantings does not provide the same value nor does it replace the existing ecosystem directly impacts the Dugway Brook.

Please consider long-term effects on our community and citizens. The interests of big money entities should not be the primary concern.

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Name Marc Lefkowitz 56

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Public  
Comme  
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Dear MetroHealth and City of Cleveland Heights,

We are writing to express concern over your plan to cut down 1.3 acres of mature trees on the eastern edge of your property at Severance Circle in Cleveland Heights for the purpose of expanding parking. First, we are patients of MetroHealth, and appreciate your expanded presence in Cleveland Heights. It is why we are also troubled by this decision.

As a healthcare institution that has committed to the national EcoDistrict plan on its main campus, we patients and residents have come to expect a real, strong commitment to sustainability from MetroHealth. By not considering the option of auxiliary parking from the ample supply across the road on Severance Circle in lieu of removing a forest for that parking, you and the city have demonstrated a lack of creativity and have underestimated your patients who would be willing to park and walk across the street. I know that is not the case for everyone, but surely a courtesy shuttle is a worthwhile consideration for those less able to make that simple walk.

With your EcoDistrict on your main campus, you have shown an incredible willingness to be a creative placemaker for the community. We urge you to extend that vision to your satellite campus in Cleveland Heights. You can probably tell by the outpouring of support for the natural environment, that a large group who lives in Cleveland Heights cares as deeply about preserving this forest as they do in wishing you much success in expanding your operation at Severance. The two need not be mutually exclusive.

We ask that you and the city reconsider all of your options before choosing the most expedient. The city agrees with us; it adopted in its 2019 Master Plan a key goal of the community's -- to preserve trees and green space. Let's show the region that it is possible to have a thoughtful, sustainable development that also satisfies a key tenet of the community which it serves.

p.s. Today is International Forest Day. Did you know that the world is losing 10 million hectares of forest each year - about the size of Iceland? Forests are crucial to stopping climate change.

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Name Susan Cady 57

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Public Comment  
Please stop the loss of such an ancient stand of trees in our city - I have walked in those woods with grandkids & made it an old growth forest lesson. Rarely is the Metro parking lot more than half to 2/3 empty.

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Name Deborah Van Kleef 58

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Public Comment  
Thank you for rescheduling this special City Council meeting to enable the public to comment on a development project of such importance to our community.

The new behavioral health unit at the MetroHealth Severance location will provide much-needed services. I welcome it wholeheartedly, along with, I am sure, most of my fellow residents. I am deeply concerned, however, about the hospital's intention to remove a 40-foot strip--nearly an acre--of the Millikin Woods to install new parking spaces along the east and north boundaries of their property.

Hospital officials, Cleveland Heights planning commissioners and members of the Board of Control refused to seriously consider the possibility of an arrangement to use existing underutilized spaces across Severance Circle from the MetroHealth campus. I realize such an arrangement might be a bit complicated, and would certainly require the installation of a crosswalk and a traffic light to keep employees and patients safe as they cross the road.

But the area condemned to the ax is part of a mature forest, with some trees over 100 years old. Their value as part of an ecosystem cannot be replaced by baby trees in islands strewn around the parking lot, and patches of green space, even if they consist of native species.

The sustainability goals in Cleveland Heights' master plan require the maintenance of green infrastructure and the expansion of the tree canopy. The map of target areas for adding trees includes Severance. It hardly makes sense for the city to approve removing mature forest in opposition to its own master plan. The Millikin Woods are more than mere greenery. The trees there filter rainwater and help divert it from storm drains, sending it more slowly into the small stream that feeds Dugway Brook, which in turn takes it to Lake Erie. They remove pollutants from our air, provide us with oxygen to breathe, sequester carbon and cool their surroundings in the summer. They provide habitat for many species of birds and insects. These few acres of woodland, saved when the old estate was demolished to build the mall, are a complete ecosystem, and as vital a part of our community as houses, stores, streets and institutions.

The new hospital unit will contribute to the health of the people in our community. But we cannot trade off a healthy environment for healthy people. We need both, and ultimately each depends on the other. The city should examine every proposed development, starting with this one, through the lens of sustainability. Finding an environmentally responsible resolution will take patience, creativity and time, but it can be done.

In 2012 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 21 the International Day of Forests. The 2021 theme is, "Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being." Cleveland Heights should be a city where "recovery and well-being" is a goal both its people and its natural infrastructure.

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Name Jeff Your 59

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Public Comment It is especially galling that Metrohealth sits across the street from one of the county's largest and least utilized parking lots. There are more than 700 acres of parking inside Severance Circle, 70% of it unused. On Google Earth, Severance is a visible eyesore from 10,000 feet, an embarrassment to our city. Surveys show that residents' number one concern is the condition of Severance. At the Planning Commission hearing this past Wednesday, a resident proposed that Metrohealth and the city work together on an alternative to destroying part of the forest. A hospital official responded that they do not own the parking area across the road, and it might be developed in the future. He and members of the Planning Commission agreed that it would be irresponsible to require employees and patients to cross Severance Circle. (They did not consider the possibility of installing a crosswalk and a traffic light.)

Is it not irresponsible to clear-cut a 40-foot swath of forest? These woods are fragile and in need of protection. Encroachment will only make them more vulnerable. Moreover, tree removal violates the sustainability goals in the city's much-touted master plan, which calls for restoration of the tree canopy, with Severance included in the target area. How many residents would consider trees-for-parking an acceptable trade-off?

1. The Master Plan's sustainability goals call for protecting and expanding the tree canopy, especially at Severance. Approving the project as it is, with no stipulation to save the trees directly violates the city's stated policies.

2. The trees in this mature legacy forest are irreplaceable.

3. Trees filter air and stormwater and reduce runoff. They produce oxygen, cool the air and sequester carbon. Their presence increases the value of our real estate.

4. The trees slated for destruction constitute the densest and healthiest part of the forest.

5. These woods have suffered from years of reckless development, with the demolition of one small segment after another. Further destruction will degrade them as an ecosystem, depriving our community of the benefits ecosystems provide.

6. This ecosystem is a vital asset to our city and should under no circumstances be destroyed or degraded.

Thank you for defending this unique asset to our environment.

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Name Cynthia Larsen 60

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Public Comment I am writing regarding the proposed additional parking lot at Severance for the MetroHealth expansion. I am opposed to this because we already have too much underutilized parking at Severance. Creating a crosswalk and stoplight for visitors seems like a much better solution. One of the things I value most about Cleveland Heights is the green space, and the fact that children can still find "wild" spaces to explore. This is a rare and valuable thing. Wild green spaces are also good for our air quality and our mental health. It seems like a contradiction to remove more

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green space, more trees, for mental health/behavioral health parking lots. I think our city can come up with a more creative solution. Thank you. Cynthia Larsen

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Name Steven Gubkin 61

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Public Comment I urge you to reject MetroHealth's proposal to remove mature forest along the east and north borders of their property for the purpose of increased parking space.

Across Severance Circle are 70+ acres of mostly unused parking.

MetroHealth could lease spaces from the mall owner, and a crosswalk and traffic light could be added for the safety of employees and patients crossing the road.

Replacing a natural forested area with more impervious surfaces would be a grave error when so much underutilized parking space is available in the immediate vicinity.

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Name Josephine Moore 62

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Public Comment Regarding the MetroHealth expansion plans

In our city's Master Plan, we made a commitment to sustainability. We made this commitment because we recognize that the way we do things is NOT sustainable. For too long we've exploited and destroyed our natural resources and built in a way that works against our surrounding habitat rather than with it. In doing so, we have been borrowing against our future, and the climate crisis that we are now experiencing is just one of many indicators that the bill is now coming due.

I am asking that you do not approve the aspect of the proposal that will remove a 40-foot strip of mature trees and the wetlands they inhabit.

This is not just about environmental sustainability. It is also about economic sustainability. These are wetlands. One thing great that wetlands do is absorb storm water. And the more storm water that gets absorbed this way, the less that goes to our sewer system, which is already not compliant with EPA guidelines and not sufficient for our storm runoff needs. We know that upgrading our sewer system to meet EPA guidelines and our storm runoff needs is going to be expensive and is a cost that will be passed on to our already overtaxed taxpayers. We also know that the more green space we have, the less storm runoff there is and, thus, the less we will need to upgrade our sewer system in the coming years. When we take this into account, it is more economically sustainable to preserve as much green space as we can so we can work with our surrounding habitat rather than against it and, therefore, minimize costs in the future.

We made a commitment to sustainability. And that requires us to change our ways. We need to change how we view our natural environment, how we plan new projects, what we require from people planning to develop, and how we build. We can't keep doing things the same way and expect a different result.

This may require creative thinking and new ideas. Luckily, there are smart, resourceful,

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and innovative people working on this project. I have every confidence that they can find a way to meet the goals of MetroHealth without making our local government turn its back on our city's values and commitments.

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Name Pat Dillard 63

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Public  
Comm  
ent

Dear Council Members,

I am totally in favor of MetroHealth's plan to build a facility which will serve adolescents, adults and seniors suffering from drug and alcohol addiction and behavioral health issues. These services are very much needed in our community.

However, I would like to urge the Council to be creative in considering the parking situation. Cutting down almost an acre of trees is not in the best interests of anyone. Our tree canopy has been shrinking for many years, and we need to increase it, not cut it down.

I do not pretend to have all the answers, but I would suggest one possibility is an attached multi-story parking garage which would take up less land space and provide easier access to the building for both patients, families and workers.

I have confidence that our Council, along with our City Planners, can come up with a better solution - one which mirrors our community values.

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Name Jan Jones 64

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Public  
Comm  
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My name is Jan Hollinger Jones. I have lived in Cleveland Heights for 45 years and worked at MetroHealth for 18 years so you might say I have an interest in the proposed expansion of the MetroHealth campus at Severance. I am very much in favor of the proposed inpatient mental health facility . However, I am totally opposed to the destruction of much of the adjacent forest to provide 80 parking spaces. I am opposed because it will upset the ecosystem which is such an asset to Cleveland Heights. Cleveland Heights supposedly has a policy of sustainability. How can destroying part of a mature forest to build a parking lot make sense (when there is a huge unused parking lot across the street)? I beg that you reconsider this part of the proposal and try to negotiate with the owners of the old Walmart parking lot. Please save the forest! Thank you.

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Name Susan Weber 65

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Public Comment           As a concerned citizen of Cleveland Heights I urge you to require MetroHealth and city staff to explore together how the hospital can utilize parking inside Severance Circle. I believe it's a civic duty to preserve the beauty of our community and I oppose the clearcutting of trees when so much parking nearby goes wasted.

                                  Please act to responsibly preserve the natural environment in our city.

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Name     Louisa Oliver 66

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Public Comment     I write to to endorse the proposed compromise on cutting the trees to make room for parking at the new addition to the Metro Health facility. Building parking spots around the most mature trees will save the oldest ones, provide shade and a much more attractive area than a flat span of concrete. It adds permeability as well. This compromise will go a long way to demonstrate Council's seriousness of purpose and responsiveness to community concerns. Thank you for your serious consideration.  
Louisa Oliver

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Name     Katherine Petrey 67

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Public Comment           Members of City Council,  
                                  Thank you for rescheduling your consideration of MetroHealth's expansion plan so as to allow for further public comment. While public comment was permitted at the recent Planning Commission and Board of Control meetings, notices of those meetings and the opportunity for public comment were not widely distributed. As currently planned, this expansion will have a serious negative environmental impact on our City's mature tree canopy and water quality. Cleveland Heights residents deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns about environmental impact to their elected representatives well in advance of Council taking final action.

                                  I ask that Council delay action on the MetroHealth expansion plan until MetroHealth and/or the County have pursued all other parking options, including leasing or purchasing some portion of the already existing and underutilized parking area at Severance Town Center. I understand that representatives of MetroHealth consider leasing parking space to be unwise, as the lessor might cancel or not renew the lease. Have those representatives taken in consideration that the County has

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eminent domain powers that might permit the taking of the parking space for MetroHealth's use?

I also understand that MetroHealth representatives have expressed safety concerns about employees or patients crossing the Severance Circle road to access MetroHealth facilities. Those safety concerns, which could easily be met with a pedestrian friendly stoplight, do not justify the destruction of a mature forest and potential contamination of ground water.

At the Board of Control meeting, a County representative cited MetroHealth's not requesting tax abatement as a factor justifying the City's speedy approval of the expansion plan. In fact, the MetroHealth property at Severance has been entirely exempt from property taxes since tax year 2013. The prior owner of that property was the second largest taxpayer in the entire CHUH school district. Perhaps, as an acknowledgment of the financial impact of its privileged tax position, Metrohealth might respond to community concerns and pursue other readily available parking options rather than contributing to further destruction of our tree canopy and ground water contamination.

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Name     Walter Thiem 68

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Public             I am writing today to object to the approval of Metro Health to remove trees  
Comm             along the southern edge of its property for the installation of new on-grade parking.  
ent                The reasons for my objection are as follows.

1. There is no need for additional parking. According to the study by Walker Consultants, no additional parking is required for the facility including for the new behavioral health center. If additional parking spaces were needed, Metro Health's Cleveland Heights facility sits on the edge of a massive underutilized parking lot.

2. According to the Walker Consultants study, the current Metro Health parking lot could be made more efficient through reconfiguration, better signage and striping and with better maintenance.

3. More impermeable paving would add to an already existing storm water runoff problem. Residents of Cuyahoga County are already paying a premium for precipitation runoff on their property. The county is in the midst of a massive, decades long, public works project to help eliminate this problem. Adding additional hard surfaces when none are needed would be a bad idea.

4. The existing mature trees provide essential services. They act not only as a visual buffer between Severance Center and the adjacent residential neighborhood, but also as a carbon sink.

In conclusion, there isn't a need for additional parking at Metro Health and there are multiple reasons not to add additional parking at their facility.

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Name Robin koslen 69

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Public I have questions that I would like answered.  
Comm  
ent 1. What attempts have been made to secure parking for the facility with the owner of Severance Mall;  
2. Has anyone from the City or MetroHealth attempted to secure a long term lease for the parking lot presently available next to MetroHealth?  
3. Has anyone investigated securing the parking through eminent domain?  
4. Are Council members concerned about the lack of transparency involved in this process?  
5. MetroHealth submitted their plans to the City on March 2, 2012. Does Council consider this to be the appropriate timeline to secure community input?  
6. The issue of walking from the parking adjacent to the Metro facility has been raised as a concern as to why the woods needs to be cut down. Is walking not a concern at Metro's west side facility?

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Name David Krauss 70

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Public Please consider using the abundant parking available at Severance before the City cuts  
Comm down any more trees in "Tree City" for additional parking for the new Metro building.  
ent Let's use the resources that are already available and find a creative solution to this situation.

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Name Druscilla Robertson 71

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Public It is my hope that city council consider other parking situations for the Metro build.  
Comm Further deforestation of the area in question would be a travesty. Currently there are  
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ample areas that are already paved and devoid of life. Please consider using one of these areas before adding to our current asphalt jungle.

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Name John Hubbard 72

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Public Comment No parking expansion for MetroHealth

The planned MetroHealth facility will certainly benefit the city but there's no need for additional parking, especially at the expense of wetlands, greenspace, and mature trees. The loss of a wetland, particularly in a city with an expensive consent decree, suggests no lessons have been learned.

In addition to the existing acres of parking within Severance, you might reference any of hundreds of articles discussing how rideshare is changing the need for parking. Here are a few headlines and links - note the dates - none of this is new thinking:

The Future of Parking in an Era of Car-Sharing – 2015

<https://www.govtech.com/transportation/The-Future-of-Parking-in-an-Era-of-Car-Sharing.html>

How Building Owners Can Prepare for the Rise of Autonomous Vehicles and Ridesharing – 2018

<https://builtworlds.com/news/how-building-owners-can-prepare-for-the-rise-of-autonomous-vehicles-and-ridesharing/>

How Uber, self-driving cars, and more are changing real estate - 2017

[https://www.inquirer.com/philly/business/real\\_estate/uber-self-driving-cars-and-more-how-theyre-changing-real-estate-20170623.html](https://www.inquirer.com/philly/business/real_estate/uber-self-driving-cars-and-more-how-theyre-changing-real-estate-20170623.html)

Parking lots disappearing in ride-sharing era as downtown construction booms - 2018

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/ryan-ori/ct-biz-parking-redevelopment-ryan-ori-20180308-story.html>

Additionally many publications, including the Wall Street Journal, have reported on the declining numbers of teens pursuing a drivers license.

(<https://www.wsj.com/articles/driving-the-kids-are-so-over-it-11555732810>)

The following Medium article is both more current and more thorough in research cited, reaching the same conclusion -- there are fewer drivers:

<https://medium.com/swlh/american-teens-are-driving-less-and-the-reasons-are-more-than-economic-4cf6217375a1>

Essentially, there is absolutely no need for additional parking. Destroying wetlands and trees for unneeded space is irresponsible when forecasts for climate

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change warn us against such actions.

I urge you to reject this plan and focus on future facing solutions.

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Name Robert Berger 73

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Public Comment I cross Euclid avenue. To get to the cleveland clinic I walk a further distance. And cross a much busier street to get there. Than it would be to cross the road at severance. On Carnegie a much busier street the clinic built a bridge. Which is also an alternative for metro health. How does the cost to build the proposed parking lot compare with purchasing parking from severance

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Name Joan Taslitz 74

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Public Comment I am against removing any trees to extend the Metro parking lot. Not only do they serve as a natural buffer between the commercial and residential spaces they also help to keep it cooler, reduce noise and provide oxygen . I live near there and know that this part of the city is already hotter than other areas.

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Name Summer Watterson 75

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Public Comment I wanted to write to note my concern regarding the proposed expansion of the MetroHealth facility at the Severance property. Losing more trees in our community is a concern for public health and I would expect that MetroHealth would consider that in their decisions. However, it seems as though there is a plan to move forward with some clear cutting of the Millikin Woods. With the immense amount of parking available at Severance and no obvious intentions to use that space, I'm concerned about the lack of creativity with CH and MH. Please reconsider leaving the green space and native woods behind the Millikin building and show the residents of the north side of town that you value their opinions as much as the south side of town.

I would also like to note that I am very pleased that MetroHealth is choosing Cleveland Heights for the new behavioral health facility. I just very strongly believe

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that there are enough creative people on the expansion teams to make this work without disrupting the neighborhood.

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Name Maribeth Katt 76

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Public Comment Cleveland Heights used to be called the city of trees. Currently we are creating more and more impermeable surfaces, in this case, right next to a huge impermeable surface, Severance Mall, which has been mostly standing empty for years. I believe that efforts to preserve trees and greenspace are integral to preserving the beauty of our city. And we all know how impermeable surfaces and continually more serious weather events don't play well together.

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Name Susan Myers 77

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Public Comment I am very opposed to taking our green space away- It has been in our backyard for at least 70 years when it was part of the Severance estate. You have a whole empty mall across the street-waiting to become a vital part of Cleveland Heights. Rebuild that area-Utilize the vast amount of space that is available to the city. Leave the small amount of green space we have in this neighborhood- Animals will have no where to go but in our yards and do more damage.

Photosynthesis uses the energy from the sun's rays to split carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release more oxygen back to the neighborhood.

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Name Sarah Horter 78

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Public Comment Tearing down a forest to be replaced by concrete is regressive and shortsighted. Preservation and sustainability of wild areas/forests is needed now more than ever.

Especially considering there is a giant parking lot adjacent that is unused. Imagination, progressive thinking is essential. Save the trees and existing ecosystem!

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'When the Last Tree Is Cut Down, the Last Fish Eaten, and the Last Stream Poisoned, You Will Realize That You Cannot Eat Money' Native American proverb

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Name Sam Bell 79

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Public Comment While I strongly support the idea of Metrohealth adding additional service capabilities and capacities to its Severance location, I am concerned about possible detrimental effects of the current project as proposed. Each of you has received a more detailed email from me on this subject already.

As the volume of comments you will receive should make clear, it is time to reset the inordinately rushed process surrounding this project. Under normal circumstances, the County, in its MetroHealth guise, would have held one or more community meetings, and perhaps a design charrette, before submitting a project plan. This would have allowed an opportunity for communication and discussion before locking in the final design. The architect of the current plan says it is "too late to make any changes." I respectfully disagree.

Tree canopy preservation and restoration are key parts of the Cleveland Heights Master Plan. Like many of my neighbors, I spent many hours and a great deal of effort to make sure that this specific language was included in the Master Plan. It was not our intention that the City should then ignore this issue. We expect you to hold yourselves accountable to the principles and strategies expressed in the Master Plan.

Accordingly, I call on you to find a way to pause this process while you invite the County to meet with the community. Collectively, we are a group of deeply concerned individuals with a broad range of expertise and a bent for creativity. I am confident that we can find alternative designs that meet both MetroHealth's needs and our own.

Trees are one of the most important weapons in the arsenal against climate change.

We've lost a great deal of our urban tree canopy in the past few decades. Let's not lose any more of it for the sake of mere convenience.

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Name Danielle van Heeckeren 80

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Public Comment Removing beautiful mature trees at a location that already has ample parking is ridiculous. While we welcome MetroHealth's investment in the well-being of Cleveland Hts' residents, we respectfully ask that you utilize the existing infrastructure. There is more than ample parking available in Severance Circle. Until the existing mall is completely inhabited, there is absolutely no reason to pave another square inch of green space!

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Name Robert sanders 81

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Public Comment PLEASE, it's not too late to stop this unnecessary destruction of a precious natural ecosystem.  
I think that the logical alternative would be using some of existing parking for their expansion. Access to additional parking is right across the street or they could build a parking garage. It's time to stop thinking that progress has a God given right over Nature. Thank you

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Name Laura Marks 82

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Public Comment Hello, my good Council People.  
It will greatly benefit Cleveland Heights to have a rehab center at Severence. However, the plan needs to be modified to preserve the stands of trees to the east and north of the proposed building site.  
  
Ameliorating Severence was the top priority of the Charter Review process. Further degradation of the natural features at Severence is counter to this mandate.  
  
I have addressed Council for years on the benefits of trees. The MetroHealth project is an instance where your understanding of these benefits needs to be taken into consideration in the building design.  
  
The buffer zones of trees need to be left in tact, especially the area on the eastern edge of the MetroHealth property that buffers Milikin school from activities on the MetroHealth campus.  
  
Let me remind you of some of the benefits of trees:

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In this case, the stand of trees separates land uses. If Milikin were to once again be a viable elementary school, I would want the children to be separated from drug addicts.

Trees cool the urban heat island. Severence has 50 acres of impermeable surface absorbing heat.

Trees absorb water. The area to the east of the parking lot is a vernal pool wetland. Homes down hill from Severence, including my house, have wet basements because the former wetlands at Severence have been replaced by impermeable surfaces.

Trees reduce all stress related diseases including heart attack, stroke, COPD, and ADDICTION.

Trees reduce respiratory diseases such as asthma, and bronchitis.

Trees reduce crime, including domestic violence.

Trees reduce depression and anxiety.

Trees increase property values.

Trees cause people to spend more time and more money in shopping districts where they are present.

Trees give shade that encourages people to gather, strengthening communities.

The tree canopy in the neighborhood south of Severence is one of the most depleted in the City of Cleveland Heights. Please do not allow it to be degraded further.

Cleveland Heights, as in most cities, has a disparity of the benefits of trees. The negative impacts would disproportionately affect the residents of the the northeastern portion of Cleveland Heights.

We grieved when the Coventry/Fairmount area lost 56 tree in the microburst of 2019. At Severence, we are looking at losing even more trees by our own hand , not an “Act of God”.

Trees clean our air and water.

Trees give food and habitat to birds and other species.

Reiterating, I hope to see a rehab center built at MetroHealth. We simply need to design the facility to accommodate both humans and other species.

People are happier and healthier when we live with trees.

Thank you for your service to the community.

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Name Mark Salling 83

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Public Comment While I support the proposal from MetroHealth to add a behavioral health facility to its Cleveland Heights campus, I am very concerned that the proposed footprint expansion plan being considered by Council unnecessarily destroys valued woodland and environmentally sensitive land.

I live in the neighborhood directly affected by the expansion and, along with my neighbors, put great value on the legacy wooded area to the east of the current MetroHealth facility. The City’s statement on valuing sustainability says: “Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and ecological requirements of present and future generations.”

(<https://www.clevelandheights.com/329/Sustainability>). The proposed expansion would cast that principle aside.

Furthermore, a rushed decision, with little opportunity for citizen and neighborhood input, would violate trust in the City’s government.

I am asking Council to require the developer to go back to the drawing board and present a design that honors the city’s and our neighborhood’s values.

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Name Isabel Trautwein 84

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Public Comment SAVE Millikin Forest, a community treasure. An old forest with its intricate balances is a community treasure, providing a space to restore our senses from urban life, habitat for animals, cleans our air and water and restores and is irreplaceable once destroyed.

It is especially tragic that it would be destroyed to create parking across from our cities largest unused parking lots at Severance Mall and ironic that it would be done to ease parking for people with mental health issues in a world where the loss of natural surroundings and healthy ecosystems take a measurable toll on our collective

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mental health.

Please save our forest!

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Name Emma Shook 85

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Public Comment I am writing as a 20-year resident of The Heights. I and my partner Eran Shiloh are part of several volunteer environmental restoration groups in The Heights (Friends of Lower Lake, Friends of The Walt, and Friends of Bradford Cinder Path), and have learned much about the state of our natural areas. We are working hard every weekend to restore health to our dwindling natural areas. But the hugest positive impact on our natural areas is preservation from development in the first place!

In the midst of an extinction crisis, there is currently, and has been, a big push in Ohio to develop, develop, develop. Since I moved here in 2001, I have witnessed thousands of acres of habitat destroyed to create Legacy Village, Pinecrest, the seemingly endless expansion of Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals, and "luxury residences." And now, the expansion of Metro Health. Meanwhile, we have more than enough unused, vacant acreage to rebuild upon.

Every tree cut, every wetland destroyed, every inch of topsoil removed (it takes thousands of years for several inches of topsoil to be created)... all of this is not only contributing to the climate crisis by releasing carbon, but the already splintered web of life here is being systematically destroyed.

This is not a knee-jerk reaction. This is a thoughtful, science-based, morality-based response.

We need to stop prioritizing long-term environmental destruction for short-term profit, and start prioritizing the existence of pollinators, native birds, and amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. It is for our own health that we honor the health of our natural communities.

There are many unused acres in Severance Circle. There simply must be an alternative, whether re-purposing the old Walmart, or its vast, unused parking lot.

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Name Suzanne Miller 86

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Public Comment Please find a way to accommodate Metrohealth's need for additional parking space without sacrificing the almost-acre of mature trees close to their buildings. A huge portion of the Severance Center parking lot across the road from Metro is now being used mainly by seagulls. It's a logical choice for Metro parking. Bottom line: health and trees are natural partners.

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Name Constance Whalen 87

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Public Comment This project is an incredible thing for our city! While I understand that some residents are concerned about the small section of trees being removed, it's an extremely small price to pay for the human lives that will be improved as a result of this facility going up. A comprehensive sustainability plan is about much more than the trees and to hold this project up or risk wasting more time is the wrong thing to do for Cleveland Heights. Severance Town Center is the area in town that needs the most attention and this project will serve as a potential gateway for a complete redevelopment effort and new vision for the area. Thank you, MetroHealth, for this incredible opportunity for our city!

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Name Miron KAUFMAN 88

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Public Comment At a time when forrestation is considered an important tool to slow climate change, deforestation to create parking spaces is just wrong.

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Name Paul Epstein 89

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Public Comment I support the construction of the behavioral health center. However, because of what appears to be the architecturally lazy decision to cut down some of the last remaining vestiges of Cleveland Heights' old growth forest for parking spaces when a sea of available parking is a few hundred feet away, I urge Council to vote No, send

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the plans back to make what should be some fairly easy adjustments, and resubmit them for approval. That shouldn't take too long.

Effectively planning a city requires care and a deep acknowledgment of all its underlying environmental systems—social, structural, and ecological. Ideally, it should be shaped by the community itself, not by developers or the politicians who court their dollars. It is, by its nature and necessity, a slow process, hardly something to be decided upon in an “emergency session”. The plans have sat on the shelf since last December. Now, suddenly, it has to be wrapped up in three weeks? All this haste might lead one to think, “What real motives are they hiding?” In truth, to be rushing major development at this very moment—when city government is about to undergo a sea-change, and the extent of our sewer problems is as yet unknown— smells a bit irresponsible.

This whole affair underscores the massive dysfunction in our city government and why that sea-change is so welcome. Thank you.

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Name Sladjana Krstic 90

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Public Comment I'm contacting you in respect to the proposal to rim forest's edge for Cleveland Heights MetroHealth expansion. I believe that we should plant trees, not cut them. It is great that MetroHealth wants to expend, but if they want extra parking lot space, they can do underground parking.

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Name Grant Marquit 91

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Public Comment While I support increased access to mental health services in our city with the proposed MetroHealth expansion at Severance, removing trees and encroaching on what little "wetland" we have (referring to the Millikin Wood) doesn't make sense, especially since there is plenty of parking and land all around the rest of the Circle. I understand new trees will be planted, but I am voicing concern about the hydrological issues this expansion presents. Our City needs to consider the health of our environment -- and particularly our watershed -- first.

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Name Sue Hannibal 92

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Public Comment Please save this vital resource! There ARE viable solutions to the parking situation. .  
but it requires determination and ingenuity. Who has the courage to do so? Who has  
the courage to do the right thing?

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Name Steve Cagan 93

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Public Comment Dear Council members,  
In the world we live in today, where the critical problems of global climate change, loss of habitat and loss of biodiversity are finally being recognized for the important issues they are, there are some things that individual cities and towns, even neighborhoods and street organizations can do.  
One of those things that can be managed locally is increasing the tree canopy cover in our towns and neighborhoods. This is not a small thing; there is plenty of research that demonstrates the important positive effects of increasing tree cover, and the negative effects of losing trees--effects not only environmental, but social and even in public health.  
Sadly, municipalities in Cuyahoga County that have not been bad in this respect are getting there--become worse, instead of better.  
In this context, the issue of how the MetroHealth facility at Severance Center is going to expand takes on an extreme importance. We are MetroHealth patients and long-term residents of Cleveland Heights. We know that City Council faces an important decision this Monday. In essence, you are going to tell us whether you think the issues connected to environmental defense and the quality of life in our city are important enough to act on, even if it means confronting an institution as strong as MetroHealth. We hope with all our hearts that you will see the importance of conserving the little bit of old forest that remains in Severance Center.  
When we moved here 50, years ago, there was much more forest all through the periphery of Severance, and our understanding was that conserving it was one of the terms of the transfer to the city. Over these decades, we have seen most of it lost. It's time to stop.  
Please do the right thing.

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Name Catherine Pankhurst 94

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Public Comment This is a critical moment, when “ The Tree City “ must act to protect old growth forest, & the precious dwindling green space in its boundaries. It’s unthinkable ~ that Metro Health wants to tear down a wooded lot for parking, when there is a vast wasteland of disused, under used parking across from them. Now is the time to realize that the underutilized parking is a way to recover from pandemic retail loss, while giving the community much needed medical services. Severance may never be the retail hub it once was, don’t waste this opportunity to redeem the use of space.  
Aside from the parking lot, this area has been served well by public transportation. It will benefit both employees and patients.

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Name Christopher Wood 95

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Public Comment To the Council and city residents:  
When I first heard about the building of a new behavioral health hospital at the MetroHealth facility I thought it was a great idea, both for those who might need its services and for the city. I envisioned it being built in the parking lot to the east of the current building. How naive! The plan to cut old trees in a small but intact forested area is ludicrous given that Severance is a vast wasteland of unused parking. Can it truly be impossible to make use of some of that parking? The city should make the planners work a little harder.

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Name Kevin Schaner 96

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Public Comment The Cleveland Heights committee is known for and loves its trees. Greenery increases the value of our properties, aids in erosion and cleans our air. In the last few years, the percentage of tree covering has decreased from 37% to 35 % . in Cuyahoga County. In Cleveland Heights, we have lost 11% of our tree canopy. Natural causes for loss include aging, disease and invasive insects. Unnecessary clear cutting, such as the proposal for the Milliken woods is one of the top human

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causes for tree destruction. The symbol for Cleveland Heights is a CH with a tree sprouting.....let's support plans that support our logo.

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Name James Levin 97

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Public Comment Please save the trees.

One of the great assets of this city is the old growth trees, majestic and irreplaceable.

I realize that the hospital could be an anchor tenant at Severance and needs to be accommodated but cutting out trees ought to be an absolutely last resort. In fact I look forward to the day where anyone cutting down a tree whose diameter is more than 14 inches needs a permit. The trees are not just "owned" by a property owner but provide beauty, shade, a visual rest and oxygen for everyone.

God knows we do not need any more asphalt. Allowing these kinds of trees to be cut will quickly transform Cleveland Hts into South Euclid.

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Name Christine Borkan 98

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Public Comment This is about the metro health expansion east for parking. Please help Metro find alternative space inside the circle rather than cutting down 200 year old trees. Once they are gone we can't get them back. We don't want our only trees to be the one on the city logo. There are so few undeveloped places in the city; it is also our job to be good stewards of the land including the wildlife in it.

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Name Barbara Wherley 99

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Public Comment Please consider utilizing the pkg spaces inside Severance Circle instead of killing trees to make more pkg spaces. Perhaps you could redirect the ring road inward so that people won't have to cross a road to get to the hospital. Thanks for considering this option

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Name MARY SIMPSON 100

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Public Comment I oppose the encroachment on Millikin Woods at Severance by the Metro Health Project. I am at the point where I am opposed to anything that takes green away from Cleveland Heights. There are too many proposals right now, all destroying green space. Our housing is increasing in value which is good. This is because people like Cleveland Heights and that is because of its character. These proposals will destroy its character. It is time to hold the line on taking down trees and taking away more greenspace. I join with citizens that want to have our council rethink this, before taking away greenspace, not after. That would mean halting this now.

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Name Lisa Rainsong 101

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Public Comment I just learned of the proposed MetroHealth expansion's impact on mature trees in Millikan woods. A plan that necessitates cutting down these trees for 80 new parking spaces is not a plan at all. This isn't acceptable and MetroHealth needs to do better.

Of course it would be great to have MetroHealth expand here, but this is not the way to proceed. We already have significant tree losses here in our "Tree City," and eliminating more trees to add more concrete and asphalt to the Severance area cannot be part of this plan.

We're supposed to be protecting and expanding our tree canopy and working to mitigate the effects of climate change, aren't we? I'm sure many Cleveland Heights residents have already written about the value of these trees for birds, native, beneficial insects, and other wildlife - and for the human residents in the area as well.

I've been a homeowner here for 26 years and a renter here for longer. I urge you to require a more environmentally responsible plan from MetroHealth.

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Name Anne Caruso 102

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Public Comment Council Members,  
I am very disappointed in council's inability to understand that 27 acres of old growth forest are not insignificant, especially when there are obvious alternatives which should have been explored first, not last. Alternatives such as asking if some of

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the existing parking spaces can be rented by MetroHealth, or gauging whether a parking garage can be constructed on land that is not part of the old growth forest.

We are in a severe climate crisis. Did you know that? I ask this, because your lack of awareness about the preciousness of 27 acres of old growth forest tells me that you don't understand what is at stake and what must be done to avert the end of life as we know it. Trees are the perfect defense against irreversible catastrophic climate change. Trees are so important and necessary that volunteers in Cleveland Heights are vigorously planting trees wherever they can. This is because a trillion more trees are needed on Planet Earth(1).

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, "in one year a mature tree will absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen in exchange. It is proposed that one large tree can provide a day's supply of oxygen for up to four people." (2)

One council member recently said that the public had ample time to weigh in on this project. I can't find anyone who was aware of the specifics of this project. If it hadn't been for 2 attentive citizens who alerted many of us, there would have been no public input at all before your vote.

Please reconsider this plan and prioritize the old growth forest we are blessed to have.

(1) <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/news/power-trees>

(2) <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2015/03/17/power-one-tree-very-air-we-breathe>

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Name Elana Baldwin 103

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Public Comment As a Cleveland Heights resident, I am appalled by the current proposal to cut down woods in the Severance area to expand parking for a new Metro facility. While I fully support the new facility, there is already extensive parking space in that area. While it may take additional work to make use of the current space, it would be well worth it. Please do not create waste and asphalt in a natural space, when there is already so much space to be used. We can and should do better.

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Name Clifford Berns 104

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Public Comment Regarding MetroHealth: Severance lots! Explore using the Severance lots BEFORE destroying trees that have been growing there for years. Planting some shrubs, bushes and tress after the destruction will not be sufficient. I am a resident of this neighborhood since 1995, etc. The area is haunted by empty parking lots and empty commercial structures. No need for destroying more woods.

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Name Jeremy Baldwin 105

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Public Comment There is a ridiculous amount of excess parking in the Severance area as it is. Cutting down trees to make more so that one building can say that it has enough parking that "belongs to it" would be like knocking down a playground to add more grass to a soccer field, just in case your entire family reunion wanted to watch a game someday: you're destroying something that benefits the community in one way to make more of something that we already have enough of, just so you can say that you control enough of this plentiful resource yourself.

If we looked at the parking as a public resource and not a private one, then Metro would not need to be concerned that it did not have adequate parking. Clearly, there is plenty, a huge portion of which goes unused on a daily basis. Instead of building more parking, we should better allocate the use of the parking we already have, by using the powers of the City Council to ensure that parking near Home Depot and the old Walmart site is not exclusively the property of those organizations, but can be used without penalty by any visitor to the Severance complex.

Would some visitors to Metro have to walk a bit? Yes. But it would be trivial for them to set aside reserved parking for the mobility-impaired, and as health professionals they surely can understand the benefits of a little more walking.

It is not reasonable for them to ask to cut down local trees to make more parking in Severance, any more than it would be for them to ask us to use local water to fill up Lake Erie.

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Name Tiffany Mosley 106

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Public Comment Severance is full of open space and closed store fronts. If people can walk half a mile or more across busy streets to get to the Cleveland Clinic they can walk across Severance to get to Metro. Cutting down mature trees when there is an abundance of

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open space available is destructive and will make Metro look like an open eye sore instead of the inviting hospital you might plan on building. There are many questions that should be answered before you destroy an eco system as old as the one around Severance. Do you have to make your own space? What is stopping you from using or changing the open space available? What is the best way to keep the current forestry the way it is? How will patients and staff handle the wild life returning looking for there homes?

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Name Sandy stone 107

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Public Comment Dear Council, you've heard our neighbors environmental concerns regarding further destruction of the Severance-Millikin woods. Please listen and move towards other alternatives. This is spring and so much pending and new life will be killed if these woods are torn down.  
Please consider our pleas. Please.

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Name Bob Rink 108

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Public Comment I support the Planning Commission's recommendation approving the MetroHealth's proposed expansion, including the currently negotiated parking variance. I find it disingenuous that many in the opposition who oppose the sacrificing of a few trees are also part of the same group who constantly whine about the lack of development at Severance. Here is a positive opportunity to have a stabile, positive, job creating development by a very responsible nonprofit and they want to reject it over the preservation of a few trees, which can be replaced elsewhere. Excuse me, people, you can't have it both ways. How many jobs and positive development have the trees created in all the years they've been there. And it's not like they cannot and will not be replaced. Using the across the road parking in my opinion would be a dangerous alternative, even if the legal issues to secure its use could be worked out. As with Top of the Hill, every project in this City seems to be able to find or create its opponents, who see opposition to each and every development project as their birthright. I respectfully would ask City Council to approve the project as presented so the City can get on with the real work it is encouraging.

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Name Mary Kelsey 109

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Public Comment Scientists now understand that trees in a forest are interdependent, such that the loss of individuals impacts the health of the whole. Losing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre of trees doesn't seem like much, until you consider that constitutes 3% of the whole forest. It's a stable climax forest stand that cannot be replaced or compensated by planting new trees elsewhere.

Healthy natural areas are important to quality of life in Cleveland Heights as a place where families and professionals want to live.

A different parking site plan must be developed that doesn't carve into the woods.

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Name Debbie Applepresser 110

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Public Comment Cleveland Heights prides itself for the beautiful trees and gardens we plant, nurture and love.

"He/She who plants a tree. Plants a hope " - Lucy Larson

Isn't this what health care is about? It has been proven that nature heals. Isn't healing the point here?

"Between every two trees there is a door leading to a new way of life". - John Muir

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now. "  
- Chinese Proverb

We are talking about health care here! Are we so lazy that we have to cut down mature trees so we can walk less steps?

What is the message here??!

Severance is already a sea of parking spaces. This whole thought is so sad.

" AND THE BOY LOVED THE TREE VERY MUCH. AND THE TREE WAS HAPPY ". Shel Silverstein

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Name Harriet Applegate 111

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Before you vote to approve Metrohealth's plans, please consider the following:

1. A simple, easy solution presents itself: the trees could be saved if 79 parking spaces are removed from Metrohealth's property to Severance Circle directly across the street from Metrohealth's entrance.

2. City Council is uniquely positioned to make this proposal.

It is Metrohealth's job to consider what is cheapest, easiest, quickest and most efficient for them. Only you are entrusted with doing what is best for the citizens of Cleveland Hts.

3. Naturally Metrohealth would not consider building on land they don't own so it is up to you to come up with alternatives that accommodate all parties. For you the ultimate party is your constituents.

4. The blight that is Severance Circle is not of concern to Metrohealth, but it IS your concern.

5. From the standpoint of Cleveland Hts residents, the optics of City Council allowing the destruction of even one tree, much less hundreds of them when acres of empty parking lot exist as close to Metrohealth as the forest they want to cut is surreal, painful and ironic.

6. Only you have the ability to negotiate with Namdar to make an accommodation for use of unused parking space. BONUS: the ocean of empty parking lot is put to good use and the waste that Severance Circle has become would have some utility once again.

7. Others have spoken, written and called with eloquent and elegant descriptions of the desirability & scientific necessity of preserving these trees. They have schooled you on the difference between an eco-system which provides untold benefits for health, quality of life, the connection between community building and stewardship of natural resources on the one hand and landscaping. 'Greenspace' is in no way comparable to the complicated and wondrous eco-system that a forest provides.

8. As cities all across the country are working hard to increase their tree canopy, it is not a good look for Cleveland Hts to be facilitating the destruction of tree canopy. Other cities would kill to have the valuable asset of an urban forest a few hundred yards away from City Hall. You, on the other hand, have shown absolutely no interest in or respect for this wonderful asset at your front door. Indeed, in their short-sighted zeal for the thoughtless and ultimately ruinous 'economic development' that has resulted in the current blight at Severance Circle, your predecessors did everything in their power to reduce & all but destroy it. It is time to pay the piper.

**DO YOUR JOB:**

- Represent the needs of the citizens

- Do what's best for the city
- Explain to Metrohealth that your duty is to the citizens and that you want to proceed as quickly as possible to work out a deal whereby you will facilitate parking across the ring road for them so that they can save the trees.

Anything less renders you derelict in your responsibility to represent your constituents and do what is best for the city.

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Name Mark Chupp 112

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Public Comment As a patient of the MetroHealth Systems that uses the Severance Center facility, I am excited to see that MH has chosen to expand at this site. Severance is largely abandoned so having new development and increased use of this part of city is excellent.

However, the destruction of older forest, in the midst of acres of unused parking lot, is unconscionable. I am deeply concerned by what appears to be City Council and the City's willingness to lose a significant asset that cannot be replaced for generations, conceding to the demands of a large institution rather than to your voters and taxpayers.

This is our community, one heralded for its natural environment and tree-lined streets. Severance is the one exception to this profile and this plan further scars our community with more buildings and parking lots void of mature trees.

I'm also disappointed with MH's response, which reminds me of the developers of Legacy Village who committed to keep the buffer trees and to plant more trees. In the end, they cut all growth out along Cedar Road that was 25 feet from the ground. Instead, they "landscaped" it with mulch and ornamental plants. This replaced a natural area with sticks of trees to allow people to see the new shopping buildings. They kept their commitment.

The lessons for me are to preserve the asset as it is, get everything in writing, and be insistent on what our community needs. MetroHealth will not walk away from this deal. If we begin from the premise that the forest will not be reduced, then creative options can be found. Start with what our community believes is a non-negotiable: do not remove mature forest when vacant land surrounds the other side of this site.

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Name Jonathan Epstein & Martin E. Gawry 113

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To City of Cleveland Heights Council Members:

As 22-year-long residents of Cleveland Heights, my husband and I are proud of the forward-looking agenda our City often embraces; the MetroHealth facility proposal stands as no exception. The addition of this care facility would be a marked game-changer for what has been an increasingly underserved population.

For the last 8 years, I have worked as a dedicated volunteer for the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Greater Cleveland, or NAMI GC. As a frontline peer support specialist and voice for the unheard, I work with patients, train police cadets and police forces in crisis intervention training (CIT), and speak to medical, academic and various community organizations. In such capacities, I continue to witness firsthand the harsh realization of the needs of our Community when it comes to mental illness, where between 1-in-4 and 1-in-5 people are afflicted, and 60% of whom go untreated.

The facilities I currently work with include Highland Springs, MetroHealth, Lutheran Hospital (part of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation) and the LGBT Center of Greater Cleveland. To the best of my knowledge, none of these has experienced any uptick in crime or disturbances in their respective neighborhoods because of the concentration of behavioral health services provided. In fact, the outreach to each of their respective, surrounding communities has increased the awareness and accessibility to the desired, necessary care.

What we require are additional facilities geared toward the provision of tailored care for behavioral health without any stigma attached. As a result, I wholeheartedly, and without reservation, support the passage of MetroHealth's proposal to build upon its current commitment to our City. The proposed layouts of the building and of adjacent areas appear sound; projected staffing levels seem adequate. The hospital system has gone above-and-beyond to listen to residents and partner with the City to address their concerns and modify the proposal accordingly. No plan is perfect; that should go without saying. However, MetroHealth has modified this proposal with sincerity to the interests of residents. As a reminder, MetroHealth is not a for-profit institution; it belongs to all of us Cuyahoga County residents. It is their purpose to serve the health care needs — which includes behavioral — of our communities. Please ask yourselves, where you would turn if you, a spouse, a child or grand child required behavioral health services but you felt no one would listen or cared or there was no bed available anywhere? These are real concerns, not hyperbole.

Clearly, the passage of this proposal this evening has attached with it low-risk

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but high-reward. I respectfully request you consider my and my husband's viewpoint in your Council's decision-making.

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Name            Jim Miller 114

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Public            Not granting a variance to Metrohealth's parking requirements puts at risk  
Comment        a unique woodlands and the stream which flows down from Severance.

                    The Millikin wooded wetlands are the only remaining place in the Heights where we, and our wildlife, can experience the headwaters of a stream that is part of our local watersheds, Dugway, Shaw, and Nine Mile.

                    The other starting points of these ancient streams are mostly covered by the past century's concrete, asphalt, houses and businesses.

                    AND - the Severance stream links together 4 key landmarks in Cleveland Heights: Severance Center, Park Synagogue, the CH Community Center, and Forest Hill Park.

                    Finally, look closely at the segment of the woods where the Metrohealth proposed new (and likely unneeded) parking spaces will go. Less than 10 from the proposed spaces is one of the stream channels cut in the woods by the natural flow of water. Not likely to survive the bulldozers.

                    A proper solution by City Council will be good for the future, but also for the present.

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Name            Tony Cuda 115

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Public            MetroHealth's new mental health clinic is a much-needed and welcome  
Comment        service for our community and beyond. Everyone I have spoken with agrees.

                    With regard to parking for this facility; the problem is the lack of a plan for a methodical process for public engagement with city council - the deciders. That process must include a public engagement piece before and after legislation is written. Less surprises = better legislation and less unintended consequences. And there should not be any contract verbage like, "an arborist should be retained." I think council's recent experience with loose language in our charter should suffice.

                    Please listen to the people who have spoken on this issue; look for

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alternatives to removing any trees, tighten up the language in the contract; then revise, and by all means, move this important project forward.

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Name Timothy Beyer 116

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Public Comment I would like to say, respectfully, that this seems like a really terrible idea to me. I've read all of the reasons why MetroHealth wants to remove the forested area that was formally a part of the Severance Estate. Furthermore, I am aware that MetroHealth is pushing this agenda hard.

It just doesn't hold water. There are clearly, despite what MetroHealth insists, so many other options that do not necessitate the destruction of almost an acre of forest. I find the entire thing to be utterly ludicrous. There are just so many other options!

I have always loved living in Cleveland Heights. It's a very special place. A big part of why it has stayed such a great place to live for so many generations is because of the leadership and guidance of our city government and of this council. Cleveland Heights is a beautiful place to live and will only remain so if the community and its residents are protected from this sort of needless destruction of our natural spaces. I beg you to please be good custodians of our beautiful city and not let this happen.

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Name Jordan Davis 117

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Public Comment The Millikin Woods controversy presents a unique opportunity to forge a creative compromise. Couldn't the City of Cleveland Heights and MetroHealth work together to preserve this valuable ecosystem as a showcase statement in the name of preserving public health and protecting our natural environment?

It is fully within Council's ability and duty to take a step back and explore alternatives to clearcutting old growth trees in our City. In this era of pervasive ecological degradation it behooves the public sector to reconsider business-as-usual practices and help guide responsible, considerate decisions by the commercial sector. Cleveland Heights should be a leader in this kind of public policy.

The lasting benefits and potential of even a small parcel of old-growth

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forest are manifold. They include stormwater retention, carbon locking and oxygen generation, as well as providing vital haven for wildlife, which also helps keep animals out of our yards. Further, this classic, irreplaceable midwest heritage forest could become an educational resource for all residents, including our public and private schoolchildren.

Yes, it would be more costly and complex to finance a parking deck, or an underground lot, or to craft an arrangement utilizing an unused area of the Home Depot lot just yards away. But innovative solutions are available if we look for them, and a win-win solution is possible.

MetroHealth should want to be seen as a responsible corporate citizen, but they need some help. Their construction timetable and budget need not be the only imperative. The City needs to demonstrate commitment to the sustainability goals in our City's Master Plan, which includes tree canopy preservation.

I urge Council to table approval of MetroHealth's application and initiate a committed dialogue to explore a parking alternative with environmental stewardship as the priority.

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Name Nan Wiggins 118

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Public Comment I implore you to not destroy any of the Severance woods as part of the Metrohealth facility expansion at Severance Circle. Please commit to work creatively, thoughtfully and resolutely to ensure that this expansion does not violate our CH Master PPlan's goals to protect and expand our tree canopy. A Crest Road resident for 41 years, I have watched the most pristine and rare section of our surrounding woods (Austin Company property), be stripped bare and covered with condos, a USPS, and a sea of asphalt. A promise of wooded abatement between them and our street was never fulfilled. I have witnessed the slow (41 years slow), unimpeded, death of Severance Center, from one of our country's first prestigious indoor malls to a retail wasteland. It has perished from the center out - pushing the outer perimeter development just perpetuates this continuous fallout. If additional parking is needed (please see NOTE below) consider a multilevel parking lot, perhaps with attached covered walkways to the building facilities. Consider something, anything - smarter, better, more thoughtful and innovative than annihilating yet another swath of irreplaceable tree canopy. Preserving what cannot be replaced while building a better future are not

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mutually exclusive, they are one and the same. What good is a master plan void of the action to bring it to fruition?

NOTE: Both Hasenben Architects (letter of February 10, 2021 to CH Board of Control\*) and Walker Consultants (Parking Supply/Demand Analysis of January 29, 2021\*) assess and support that NO additional parking space is needed for the new Metrohealth Extension. Who is, and why are they adding parking spaces at the expense of bordering woods? Please clarify.

\* "The proposed addition will require redesign of the East parking lot. Overall proposed parking spaces will be reduced on campus from the current count and would be less than required by the current zoning code. An independent parking consultant has studied the facility's current parking demand, proposed facility future services and calculated the anticipated future demand. Based on the parking study report findings, the proposed plan would have a surplus of 80 spaces above anticipated demand. The proposed plan also identifies landbank areas for optional spaces that may be added in the future. Please refer to the submitted drawings and parking study provided. We would request approval for a reduction of required parking spaces for this facility based on the parking study."

\* "The MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Medical Center is anticipated to remain adequate for operation with the anticipated growth on campus. While no changes are necessary for the number of spaces, Walker observed several maintenance and managerial aspects that could improve the user experience for both patient/visitors and staff."

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Name Susan Miller 119

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Public Comment My concern is that a series of cascading effects could result from trimming off this seemingly small section of the Millikin Woods.

From scientist Suzanne Simard: "Forests aren't simply collections of trees, they're complex systems with hubs and networks that overlap and connect trees

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and allow them to communicate, and they provide avenues for feedbacks and adaptation, and this makes the forest resilient. That's because there are many hub trees and many overlapping networks. But they're also vulnerable, vulnerable not only to natural disturbances like bark beetles that preferentially attack big old trees but high-grade logging and clear-cut logging. You see, you can take out one or two hub trees, but there comes a tipping point, because hub trees are not unlike rivets in an airplane. You can take out one or two and the plane still flies, but you take out one too many, or maybe that one holding on the wings, and the whole system collapses. We need to remember that forests aren't just a bunch of trees competing with each other, they're supercooperators.”

Cutting even what appears to be a narrow swatch of this forest could weaken and degrade its overall health.

Let’s redesign to save the health of the forest and the patients. I believe the people in Cleveland Heights welcome the people who will be treated in this new facility; out of the concrete jungle and into our green city. Must we diminish our forest which can benefit their healing for cars? Could we not speed their recovery by sharing views of our beautiful forest with them as a balm for what ails them? Must we see our city die by degrees? I refer you to this study: “Exposure to neighborhood green space and mental health: evidence from the survey of the health of Wisconsin”.

I urge you to send this back to the drawing board, to adjust the plan to benefit not only our hydrology, air quality and carbon footprint, to heal our environment, but to improve our ability to heal our visitors more quickly.

We have made mistakes because we didn’t have enough information to know better. In this case, we do know better in many ways we didn’t when the S1 district was created in 1956 and amended in 2000. Let us benefit and build on our new knowledge, not rush to another potentially costly mistake.

You all may think it’s too late. We first saw this plan in December when the metro expansion was announced. A public process began only a few weeks ago in a poorly publicized process with an appointed board. This plan for public engagement is not good planning. It is an affront to we, the people of our polis, to tell us now that it’s too late when this has been known for months. Right now while the plan is on paper and not on our precious planet, let us redraw it to benefit us all. Tonight you can vote no.

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Name Rachel Venezia 120

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Public Comment      Please use the existing parking which is currently going unused! Cleveland Heights can't remain the Forest City if you keep cutting down the mature trees and remaining semblance of forest!

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Name                  Frances Mentch 121

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Public Comment      I'm chair of the NEO Sierra Club group; I've lived here over 30 years, and watched as we have lost most of our greenspace. That is one of the reasons why we have become the city that people leave--they move to greener, more aesthetically pleasing places. If you approve this plan tonight you are choosing pavement over a legacy forest. If you approve this plan tonight, you are choosing pavement over people.

                              If you approve this plan tonight, you are placing yourselves squarely in the camp of climate deniers.

                              The number of trees and amount of land has not been clearly defined or described--so how do you know what you are actually voting on?

                              Metrohealth representatives have been less than honest about whether or not they asked the owners of Severance about leasing parking spaces. Shouldn't they purchase some of the Severance Sea of Asphalt for this project? The county gave them \$5 million to build this facility--you can insist that they use some of this money, our money, to purchase parking across the street.

                              You and Metrohealth iare both public entities. You have the power to bring them back to the table and negotiate that they increase the buffer and leave all the woods. It is a small concession. Metrohealth is NOT GOING TO WALK AWAY from this project if you make them put up a larger buffer zone. Please do the job you were elected to do, and vote no tonight and ask Metrohealth to return to the table. What are you afraid of? Thank you,

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Name                                  Theo Hollingshead 122

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Public Comment                  How many public comments are there?  
  Why can't citizens speak at this meeting?

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President of Council Stein stated that one Council Member had a flight to catch. Since public comments had lasted two hours, he asked that the entirety of comments be sent to Council in an Email. He apologized to anyone that didn't have their comment read. He stated MetroHealth would make a short presentation.

Note: The entirety of public comments submitted are included in these minutes.

Joe Frolik, MetroHealth Senior Vice President, stated as of this June he is a 40-year resident of Cleveland Heights. He stated it was good to be with them again 4 months and 1 day since Dr. Brunner and he unveiled MetroHealth's plans to add a behavioral health and addiction services expansion. Since then, MetroHealth has worked with the city and members of the community. They will invest another \$42 million in the Severance area without any incentives from the city. There are currently 42 employees at the Cleveland Height Metro Center with an annual payroll of about \$15 million. When the first year of the behavioral health addition, they expect to add 155 full-time employees and close to another \$10 million in payroll. By year five, they'll have 225 employees on the behavioral health side of the house alone. The additional income tax to Cleveland Heights will be roughly \$350,000 per year.

Regarding environmental concerns, MetroHealth owns about 6.75 of wooded land, most to the east of the current campus. To enable the expansion and build a new wing that can accommodate ambulances or fire vehicles trying to reach the emergency department, less than .75 of an acre needs to be cleared. Nearly 98% of the Severance Woods and almost 90% of the forest on their property will remain in tact. They are blocked from expanding on three sides. They spent \$10,000 on an independent parking study that convinced them and the Planning Department that they can operate the expanded campus with nearly 300 fewer parking spaces. That will preserve another 90,000 feet of woodlands, about three times of what they need to remove. Most of the wooded area that is being taken is for the ambulance route. All the trees removed will be replaced as required by the city's preservation code; probably between 50 and 60. There will be two underground retention systems for storm water which was approved by NEORS.

Susanna Niermann O'Neil stated that the Planning Director will give a presentation of the timeline once the legislation was presented by a committee.

President of Council Stein asked Council Member Ungar to go ahead with the Planning and Development Committee.

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**RESOLUTION NO. 28-2021 (PD).** A Resolution approving Board of Control Resolution 2021-01

Introduced by Council Member Ungar, Second by Council Member Dunbar



Eric Zamft reviewed the timelines of reviews and presentations to date including Council, staff, Board of Control, Planning Commission, Architectural Board of Review, community meeting, Severance neighbors, and public hearings. All materials for the project are available on the website. The legislation before Council affirms the analysis, review, and recommendations for the Board of Control and Planning Commission in Section 1. Section 2 approves the Board of Control's approval of the amended to the detailed development plan. Section 3 approves the Board of Control's approval of the variance for a reduction in parking to 402 spaces from 700. Section 4 states the conditions of the conditional use permit.

Council Member Ungar stated Council Member Hart has a friendly amendment to add. He confirmed with staff and the applicant that it is acceptable. Council Member Hart stated she would like to add a condition that says while moving forward with the project, the applicant shall actively investigate parking alternatives such as renting of Severance's existing parking area that could preserve the trees adjacent to the buffer zone. Council Member Ungar stated he accepted that amendment. Council Member Russell seconded the amendment.

Roll Call on Amendment: Ayes: Hart, Russell, Seren, Stein, Ungar, Dunbar  
Nays: None

**Motion Passed**

Council Member Russell stated she appreciated the addition of the amendment.

Council Member Dunbar stated she's served on Council for 10 years and it's wonderful to see the developments happening in Cleveland Heights. The world's population growth has impacted forests in Africa. In Cleveland Heights, we've been losing population and a few years ago, we were taking down 50 or 60 houses every year from foreclosure. We're now on a trajectory where we're getting growth and rehabs to houses and talking about infill housing This is critical for our community. Based on what people say, developers say we're difficult to work with because we have a lot of requirements because we love our city just the way it is, but in order to maintain the level of services that we have, we need to embrace change to maintain the tax base.

Vice President of Council Seren that Council Members aren't expected to be experts on every conceivable subject, but are elected to make decisions on residents' behalf. We've received a lot of input from residents and information from the applicant and administration about the project. He stated he wants the project to move forward and it could be the beginning of reimagining Severance as a whole. However, this process deviates from regular order dramatically and in a way that inhibits a deeper examination by this Council in view of the people they represent. He stated Council should consider all reasonable options. These plans were made public approximately three weeks ago. Additional review

of the plans may allow for a compromise. He reviewed the parking plan which would provide a surplus of parking for what is needed. He moved postponing the vote until April 5 giving the applicant time to adjust the development plan to reflect the parking needed. He asked for a second if only for the sake of discussion. Vice President of Council Seren stated we could have been creative. He doesn't understand the haste with which we are pursuing this and this flies in the face of regular order.

Council Member Ungar stated he does not believe it flies in the face of anything. He stated there is usually a high degree of deference appropriately paid by Council to the Planning Commission, Architectural Board of Review, Board of Control, and Planning Department staff. Every board mentioned is recommending to Council that they approve this project. There has been a lot of discussion with MetroHealth and there are many conditions from the Planning Commission's recommendation. Council has included another amendment and any community would embrace the opportunity of MetroHealth's expansion. The applicant has been respectful of staff and citizens. The public comments show that residents care deeply.

Council Member Russell stated that her not seconding is not because she doesn't agree with Vice President of Council Seren, but she agrees with Council Member Hart's amendment to look at all variants of not cutting down as many trees.

Vice President of Council Seren stated he appreciated that and stated this will be a phased construction where the first phase is the clearing of the trees to make room for the ambulance run so the ambulance runs are not interfered with during construction.

Council Member Hart stated she was excited about the expansion of MetroHealth. She received a lot of Emails and she will work with neighbors as she did with Buckingham residents to make sure their concerns are addressed. Residents are concerned about trees. A portion of them will be replaced. She did not second the motion because we're in the discussion period anyway. She stated these trees are owned by Metro just as you own the trees on your property, so they could have cut them down before they even came to us since they are their trees.

Council Member Dunbar stated she moved to a new house a little over a year ago and a dogwood was blown over and had to be removed. The Heights Tree People came over to say what trees were options to plant and she suggested talking to them or looking on their website.

President of Council Stein read a letter he received from Dr. Boutros, MetroHealth CEO, and read it. In it, Dr. Boutros thanked the city and stated he understood the concerns about safety and about the removal about a small portion of the trees to accommodate the ambulance roadway. Metro listened carefully and addressed them in multiple public forums. The new hospital will be very secure and the community as a whole will be safer because people who have behavioral health problems will get the treatment they need. As for the woods, if designers thought it was possible to complete the project without touching a single tree, that's exactly what would be done, but it's not. They have agreed to over 300

fewer parking spaces than the current code would require. He stated they do care about the environment on their campus. The behavioral health hospital must open at the same time as the main campus opening in October 2022. Not getting Council to approve the project tonight would cause this deadline to be missed and would be tragic for patients.

Council Member Russell stated that it appeared that a lot of residents didn't realize that all the trees we're talking about actually belong to Metro and are on their property.

President of Council Stein stated Metro's expansion and investment of \$42,000,000 in Cleveland Heights and specifically at Severance is a huge win for Cleveland Heights. They're bringing good paying jobs, hundreds of thousands in new tax revenue and he believes a springboard into additional interest and reimagining of Severance. This behavioral health hospital is needed as Dr. Boutros wrote – please don't lose sight of the bigger vision here in giving our neighbors, friends and family members the compassionate care they need and deserve.

Roll Call on Resolution: Ayes: Russell, Stein, Ungar, Dunbar, Hart  
Nays: Seren

### **Legislation Passed**

Council Member Russell stated her aye and everyone else's aye is contingent to talk to Metro about whatever we can do about those trees. Council Member Ungar stated his aye is not condition because all the conditions are in the legislation. Council Member Russell stated she's talking about moving forward. Council Member Ungar stated he accepts the amendment.

Council Member Ungar motioned to move to Executive Session to discuss with an attorney for the public body, claims or disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending court action. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hart.

Roll Call: Ayes: Seren, Stein, Ungar, Dunbar, Hart, Russell  
Nays: None

### **Motion Passed**

### **Executive Session**

9:07 – 9:28 p.m.

President of Council Stein presiding

Roll Call: Present: Dunbar, Hart, Seren, Stein, Ungar  
Excused: Russell

Staff present: Hanna, Himmelein, Niermann O'Neil

Council Member Ungar made a motion to end Executive Session which was seconded by Council Member Dunbar.

Roll Call:     Ayes: Stein, Ungar, Dunbar, Hart  
                  Nays: None  
                  No vote: Seren

**Motion Passed**

**NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL: MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021**

Respectfully submitted,

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Jason S. Stein, President of Council

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Amy Himmelein, Clerk of Council  
/jkc