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97th YEAR NO. 38

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2020

PHONE: (216) 441-2141 • EMAIL: NNEWS1923@AOL.COM

FREE

From the Mayor's Desk M.H. Senior Center renewal levy OK'd for Nov. ballot

COVID-19 UPDATE

By Garfield Heights Mayor Vic Collova



As we continue to keep safety our number one priority in Garfield Heights, I want to thank everyone for taking precautions and working to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. I assure you I focus daily on the best interests of residents and employees as we work together to provide city services during the pandemic.

Garfield Heights is slowly resuming public access to the Civic Center. The city's Building Department is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday- Friday. Only two people are permitted at the counter and visitors are asked to wear masks and maintain the recommended social distance.

Other municipal departments remain closed to the public; however, services continue. Administrative office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Call 216-475-1100, 216-475-1199 or 216-475-6607 to reach someone for assistance. Staffing has been reduced and some administrative employees also are working remotely, so please leave a message and your call promptly will be returned. I am encouraging telephone rather than in-person appointments.

The Senior Center remains closed to all visitors and non-essential staff. Senior Center transportation staff is delivering meals to lunch program participants and home-bound seniors. Staff also reaches out with phone calls to our seniors to check on their welfare.

We continue to have our monthly food pantry distribution dates on the third Wednesday from 1-2 p.m., and the third Thursday from 6-7 p.m. for Garfield Heights residents only at the Civic Center. Bags are pre-packaged for pick up and registration is required.

The Dan Kostel Recreation Center and swimming pool will remain closed and all summer activities have been canceled. We hope to reopen for winter activities including ice skating lessons and hockey.

We have cancelled all public meetings; however, City Council meetings will continue via teleconferencing and are open to the public. City-sponsored public events have been cancelled indefinitely.

I continue to stay closely in touch with officials in our federal, state and county governments, the Cleveland Clinic, and especially Marymount Hospital discussing the latest statistics, projections and safe practices. Although we will do everything possible to keep our community safe, we can not do it without community support!

PLEASE practice the disinfectant procedures and stay-at-home instructions as much as you possibly can to prevent the spread of this potentially deadly disease.

Again, keeping safe is our highest priority. Our whole world has been turned upside down during this pandemic, and while I am reassuring everyone that our goal is to provide needed services for our residents, I also plead for your patience. These are very challenging times.

By Judith Goldsworth

Maple Heights Council passed a resolution to place the renewal of a 1.3-mill, five-year tax levy for expenses and operations of the Maple Heights Senior Center on the ballot in November, at its video conference meeting last week. Law Director Frank Consolo explained that it is backup legislation if the renewal on the August ballot does not pass.

Earlier this month, the county fiscal officer certified that the total current tax valuation of the city is \$278,554,630, and that the revenue that would be generated by renewing the levy would be \$336,761 annually during the life of the levy, according to last week's legislation.

However, should the renewal fail in August and have to go on the November ballot, the dollar amount of the revenue generated, if voters pass it, would be \$115 less each year for the Senior Center.

From the Mayor's Desk Keeping residents safe

By Maple Heights Mayor Annette Blackwell

I want to assure the residents of Maple Heights that along with the members of the Administration and City Council, I am staying the course and doing everything possible to keep you safe and well during this worldwide pandemic, COVID-19. We have made adjustments and cut our expenses in ways that will least affect services to you and your quality of life as well as the economic impact on the city. And, even though we are facing some significant challenges, I am pleased and proud to share with you that the Moody's Investor Service has upgraded the bond rating of the city from a B3 Positive to a B2 Stable. We are steadily making real, tangible economic progress.

The men and women of the Maple Heights Police and Fire Departments answer your calls to keep you safe, secure and healthy. The Service Department is out cutting grass and taking care of our roads. The Economic Development Department is busy with new business opportunities for the City. The Building Department is open for business; the Human Service Department is delivering meals to our most vulnerable older adults and keeping the Food Pantry and Mobile Market well stocked for all of you who need assistance. All of the frontline essential workers of the city of Maple Heights are on the job every day to serve you.

I am acutely aware that many of you are struggling right now. But please be assured that we are in this together. Do not despair, because I know if we stand together while taking one step at a time that we can rise again and thrive.

Lastly, we must continue to be compliant with social distancing recommendations to flatten the curve. Therefore, I am asking each of you to adhere to safe health practices and, together, we will make this a new season of hope.



Water main replacement okayed

Council also passed a resolution authorizing Mayor Annette Blackwell to enter into a contract with Catts Construction, Inc., for the Hollywood Ave. water main replacement project, at a cost of \$596,767.36.

Last year, City Engineer Ed Hren applied to the Cleveland Division of Water to fund the replacement of the water main on Hollywood from Maple Heights Blvd. to Waterbury Ave., under the Suburban Water Main Renewal Program (SWMR), and the city was awarded \$752,032.

Hren said the earliest start date for the project would be June 29, 2020, and the time of completion for the project was indicated to be 90 days.

Hazardous duty pay

Addressing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the risks it poses to auxiliary police officers in the city, council passed legislation amending the codified ordinances to raise hourly hazardous duty pay for auxiliary officers from 50 cents to \$5 an hour. This was recommended to council by Police Chief Todd Hansen, who noted at last week's meeting the length of time (36 years) since the last hazardous duty raise.

Auxiliary officers currently make \$8.50 to \$12.50 an hour, contingent on rank, and have not received a raise in hazardous duty pay since 1984.

It was recommended that the ordinance permit Hansen, "at his discretion, to provide additional hourly pay at an hourly rate not to exceed \$5 for hazardous duty."

(Continued on Page 2)

Stella Walsh Rec closed for the summer

The city of Cleveland has announced that based on an analysis of the risk assessment data for each of the 22 recreation center facilities the city operates, it was determined that Stella Walsh Rec in Slavic Village and four other centers will remain closed during summer 2020.

The city says the physical layout and/or occupant capacity of each of these buildings does not allow for the successful enactment of key mitigation measures.

The other closed rec centers are Kovacic, Hamilton (indoor pool will be open to the public), Halloran and Camp George Forbes.

Playgrounds, parks

Due to the limited ability to enact, monitor and enforce health and safety measures, playgrounds will remain closed until further notice.

Parks will remain open to the public. Signage will be posted reminding guests about recommended health and safety measures that should be followed in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Large, organized events will not be allowed. Parks use permits will not be issued.

M.H. Senior Center

(Continued from Page 1)

The chief is looking at grant funding for reimbursement to the city for the additional hazard pay.

\$58K state grant for park

Council approved a resolution authorizing Blackwell to enter into a grant agreement with the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) to provide funding for setup, operation and management of the Stafford Park Pool Spray Ground, and accept \$58,000 in funding from the ODSA.

Blackwell and Human Services Director Linda Vopat have sought funding from various county, state and federal agencies for the spray ground, which will feature water park-style attractions at the pool facility.

Budget amendment

Council approved an ordinance to amend this year's budget, as recommended by Finance Director Tinita Tillman. It had previously approved the 2020 budget for the city's operations in the amount of \$25,849,570.95, per a statement from Tillman in December.

However, the amended appropriations, stated in Tillman's May 20 exhibit accompanying the legislation, are in the amount of \$26,567,457.37, and "are necessary to account for certain additional expenditures," the legislation states.

The city's estimated receipts for 2020 are \$33,034,561.57, according to Tillman, who is authorized by the ordinance to submit the amended budget to the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer.

An ordinance adopting the alternative tax budget information for the fiscal year beginning Jan. 1, 2021, and to submit it to the Budget Commission of Cuyahoga County, was passed on first reading.

Committee reports

Councilman Stafford Shenett, chair of the Community Life and Education Committee, reported that committee members would like to network with the Ohio Minority Task Force to help assist and educate the community on COVID-19.

The CLEC committee will be looking at the city's "Ready Notify/Robocall" system to come up with a more effective approach to collect residents' phone numbers, and also will be working on a community engagement strategy to address the robocall system, Shenett said.

He reported that in June, the CLEC would follow up regarding the status of 2020 city events that may be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing guidelines, including the "Bridge the Gap-Hoop It Up" tournament with the police department in August; "Trunk Or Treat" in October; "Gobble Gobble" turkey giveaway in November; and the Youth Christmas Party in December.

Councilman Richard Trojanski, chair of the Public Works and Safety Committee, reported that committee members had discussed several issues, explaining, "Responding to the continuous recurrences of violence displayed at some of our city's bars and lounges, the committee seeks to act by legislating more stringent regulations on such establishments, in the interest of promoting the safety of our city's residents and visitors."

Trojanski also reported that the committee discussed a garbage can citation enforcement policy, as the city was continuing to experience issues of noncompliance by residents failing to collect trash and recycling containers after trash pickup.

The PWSC also discussed the NOPEC "Do Not Knock" registry program, and possible legislation to protect residents from door-to-door scams and solicitors, Trojanski said.

"The committee agreed to move forward with introducing this legislation, but due to COVID we have temporarily delayed introducing the legislation," Trojanski said.

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PLEASE NOTE: **THE JUNE 4th
BOARD MEETING IS
CHANGED TO JUNE 11th**

FUTURE MEETING DATE: JULY 9, 2020

Meetings start promptly at 5:30 p.m.
No live audience permitted.

N.N.: 5-27-20

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Garfield Heights Council update

By Ellen Psenicka

For the first time in recent memory, Garfield Heights Council, at a special meeting last Wednesday, decided to keep meeting on the second and fourth Mondays of each month for the summer 2020.

During June, July and August, it normally votes to hold only one regular meeting a month and adds special council meetings as needed.

The initial vote taken Wednesday saw Councilmembers Matt Burke, Shayla Davis and Mike Nenadovich voting for the revised summer meeting schedule, and Councilmembers Jason Blake, Charles Donahue and Tom Vaughn voting to keep the twice-monthly meeting schedule, which ended in a tie vote.

Council President Burke had reasoned it was procedurally easier to meet once a month and call special meetings when legislation warranted it, but changed his vote to "no" to avert a deadlock.

Also approved were the following ordinances:

- To raise the salaries of the police and fire department officers in accordance with charter regulations. The raises would be from 1.5% to 2%, depending on rank.
- To amend appropriations for current city expenditures for 2020 by adding another \$5 million to the previous \$50 million budget.

Finance Director Barb Biro said the increase would be predominately for roadwork, salaries and COVID-19 expenses.

- To replace an agreement with Perk Company, Inc. to repair a storm sewer on Canal Road causing flooding to local businesses.

The original agreement was for \$50,000 for the project, which legislation passed last Wednesday will raise to \$200,000.

- To enter into an agreement with Fabrizi Trucking & Paving Co. to take immediate action to remove blockage to the storm sewer near 10406 Broadway Ave.

Local food pantry distributions

The following food pantry distributions are taking place in The Neighborhood News readership area. Registration may be necessary. Anyone with additions to the list are asked to email to: nnews1923@aol.com to be included in future issues.

Garfield Heights

Garfield Heights Civic Center, 5407 Turney Rd. – Third Wednesday of the month from 1-2 p.m., and third Thursday from 6-7 p.m. Garfield Heights residents only.

The Rock Church, 9403 Garfield Blvd. - Third Saturday of the month from 8 to 11 a.m. for Garfield Heights residents only. Saturday, May 30, 10 a.m. to noon, drive through only. People with carts need to queue in line with the cars. All zip codes welcome.

Southeast Cleveland

University Settlement, 4800 Broadway Ave., back of building – Tuesday-Friday from 11:30 to 2 p.m. If you or someone you know has needs, please call 216-641-8948 or email to: usiemergency@universitysettlement.net

Holy Name Church, 8328 Broadway Ave. - Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. 216-271-4242

Elizabeth Baptist Church, 6114 Francis Ave. - second and fourth Saturdays of the month, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 216-429-2922

First Tabernacle Beth El, 3561 Independence Rd. - Greater Cleveland Food Bank distribution on June 4, July 2, August 6, 4-6 p.m.

Greater Cleveland Food Bank - Call for times and pickups: 216-738-2067

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James V. Psenicka

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NOVENA TO SACRED HEART

Dear Heart of Jesus, in the past, I have asked for many favors; this time I ask you for this special one (mention favor). Take a dear Heart of Jesus and place it within your heart where your Father sees it, then in his merciful eyes, it will become your favor, not mine. Amen. Say this prayer, 3 times for 3 days and your favor will be granted. Never known to fail. Must promise publication of prayer. **D.D.**

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Community police reports

Cleveland

Aggravated Robbery

On May 20, shortly before 1 a.m., police were called to a home in the 3600 block of E. 59 St. for a fight. Victim told officers there was a silver 4-door vehicle in front of her house playing loud music and possibly selling drugs. She went out to take pictures of the car with her cell phone and the driver got out and grabbed her and slammed her down on the sidewalk. He then took her cell phone and left in his car northbound on E. 59 St. The suspect is described as a black male in his 30's with short hair, 6'2" and slim build. The car was without plates but had a JD Byrider sticker on the front. 4th District detectives to follow up.

Drug Activity

Police were notified that a juvenile black male in a hoodie and shorts was trying to sell weed to customers in the 7300 block of Broadway Ave. on May 20, shortly

before 8 a.m. The caller said this was a habitual issue and was referred to the Narcotics Unit. The area was monitored by police

Garfield Heights

Theft – Shoplifting

Police were dispatched to Ace Hardware, 5680 Turney Rd., on May 21, about 7:30 p.m. for a report of theft. An employee told officers that about 7 p.m., a man she was familiar with, who was known to use drugs and had stolen in the past, entered the store. She said the suspect "was acting weird" and she went to find the store owner. When she arrived back to the front of the store the suspect was gone, and security surveillance showed the suspect leaving through the entrance door with a power tool in his hand. A weed whacker was found stolen valued at \$330.

Felonious Assault

Police were called to the 13000 block of Oakview Blvd. for a female shot. Officers found the victim laying on the tree lawn screaming in pain. She had been shot in the thigh and buttocks and was taken by ambulance to the hospital for treatment. She appeared to have been in a fight as she had numerous scratches on her left arm. An alleged witness said the victim had been involved in an altercation with two females over the victim's boyfriend. The Detective Bureau will follow up.

Improperly Discharging Firearm

On May 24, at 2:40 a.m., officers responded to the area of the 13000 block of McCracken Rd. for shots fired. A witness said two people had fired guns near the intersection of E. 131 St. and McCracken and then got in a dark-colored sedan and fled eastbound towards Broadway. Several casings were found in the area. Several bullets had struck a home on McCracken but no one inside had been injured. Officers canvassed the neighborhood, with several residents reporting hearing shots but did not see anything. Detectives to investigate further.

Maple Heights

Shooting/Felonious Assault

On Tuesday, May 19, at approximately 3:17 p.m., Chagrin Valley Dispatch Center received a call for shots fired in the area of 5166 Lee Rd., Food Deal, in Maple Heights. It was reported that a male, later identified as Rahsean Dunn, age 23, of Warrensville Heights, had been shot. Maple Heights police along with Maple Heights Fire/Rescue were dispatched to the scene. On the arrival of officers, the victim was found to have a gunshot wound to the torso. He was provided first aid and later transported to MetroHealth Medical Center by the MHFD.

(Continued on Page 8)

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Police reports

(Continued from Page 7)

Anyone with information related to this case is urged to contact the Maple Heights Detective Bureau: 216-587-9624 or Detectives@mhp-d-ohio.com. Information can be supplied anonymously to Crime Stoppers.

• On Thursday, May 21, at approximately 2:04 a.m., Chagrin Valley Dispatch Center received a call for shots fired at 5255 Theodore St., in Maple Heights. It was reported that gunfire had been heard in the residence.

It was then reported that a male, later identified as Mecail C. Leeth, age 20, of Garfield Heights, had been shot. Maple Heights Police officers along with Maple Heights Fire/Rescue were dispatched to the scene. On the arrival of officers, the victim was found to have a gunshot wound to the back. The victim was provided first aid and later transported to MetroHealth Medical Center by the MHFD.

Anyone with information related to this case is urged to contact the Maple Heights Detective Bureau: 216-587-9624 or Detectives@mhp-d-ohio.com.

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Nominated for his work around Fleet Ave as a caretaker of properties and a community activist.



Odetta Fields

Nominated for her work activating the Fleet neighborhood through the Community Yahoo's Group



Meeka Compton

Nominated for her work with the Community Yahoo's and envisioning Trick-or-Treat on Fleet



Councilman Tony Brancatelli

Nominated for being a long time advocate and visionary for Slavic Village and Ward 12



Walter Hyde

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The Rock Community Church

The Rock Community Church, located at 9403 Garfield Blvd., Garfield Heights, will be having a special food pantry distribution for any zip code on Saturday, May 30 from 10am-noon. Those walking also need to queue in car line.

Our regular pantry for Garfield Heights residents only on the third Saturday of each month (next June 20) from 8-11am will still be held.

All food distributions will be drive-through only till further notice.