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102nd YEAR NO. 28

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026

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FREE

Matt Faska named next principal of Indy High School at special board meeting

At a special Independence Local Schools Board of Education meeting last week, a two-year contract was approved for Matt Faska as the next principal of Independence High School. He will be formally recognized at the regular Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, April 21, at 6 p.m. Faska and his family plan to attend, said Superintendent Kelli Cogan, and are looking forward to meeting members of the Independence community.

Faska currently serves as an assistant principal at Hilliard Davidson High School, where he oversees several academic departments, including social studies, math and business, as well as custodial operations. He brings extensive experience in instructional leadership, school safety and student support systems, said Cogan.

In addition to his administrative experience, Faska is deeply committed to building a positive school culture and supporting student engagement. He has worked closely with staff and students through leadership teams, school improvement initiatives and advisory programs. He has also overseen student recognition efforts, supported grant initiatives and managed key operational responsibilities that help schools run smoothly each day.

Prior to becoming an administrator, Faska served as a high school social studies teacher for 10 years at Licking Heights High School in Pataskala, Ohio, where he built strong relationships with students and delivered engaging, relevant instruction. He also brings extensive experience in student leadership and extracurricular programs, having coached multiple sports at the high school level, including basketball, football, baseball and golf. His background in athletics has helped him connect with students while promoting teamwork, accountability and school pride, the superintendent said in a newsletter email.

He holds a Master of Arts in Educational Administration and principal licensure from The Ohio State University and a Bachelor of Arts from Baldwin Wallace University.

Faska and his wife, Amanda, who is a first-grade teacher, have two children. He grew up in Fairview Park and is excited to be closer to family while he and his wife raise their children. "He will have several transition days this spring and is excited to begin connecting with our students, staff and families as he prepares for the 2026-2027 school year," Cogan noted.

Womankind Community Resource Fair

Womankind, a prenatal and maternal care center in Garfield Heights, will hold a Community Resource Fair on Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Garfield Heights Civic Center, 5407 Turney Rd.

Connect with local organizations and find valuable resources from prenatal care, health and wellness, education, parenting, housing, food and more.

All are welcome to this free event, which will also feature food, activities for kids and giveaways. For more information email: info@womankind-Cleveland.org

Deadline approaches to submit ideas for People's Budget Cleveland projects

The People's Budget pilot in Slavic Village, a project of People's Budget Cleveland (PBCLE), has launched its idea generation phase in which Slavic Village residents and stakeholders can propose ways to spend \$100,000 to improve their neighborhood. But there isn't much time left to get ideas in. Deadline for idea submissions is April 15, 2026. Idea submission forms are available at: <https://tinyurl.com/PBCLEIdeas>

Slavic Village residents and stakeholders may submit an idea online at pbcle.com

Once idea submission closes, budget delegates will work alongside the Steering Committee and PB CLE to develop ideas into proposals. Residents interested in becoming a budget delegate may indicate their interest on the idea submission form or email pbclecoalition@gmail.com. For more information on idea submissions and the pilot program, visit: pbcle.com

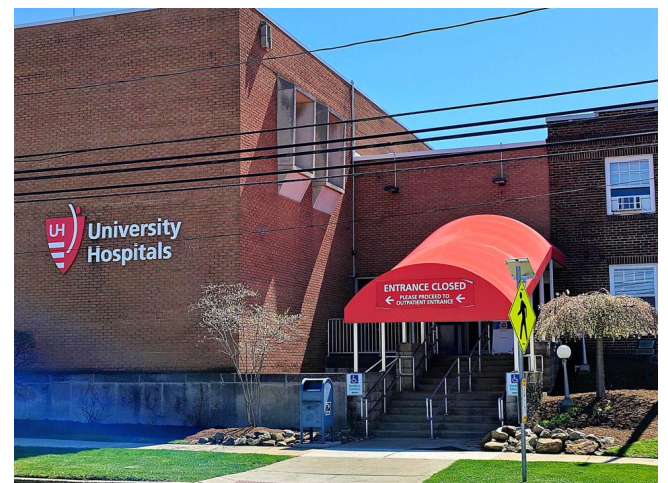
Demolition of former UH Bedford Hospital takes a huge step forward

By Ellen Psenicka

Bedford City Council met Monday night and passed an ordinance to enter into an agreement with the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corp. for project management services for the large-scale demolition of the former UH Bedford Hospital site at 44 Blaine Ave.

The administration recommended the city contract with the Cuyahoga County Land Bank to manage the Brownfield Remediation Program Grant through the Ohio Department of Development in the amount of \$2,498,121 for demolition of the site at a cost to the city of 15% of the total grant amount, estimated to be \$375,000, expected to come from money received by Bedford in the University Hospital lawsuit settlement.

At the meeting City Man-



The former UH Bedford Hospital on Blaine Ave., Bedford, will be demolished and put up for sale under an agreement passed by Bedford City Council Monday to turn over razing of the structure under the management and supervision of the Cuyahoga County Land Bank.

Photo by Elena Psenicka

ager Mike Mallis explained that Cuyahoga County and the Land Bank had applied on behalf of the city of Bedford for State of Ohio brownfield dollars to contribute to the demolition of the former hospital.

"We were awarded just under \$2.5 million which will cover the majority of the demolition," Mallis said. "The legislation will authorize the Land Bank to act on the city's behalf to coordinate the demolition and oversee the entire project."

Mallis said the city is ultimately still the decision-maker and will make sure the demolition's properly done so the city can begin marketing the shovel-ready site to prospective buyers.

Dispatch legislation pulled

A second reading for an ordinance which would authorize the city manager to enter into a contract with the city of Twinsburg for emergency dispatch services was pulled from consideration by council. Law Director John Montello explained that the legislation was pulled "to allow further exploration of ways to improve our dispatch services for our community and address the current escalating cost of the current service provider."

The legislation was introduced on first reading at the March 2, 2026 meeting of Bedford Council to change the city's emergency dispatch services from Chagrin Valley Dispatch to that of the city of Twinsburg. Officials said the 10-year contract with Twinsburg would provide the city an estimated savings of \$250,000 annually, and nearly \$3 million over the length of the contract.

Legislation passed

The following legislation was passed by Bedford Council at Monday's meeting:

(Continued on Page 4)

NN offers Freebies

The Neighborhood News has tickets to give away in a free drawing for the Garfield Heights High School's theatre production of its spring musical, "Once Upon a Time...", with performances on Friday and Saturday, April 17 and April 18, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, April 19, at 1 p.m., at the Center for the Performing Arts, 4900 Turney Rd.

Just stop in to The Neighborhood News office at 8613 Garfield Blvd., Garfield Heights, during normal business hours to sign up for the drawing. Deadline is Wednesday, April 15, at 12 p.m.

Community police reports

(All information is preliminary and subject to change pending investigation.)

Garfield Heights

Shots Fired

•On March 24, at 1:26 p.m., police responded to the Shell gas station, 5095 Turney Rd., for a shots fired call which had happened about an hour prior to police being called. The store manager reviewed camera footage and then called police. The footage showed that about 12:28 p.m. that day a male was shot at while pumping gas, but doesn't appear he had been hit. Prior to this incident the male had been inside the store when he and another male had a verbal altercation. The male then leaves in a silver Pontiac sedan and waits across the street at the Speedway station for the other male to exit the store and start pumping gas. The Pontiac then goes out of camera range and less than a minute later eight shots are fired towards the male pumping gas, who has a white VWSUV. Officers did not locate any shell casings.

•On April 5, at about 1:24 a.m., police were dispatched to assist other GHPD units at the Iconic Ultra Lounge, 4912 Turney Rd., for an active shooting that was occurring. Once officers arrived they saw parties dispersing in all directions. The officers cleared the inside of the building from any possible threat and observed a large number of broken alcohol bottles, chairs and tables flipped and personal belongings on the floor. They then went outside to help with crowd control. While outside police saw multiple spent ammunition rounds on the curb and in the parking lot. Further investigation found that multiple vehicles had been struck in the shooting. They learned that a security guard for the club was allegedly pepper sprayed and taken to Marymount Hospital for treatment. An officer went to Marymount to speak with him and the guard said an altercation had broken out inside the club with females at first, who were removed from the club immediately. He said he could hear multiple rounds coming from inside the building before people started to rush out. As of the date of the report the shooter(s) are unknown. Case forwarded to the Detective Bureau.

Found Property

On March 25, at about 9:52 a.m., an officer was approached by a city of Cleveland employee on McCracken Rd., just east of Johnston Pkwy., who said that he and

other employees picking up trash along McCracken Rd. and I-480, on the Garfield Heights/Cleveland border, had found firearms in the grass. The first weapon was a Sarsilmaz SAR9 9mm, found along the I-480 fence in the grass south of McCracken. It had one live round in the chamber and the magazine lying on the ground next to it contained 17 live rounds. The second weapon was located further east along the fence line. It was a Taurus PT845 .45 caliber, with one live round in the chamber and no magazine. Neither was entered into LEADS as stolen. Report closed.

Traffic Offense-Reckless

On March 3, at around 9:58 p.m., two officers were patrolling the area of Grand Division Ave. and Warner Rd., when they observed a silver Mercedes Benz traveling east on Grand Division at a high rate of speed. The officers followed the vehicle and activated the patrol car's lights and siren around the 8200 block of Grand Division Ave., to initiate a traffic stop. The vehicle continued to travel at a high rate of speed and ran a stop sign at Grand Division and Turney Rd., before coming to a complete stop at Turney and Sladden rds. The driver was then ordered out of the vehicle at gunpoint, as well as the passenger. The driver was placed under arrest and taken to city jail without incident. The passenger was released on scene. The driver was held for reckless operation, and cited for driving under suspension and stop sign violations.

Assault

On March 29, about 9 p.m., an officer was dispatched to the Sunoco gas station, 6009 Rockside Rd., for an assault report. The officer spoke with an employee who allegedly had been assaulted on March 27, between 11 p.m. and midnight. The employee said a black male walked into the gas station waiting in line to order food from the kitchen. The employee said two other customers were before him in line. The suspect appeared agitated and demanded to be served some burgers from the kitchen, then changed it to a 20-piece order of chicken. The employee explained that the large order would take some time. The suspect then said he would get the chicken himself.

The subject then entered the kitchen area and put up his hands like he was going to start fighting with the employee. The employee stated he kicked the subject twice before being punched in the left side of his face by the suspect. He claimed to have been dazed during this time and couldn't positively recall if he was struck while in the kitchen itself, and then further stated he almost became unconscious from the punch. The fight continued into the center of the store near the front entrance where the employee fell to the ground and the suspect attempted to kick him in the face. Afterwards, another employee joined the fight to remove the suspect from the store and was also punched. After some time both employees managed to remove the subject from the store.

While outside the gas station the first employee attempted to remove the male from the premises. When the suspect appeared to be running towards the other employee, the first employee tried to stop the subject from attacking his co-worker. At this point the suspect brandished a black firearm and pointed it at the first employee's face and he backed off from the suspect, who then left the gas station parking lot in his personal vehicle. The first employee stated that the entire incident had been cap-

tured on video from the store's security system, and a shorter video showed the suspect with a hoodie over his head. The employee later stated the male returned to the gas station with a "friend" to continue fighting around 12:30 a.m., but no further incidents took place before those parties left the gas station. Report was forwarded to the Detective Bureau.

Criminal Damage

On March 31, at about 4:10 p.m., officers responded to the city's basketball courts at 12150 Granger Rd., on a report that juveniles had damaged the locked fence to gain access. When police arrived they found six juveniles inside the locked fence playing basketball. One of the juveniles was seen on a city camera attempting to pry the bottom of the fence open. He admitted to officers he had damaged the bottom of the city fence. All juveniles on scene were identified and advised of trespassing. The report was forwarded to the Juvenile Detective Bureau for pending charges.

Theft of a Motor Vehicle

On March 31, at about 7:19 p.m., police were dispatched to a house in the 4500 block of E. 139 St. for report of a theft. They arrived and talked to the victim, who said he and his father had traveled from New York to sell his 2020 Yamaha ATV. He said he had contact with a male on Facebook who wanted to buy it and agreed on a price of \$6,900. They were to meet at a vacant home on E. 139 St. The buyers were to bring cash, but when they met for the deal the suspects handed the victim a blank check. The suspects were described as two black males wearing black hoodies and were approximately in their 20's. Prior to actually examining the check, the victim agreed to let one of the buyers take the ATV for a test drive. The suspect on the ATV fled westbound on Rexwood Ave., before the victim lost sight of him at E. 136 St. and Rexwood Ave. The other suspect ran east on Rexwood. The victim contacted GHPD and through its investigation it was determined that the victim had not registered the ATV in his name, so it could not be entered into LEADS as stolen. Police advised the victim to go to his local BMV and get it registered, then contact GHPD with the updated information so it could be entered into LEADS as stolen. They also requested that the victim send them all chat messages and pictures of the ATV, but at the time of the report those documents had not been received by police. Report forwarded to the Detective Bureau.

Cuyahoga County Board of Elections staff coming to Independence offering voter education for May 5th Primary Election

The Board of Elections will be in the field visiting nine locations in the county with information and handouts that will cover all aspects of the May 5, 2026 Primary Election. Staff will be available to answer questions and provide information on new voting rules, Vote-by-Mail, Early In-Person voting, what is on the ballot and employment opportunities.

The May 5, 2026 Primary Election Voter Education schedule includes a stop at the Independence Civic Center, 6363 Selig Dr., from 1 to 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 9.

May's primary will determine the candidates who advance to the November General Election, as well as decide important ballot issues. Voters will cast ballots for federal, state, county and judicial offices, including races for the U.S. Senate and Congress. In addition, school and local issues will appear on the ballot.

Voter information for the May 5th Primary is available online at www.boe.cuyahogacounty.gov. Voters may also call 216-443-VOTE (8683) to confirm their voting information.



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Public Hearing Notice

The City of Garfield Heights will have a public hearing at 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 20, 2026 at the Garfield Heights Civic Center, 5407 Turney Road. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss potential projects to be funded with available Cuyahoga County Community Development Block Grant and Community Development Supplemental Grant programs. These competitive grant programs help strengthen cities, encourage regional collaboration, and improve the quality of life for county residents. All applications must meet a community development need related to the health or welfare of the community. Comments or ideas for future projects can be sent to Pat Salemi at psalemi@garfieldhts.org. Any person who wishes to attend and requires special accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act should contact Pat Salemi no later than 72 hours prior to the meeting by e-mail or at 216-475-1100 Ext. 2425.

The Neighborhood News 04-08-26

Mayor invites special speaker to Maple Hts. Council meeting to mark Child Abuse Prevention Month

By Ellen Psenicka

Maple Heights Council met in regular session last Wednesday, April 1, and unanimously passed legislation declaring April 2026 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the city.

Mayor Annette Blackwell, in her report to council, relinquished her time to Jennifer Johnson, executive director of Canopy Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Cleveland, a nationwide organization whose mission is to reduce potential trauma for children and families impacted by child abuse.

CAC clients come to one child-friendly, trauma-informed location where they receive services and resources in order to begin the healing process, Johnson explained.

The organization provides therapy, victim advocacy, forensic interviews, medical examinations and case coordination, according to its website.

Mayor Blackwell said she heard Johnson speak at a recent Cuyahoga County Mayors and City Managers meeting and was very impressed with her message.

"I asked her to come and speak tonight because I found her talk very impactful to me since Maple Heights has a significant amount of child abuse and April is Child Abuse Prevention Month," the mayor said.

Johnson told council members and guests attending the meeting that CAC strives to educate communities about why its organization exists and the need to intervene in child abuse cases quickly to prevent the abuse from happening again.

She praised Mayor Blackwell for taking the lead for her city in the cause of child abuse prevention.

"Your mayor has been so invested in not just partnering with Canopy but understanding what this issue is and how to respond," Johnson told the group at the council meeting.

Contact Canopy at 216-574-4325 for more information.

Legislation passed

The following legislation was passed by council at last Wednesday night's meeting:

- Authorized a transfer of funds by the finance director of \$200,000 from the General Fund to the Police Pension Fund to provide for estimated Police Department employee pension obligations for 2026 as set forth in the

2026 permanent budget.

- Authorized a transfer of funds by the finance director of \$300,000 from the General Fund to the Fire Pension Fund to provide for estimated Fire Department employee pension obligations for 2026 as set forth in the 2026 permanent budget.

- Designated April 2026 as Fair Housing Month in the city. April 11, 2026 marks the 53rd anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, which spells out a national policy of Fair Housing without regard to race, color, religion, sex, familial status, disability or national origin, and encourages fair housing opportunities for all.

- Authorized Change Order No. 1 for the Northeast Ohio Trenching Service, Inc., decreasing the contract by \$10,500.31, for the asphalt and concrete repairs for the Maple Heights Senior Center Accessibility Project - Phase 1.

- Authorized Change Order No. 1 for AM Door & Supply Co., increasing the contract by \$1,626 for door replacement for the Maple Heights Senior Center Accessibility Project - Phase 2.

- Entering into the Healthy Urban Tree Canopy Program Project agreements between Cuyahoga County Soil and Water Conservation District and Zscape Horticulture and Knowles Municipal Forestry for the Mapleboro Tree Canopy Restoration - Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects.

Passed for more readings

- Passed for a second reading was an amended section of the Codified Ordinances concerning eligibility and payment of overtime for non-bargaining unit employees. The mayor and human resource director recommend that beginning April 1, 2026, sections of the city's Codified Ordinances be amended to eliminate the provision that requires non-bargaining unit employees to be paid overtime for hours worked in excess of eight hours in a day, thereby limiting overtime pay only to non-bargaining unit employees who work more than 40 hours in a week.

- Also passed for a second reading was a proposed new Chapter 214 - Mayor and Council Investigations - of the

Codified Ordinances of the city. Introduced by Councilmembers Edwina Agee and Stafford Shenett.

The new Chapter 214 reads:

“CHAPTER 214 – MAYOR AND COUNCIL INVESTIGATIONS

214.01 AUTHORITY; SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION. In furtherance of the provisions of Article V, Section 6 and Article VII, Section 16 of the Charter, the Mayor, the Council, or any person or committee authorized by either of them, shall have power to inquire into the conduct of any department, office, officer or employee of the city and to make investigation as to city affairs, and for that purpose may subpoena witnesses to appear before them, administer oaths, and compel testimony, the production of books, papers and other evidence.

214.02 APPEARANCE AT PUBLIC MEETING; SUBPOENAS. FAILURE TO OBEY.

(a) The mayor, or a chairman of a standing committee of the council, with the approval of the President of Council, may subpoena witnesses to appear at a meeting before the mayor, or such committee, at a time and place designated in the subpoena, to testify under oath concerning matters of inquiry into the conduct of any department, office, officer or employee of the city and to make investigation as to city affairs. Meetings before the council shall be public. However, the members may move into executive session for a reason permitted under the Ohio Open Meetings Act.

(b) Subpoenas may require the production of books, papers and records in furtherance of such inquiries and investigations. Requests for subpoenas shall be made to the city's Law Department. It shall be the duty of the mayor to designate a police officer to serve such subpoenas, with return to the Law Department. The law director shall administer the oath to all witnesses.

An ordinance to amend council's rules of order was withdrawn for revision, which would be submitted to council at a later date.

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Demolition of former UH Bedford Hospital takes a huge step forward

(Continued from Page 1)

- Motion to accept the decision by the Board of Zoning Appeals approving Mike Lozar's building of a shed within 20 feet of another building at 903 High St.

- Authorizing the city manager to enter into a contract with Ohio Plan Risk Management Inc. for property and liability insurance coverage for the city of Bedford. The agreement starts on April 1, of 2026-2027, with an increase of 7% from \$233,356.00, which amounts to \$251,614 for one policy year.

The Ohio Plan, which is a pool of 800 cities, villages, townships, etc., across the state, has presented a plan that is stronger than the city previously had and at a lower cost, according to the legislation.

- Amending an ordinance to enter into a modification to the Master Service agreement with Simplex-IT for additional information technology services (excluding the municipal court) for the city including increased security.

- Entering into a contract with Simplex-IT to purchase three-year firewall subscriptions for the city, not to exceed the amount of \$15,426.20. "Firewall licensing and an additional enhancement to it for City Hall is necessary for the security of the city's information technology (IT) infrastructure," the ordinance states. Simplex-IT provided the lowest and best quote based on the needs of the city, according to the ordinance.

- Contracting with Valley Ford Truck Centers to purchase a 2026 Ford F-450 SD regular cab truck for the service department in the amount of \$128,836.52.

- Contracting with Johnson's Fire Equipment to purchase a large diameter hose for the fire department. The administration recommended contracting with Johnson's Fire Equipment Company as they were the lower of the two quotes received, \$13,864.40 compared to \$16,215.25.

- Entering into a purchase agreement with Patrick Enterprise LLC to buy city-owned properties located at 89 John St., 16 Justin St., 27 Cresswell Ave., and 70 W. Glendale Ave., for new home construction, at the county-appraised value of \$2,000 per lot, for a total of \$8,000.

- Entering into a contract with Gametime for the replacement of playground equipment at Greencroft Park. The city was awarded a Cuyahoga County Community Development Block Grant of \$150,000 for new playground equipment at Greencroft Park. Gametime's bid came in at \$170,000.

- Declaring the property and structure at 38 Henry St., a nuisance and condemning the property. Numerous attempts have been made to obtain compliance from the property owner who has abandoned the property and is in significant arrears in tax payments.

Easter Ham Drawing winners announced

Due to the generosity of 36 local merchants, 37 hams, or gift card equivalent, were given away in the annual Neighborhood News Easter Ham Giveaway. The names of participating merchants and their winners are listed below:

#1 Roofing, 216-319-0430, Dennis Krajcirik; 3 Girls Pizza, www.3girlspizza.com, Doris Eizember; Ace Hardware, 5680 Turney Rd., Mike Tutokey; Mayor Jack Bacci, Village of Cuyahoga Heights, Irene Skala; Broadway Scrap Metals, 8202 Broadway Ave., Mr. Pitts; Matt Burke, Mayor, City of Garfield Heights, Pat Sorensen; Czech Catholic Union/CCU Life, 5349 Dolloff Rd., Mike Smothers.

Dave's Supermarket, 7422 Harvard Ave., Donna Forestall; Dave's Supermarket, 4948 Turney Rd., Heather Macks; Dependable Electric, 440-845-8661, Charles DiMarco; Trevor K. Elkins, Mayor, Village of Newburgh Heights, John Klindworth; First Federal Lakewood, 12648 Rockside Rd., Leonard & Yvette Prorock; Fisher Auto Parts, 5727 Turney Rd., Karen Sever; Gas USA, 7020 Harvard Ave., Cathy Petricvic.

Harry's Steakhouse, 5664 Brecksville Rd., Nick Climaco; Avery Johnson, Councilman Ward 4, City of Garfield Heights, Kathy Pytel; Mayor Stan Koci, City of Bedford, Michael Roch; Maple Heights Hardware, 16460 Broadway Ave., Jennelle Shephard; The Master Products Company, www.masterproducts.com, Craig Disterhof; Matrix III Income Tax Service, 5258 Transportation Blvd., Alan Zmija; PNC Bank, 7101 Broadway, Carol Gasiewski.

R&K Sausage and Catering, 7700 Harvard Ave., Sandy Bogucki; Rad Air Complete Car Care, 5266 Turney Rd., Greg Rowinski; RE/MAX Haven Realty, Inc., Nancy Harp; Ricco's Garfield Beauty Salon, 8809 Garfield Blvd., Christine Maggard; Rust Belt Automotive & Diesel, 4173 E. 71 St., Joseph Cashiotta; Mark Smith, Councilman Ward 3, City of Garfield Heights, Judy Karpowicz; Turney Town Sunoco, 4935 Turney Rd., Bernie Sliva.

Unique Tax and Accounting, Inc., 6116 Fleet Ave., A.W. McCollum; Vic's Floral, 6304 Fleet Ave., Paul Rydzinski; WeldonPC.com, 5829 Turney Rd., Renee Lesko; Woodward Convenient, 5661 Turney Rd., R. Muller; Zak Super Center, 22777 Rockside Rd., Johnathan Berti; The Neighborhood News, 8613 Garfield Blvd., Jeff Tretera; Maw's Sauce, It's the Good Stuff, Cindy Johnson; Shannon Landscaping and Snowplowing, 216-441-6167, Kenneth Mack and Karen Kipstuh.

The Neighborhood News

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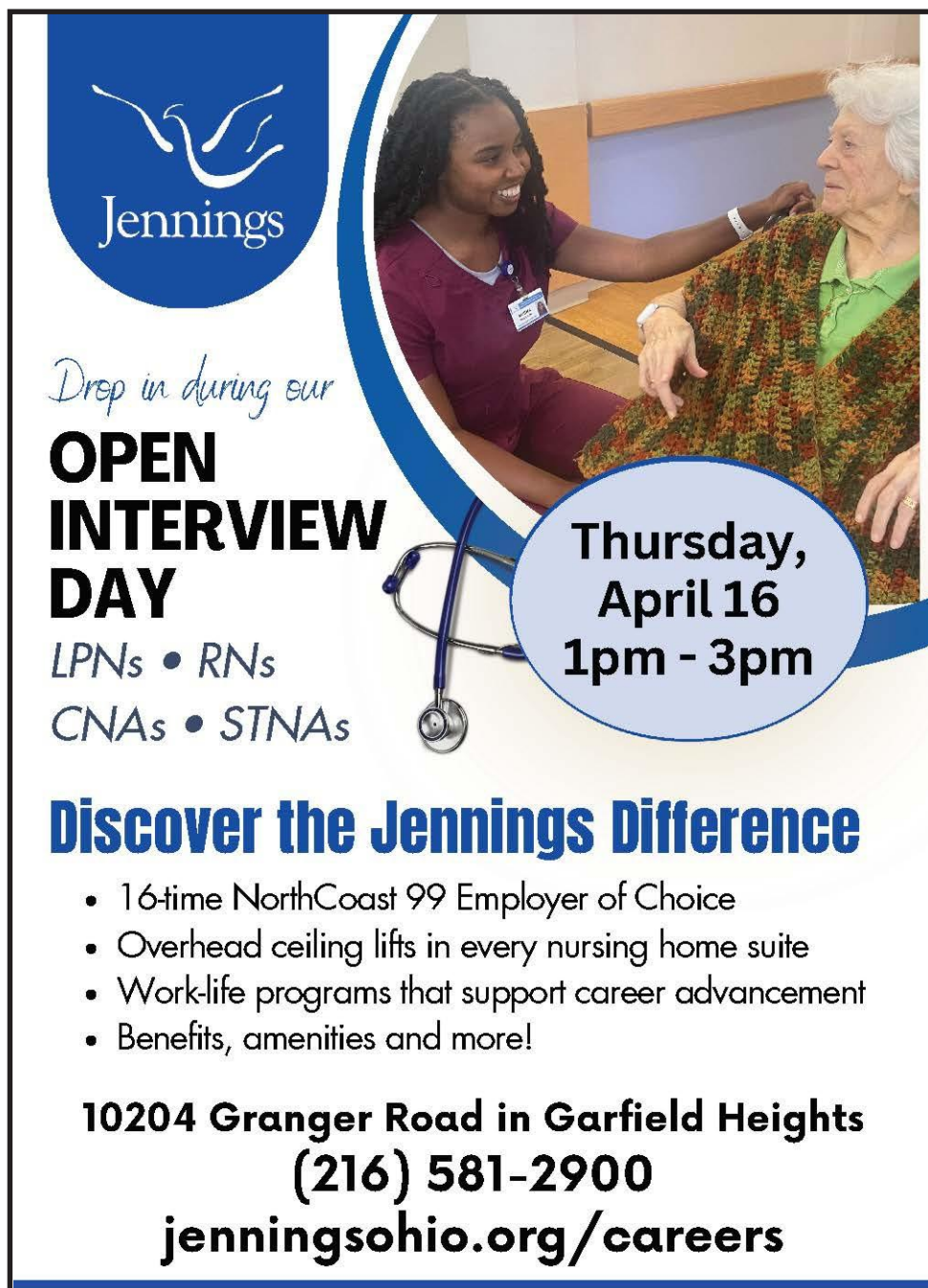
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Slavic Village grapples with parks, recreation issues sparking discussion

A recent allocation of nearly a million dollars for the renovation of Slavic Village's Warsaw Park has sparked a lively discussion among neighborhood leaders and residents about how the revitalization of community greenspaces and recreation areas should proceed.



Warsaw Park's equipment and grounds are scheduled for a major renovation.

Late last year, former Ward 12 Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer directed \$350,000 of her discretionary funds for Warsaw Park, to balance a distribution she made in Old Brooklyn, on her ward's west side. The allocation was supplemented by \$600,000 in city money from the Mayor's Office for Capital Projects (MOCAP), which specializes in greenspace infrastructure. The entire budget is under a tight deadline, according to Slavic Village Development (SVD). If it's not spent fast it could be lost.

But as a result of ward redistricting in January 2025 and elections in November, Maurer is no longer on council and Warsaw Park is now in Ward 2. That ward's current Councilman, Kevin Bishop, speaking at his ward meeting last week, acknowledged Maurer's allocation and pledged to honor it.

Differing views

But some Slavic Villagers have their own ideas. At the March meeting of the East 63rd Block Club, a mile north of Warsaw Park, members pointed to Morgana Park down the street as an area crying out for attention. It was once the home of Morgana Park Little League, a legendary Cleveland baseball program founded by volunteers under the late Slavic Village resident and Cleveland policeman Dan Kane. They directed soil excavated from the basement of St. Stanislaus Church's social center to be deposited in lowland around E. 65 St. and Kenyon Ave. The baseball facility that resulted kept summers busy for generations of youth and adults, and became a leading baseball and softball program for the entire city. But as park maintenance and volunteer ball politics deteriorated over the last decade, Morgana grew dormant.

Across the street, the once-robust, four-decade-old community gardening program at Morganic Garden today lies fallow, after soil testing last spring revealed toxic levels just above the revised safe limits mandated by the city. City Hall offered raised beds to override the soil problem. But some Morganic managers contend that clean soil imported to the site would solve the problem for less than \$20,000. As gardeners try to figure out who in City Hall is attending to the issue, the 2026 planting season clock is ticking.

And at the far north end of Slavic Village, grassroots leaders claim that Hyacinth Park has been neglected for years.

Further complicating the park politics: Morgana and Hyacinth are not in Bishop's Ward 2 but in Councilwoman Deborah Gray's Ward 3. Dividing resources between changing ward lines is organizationally tricky.

Picking priorities

So why did former Councilwoman Maurer focus on Warsaw Park? In a recent phone interview, she said it was the result of last fall's analysis by her staff of all the Slavic Village parks under her directions. Forest City and Dan Kane parks were done, and Morgana Park's needs couldn't be satisfied with \$950,000.

At a February parks meeting convened by SVD, the city's landscape architect contended that it would take upwards of \$3 million to properly renovate the Morgana baseball facility: lights are out, fencing is torn, bleacher seats are buckled and, most critically, the infield is swampy. Councilwoman Maurer backed the architect's case, saying that drying out the field would necessarily entail the installation of artificial turf, like at League Park in the city's Hough neighborhood. Engineered drainage and fake grass go together, she said.

Perfect vs. good

Some residents scoff at what they view as this over-thought scheme to revive a sports program which, due to its expense and complexity, is unlikely to proceed, leaving another generation of kids without the summer fun their parents took for granted. For them, this is not just a recreation issue but a health and safety issue. Children and teens need to be outside, running around, away from their screens and with each other, involved in productive activities not destructive ones. The same goal that, according to his daughter Donna, motivated Dan Kane over 60 years ago motivates Slavic Villagers

pushing their leaders today: "The kids need something to do--now!"

In a tense zoom meeting in mid-March, SVD's Executive Director Shauna Sanders advised patience, recalling her tenure at Ohio City Inc., on Cleveland's west side, and how it took a decade to get the \$50+ million Irishtown Bend Park off the ground. Impatient SV activists concur, but argue that's why they need to push now, because progress takes so long. They're hoping to see parks and recreation placed prominently in the new Slavic Village master plan scheduled to be rolled out this spring.



Taking action

And so, one councilperson's allocation has Slavic Villagers now talking, inspecting sites on their own, researching equipment, calculating how unpaid, motivated volunteers can override bureaucratic lethargy and budget constraints with the sweat equity and sheer stubbornness that keeps them in the ranks of the most civically engaged neighborhoods in Cleveland.

Morgana Park's infrastructure is neglected if not abandoned.

Former Councilwoman Maurer insisted that the Warsaw Park renovation be a public process, driven by resident engagement. To comply, SVD is forming a Friends of Warsaw Park advisory group. A park cleanup will occur Saturday, April 11, from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., to which the public is invited. Warsaw Park is located behind Roses department store on Harvard Ave. at E. 66 St. For more information, email SVD's Krystal Sierra at krystals@slavicvillage.org. Supporters of Morgana Park and Morganic Gardens can get involved by calling/texting 216-469-4806. For Hyacinth Park advocacy, contact 216-379-9561.



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GHUMC Community Meal

Garfield Heights United Methodist Church, 4977 Turney Rd., will host its monthly Community Meal on Sunday, April 12, from 12 to 1:30 p.m. The meal is free and all are welcome.

Sokol Schnitzel Dinner

Sokol Greater Cleveland will hold a Sokol Sunday Dinner, featuring pork schnitzel with potato salad, coffee and dessert, on April 19, serving from 1 to 2:30 p.m., at the historic Bohemian National Hall, 4939 Broadway Ave., Cleveland.

Dinners are \$20 per person; cash bar. Reservations are needed by Monday, April 13, by calling Vlad Nemecek, 216-894-3591.

Public Library, located at 6361 Selig Dr., Independence. For more information or to register for any program, please call 216-447-0160.

CHILDREN

Toddler Storytime / No registration required. 19-35 months with caregiver. Join us for rhymes, songs, fingerplays and stories. Thursdays, March 5 through April 30, 11 a.m.

Focus on 4's and 5's / Registration required. Preschool children 4 and 5 years of age and their caregivers can join us for stories, songs and a focus on skills to prepare for kindergarten. Wednesdays, March 11 through April 15, 11:30 a.m.

Kindergarten Countdown - Goal Setting / Registration required. Join us as we help your child build kindergarten readiness skills in a program aligned to Ohio's Early Childhood Standards. This session we will focus on goal setting. Wednesday, April 8, 11:30 a.m., Thursday, April 9, 10 a.m.

Tree Tale Tellers - Holden Forests & Gardens / Registration required. What's Arbor Day, anyway? Join a Tree Tale Teller from Holden Forests & Gardens to explore the world of plants and trees in this all-ages family story time and learn more about Arbor Day! Friday, April 10, 10:30 a.m.

GHHS Theatre Dept. to launch its spring musical

The Garfield Heights Theatre Department will present its spring musical, "Once Upon a Time...", on Friday and Saturday, April 17 and 18, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, April 19, at 1 p.m., at the Center for the Performing Arts, 4900 Turney Rd.

The musical review will present selections from "Motown," "Heathers" and "Wicked."

Adult tickets are \$10, and students and seniors are \$5. They can be purchased with cash or credit cards at the box office upon arrival. Seniors who bring in the coupon below will receive free admission!



Cleveland Public Library: Fleet

Fleet Campus, 7224 Broadway Ave., Cleveland, is hosting some wonderful FREE programs this month for youth, adults and families. For more information or to register for any programs, please call 216-623-6962.

Creative Writing for Youth – School-age / Teens: Wednesday, April 22, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Join in with a group of peers to write about many different provided writing prompts.

Coloring for Tranquility – Adults: Tuesday, April 28, 12-1 p.m. Decompress from the stresses of the week as we listen to calming ambient music while coloring and practicing the cognitive skill of mindfulness.

Preschool Storytime – Ages 3-5: Thursday, April 30, 4:30-5 p.m.

Independence Branch Library

Here are some of the FREE programs being offered at the Independence Branch of the Cuyahoga County

Garfield looking for paraders

Plans for the annual Memorial Day parade and service in Garfield Heights are underway. The city will honor deceased veterans of all wars and conflicts on Monday, May 25.

The parade will step off at 10 a.m. from Mapleleaf Elementary School, 5764 Turney Rd. The city is looking for participants. Anyone interested in being in the parade can contact Ward 7 Councilwoman Jennifer Newrones, parade chairperson, at 216-478-9977 or jnewrones@garfieldhts.org.

FREE Senior Citizens
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Program tells tales, impact of Ohio-Erie Canal

History buffs will enjoy "Trails and Tales: The Ohio-Erie Canal," a presentation hosted by the Independence Historical Society on Thursday, April 9, at 7 p.m., at Historic Hall, 6675 Brecksville Rd., Independence. The program will be presented by a Cuyahoga Valley National Park interpretive park ranger.

The canal system was a 19th century engineering marvel that transformed Ohio into a commercial powerhouse. The Ohio-Erie Canal connected Lake Erie to the Ohio River, linking Ohio to global markets via the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico.

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