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Committee of the Whole [MORNING SESSION]

Documenter name: Lauren Hakim

Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

Date: Aug. 16, 2023

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Summary

- Investment in home repair and neighborhood revitalization is poised to impact many neighborhoods citywide.
- Boddie Recording Co. will become a Cleveland landmark.

Follow-Up Questions

- Is there an ARPA breakdown that shows by project how City Council has spent money and which wards have received funding?
- How does council ensure that the organizations to which they award money incorporate community benefits into their work?
- Can council or the city create their own grants to provide funding for home repairs that may better assist city residents?

Notes

The Cleveland City Council Committee of the Whole and the Zoning-Development, Planning and Sustainability meeting began at approximately 9:03 a.m. Council members in attendance were:

- Council President Blaine Griffin, Ward 6
- Council Member Joseph Jones, Ward 1
- Council Member Kevin Bishop, Ward 2
- Council Member Kerry McCormack, Ward 3
- Council Member Deborah Gray, Ward 4
- Council Member Richard Starr, Ward 5
- Council Member Stephanie Howse, Ward 7
- Council Member Michael Polensek, Ward 8
- Council Member Kevin Conwell, Ward 9
- Council Member Anthony Hairston, Ward 10

- Council Member Danny Kelly, Ward 11
- Council Member Rebecca Maurer, Ward 12
- Council Member Kris Harsh, Ward 13
- Council Member Jasmin Santana, Ward 14
- Council Member Jenny Spencer, Ward 15
- Council Member Brian Kazy, Ward 16
- Council Member Charles Slife, Ward 17

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:02 a.m. Ordinance 617-2023 from the Zoning-Development, Planning and Sustainability (DPS) committee was heard and stands approved. No public comment was made. This portion of the meeting concluded at approximately 9:06 a.m.

The Committee of the Whole meeting began immediately following the Zoning-DPS session. Ordinance 750-2023, proposed by Slife and Maurer, provides \$7.3 million to Cleveland Neighborhood Progress for the revitalization of middle neighborhoods. Middle neighborhoods are predominantly single-family housing areas with an aging housing stock and declining property values. The ordinance will impact Wards 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16 and 17.

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress presenters were Tania Menesse, CEO and president; Briana Perry, senior vice president of equitable neighborhood revitalization; and KC Petraitis, director of Real Estate. Menesse outlined a three-step investment plan that will focus on rehabilitation, revitalization, and marketing. Perry discussed the “white box” program, which refurbishes privately owned commercial buildings to attract small business owners and attract investment along commercial corridors.

Petraitis said Cleveland and Cuyahoga County are competing for residents with other counties in the region. Funding renovations into middle neighborhood properties can help boost property values and make those properties less attractive to investors.

Amendments to Ordinance 750-2023 were read into the record by Council President Blaine Griffin. Maurer explained that the amendments were to align the ordinance with a state constitutional provision. The amendment was approved with one dissenting vote from Starr.

Boddie Recording Co., established in 1959 by Thomas Boddie, is the oldest recording studio in Cleveland. Boddie recorded music with acts such as the O’Jays, Ike and Tina Turner, and the Temptations. Ordinance 512-2023 was approved to designate the studio

a Cleveland landmark.

Ordinance 793-2023 concerns improvements to Cleveland Browns Stadium in the amount of \$3,449,200. James DeRosa, director of the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects, stated that the emergency repairs identified per the 2018 stadium capital audit are pedestrian ramp replacements and gutter replacements (2:21:14-2:21:53). Also included is an air conditioning repair to an IT room that is classified as a nonemergency.

Polensek inquired about the stadium repair fund and how it is funded (timestamp 2:25:00). DeRosa explained that the fund receives money from ticket sales, taxes and surcharges (timestamp 2:25:11-2:25:45). Polensek asked if the Browns are helping to pay the costs of the repairs (timestamp 2:27:50-2:27:54). Per DeRosa, the Browns are not helping with the specific repairs presented at today's meeting but have helped with other repairs (timestamp 2:27:55-2:28:05).

Ordinance 712-2023 authorizes \$10 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for home repairs citywide. Alyssa Hernandez, director of Community Development, said that \$10 million will be split among four local organizations. The breakdown is as follows: (timestamp 2:50:18-2:50:53)

- [CHN Housing Partners](#)-\$4 million
- [Cleveland Restoration Society](#)-\$3 million
- [Local Initiatives Support Corp.](#)-\$1.5 million
- [Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity](#)-\$1.5 million

Spencer commented that \$10 million "falls woefully short" for home repair work in Cleveland (timestamp 2:56:00-2:56:09). She also expressed concern for how difficult it may be for residents to interact with multiple agencies and receive assistance for repairs, especially with the funding being offered as a loan.

Kathleen Crowther of the Cleveland Restoration Society said her organization works with Key Bank to offer the Heritage Loan, which modifies traditional loan requirements to reach more borrowers. Starr said the Heritage Loan program has not awarded any funds to Ward 5 in the past five years (timestamp 3:47:17-3:49:11).

Several members of council commented that Cleveland residents would benefit more from grants than loans. Hernandez responded that loans with low interest rates will help maintain a source of funding for the future (timestamp 3:32:05-3:32:58).

[Organizations:](#)

- Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
- Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity
- LISC Cleveland
- CHN Housing Partners
- Cleveland Restoration Society
- Heritage Home Loan
- Cleveland Browns

Speakers/Guests:

- Tania Menesse
- Briana Perry
- KC Petraitis
- Greg Rush
- Kathleen Crowther
- Kandis Williams
- Jeanine Colozza
- Laura Boustani
- Justin Fleming
- William Willis
- Dione Alexander
- Joseph Gabbard

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