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City Council

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

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Summary

- Many members of the public oppose reducing the size of Cudell Park.
- Council Members Richard Starr and Kevin Conwell spoke out about Phillip McHugh, a cop/ex-detective from D.C. who previously faced a [civil-rights lawsuit](#). Starr criticized the mayor for hiring McHugh to a senior-level position in Cleveland and questioned if it was because of a personal relationship with the mayor.

Follow-Up Questions

- I am wondering what council will do about Cudell Park and all the public disapproval.
- I am wondering what council is going to do about Phillip McHugh.
- Why on earth would our mayor hire someone with a civil rights lawsuit filed against them? And what is the mayor's personal relationship to McHugh?

[Editor's note: McHugh [has since resigned](#).]

Notes

This meeting's [agenda](#).

This meeting was attended by Council Members Blaine Griffin (president), Joe Jones, Kevin Bishop, Kerry McCormack, Deborah Gray, Richard Starr, Stephanie Howse-Jones, Michael Polensek, Kevin Conwell, Anthony Hairston, Danny Kelly, Rebecca Maurer, Kris Harsh, Jenny Spencer and Brian Kazy. Jasmin Santana and Charles Slife were absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nikki Hudson, resident of Ward 15: Cudell Park is the location of two memorials, the Frank Cudell clock tower and the Tamir Rice butterfly memorial. She is worried that these memorials “would exist in the shadows” of the new school (Marion C. Seltzer) that is

slated to be built there. She said not only will the neighborhood be losing a park but also their legacy. She referenced a compromise with Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) that might save a bald cypress tree. She said the new plan doesn't save the park and isn't extensive enough. She also said that reducing Cudell Park affects climate change.

James Lamb, resident of Cleveland: Concerned about the number of Black businesses in the city. Said all they have on the East Side are dollar stores and there is only one Black-owned business in Tremont.

Rev. Pamela Pinkney, resident of Cleveland: She feels she is not being protected or given an equal opportunity. She spoke about inaction on reports she has filed to police and alleged abuse by the local police after calling them to her home. She said she does not want a white police chief in Cleveland.

Sabrina Otis, resident of Cleveland: Started by first thanking an official in the Division of Waste Collection and Disposal for doing a great job. Otis went on to talk about the consent decree. Otis shared that the 1st and 4th police districts don't have commanders but are getting ones. When being hired, the candidates are supposed to meet with the community beforehand and the community gets to make an input. She asked if the city was going to do that. Otis also said the Community Police Commission is a "hot mess." Otis said a commission member is very disruptive and keeps interrupting at meetings and said the city needs other people on the commission.

Jamie Brazier, resident of Ward 15: Brazier wants Ward 15 Council Member Jenny Spencer to introduce legislation to make Cudell Park a historic site. Brazier said City Council made a mistake with [Watterson Lake](#).

Faouzi Baddour, resident of Ward 11, which includes part of Cudell Park: The community met with CMSD and city officials. Baddour suggested expanding the new Seltzer school in the opposite direction of the park. Baddour said officials said to do that, they would have to move utilities and do sewer work, and it would cost \$4 million. Baddour asked the city to come up with money.

Brent Eysenbach, resident of Ward 15: Eysenbach said the council wouldn't do this to other parks and questioned Mayor Justin Bibb's goal for a 15-minute walkable city and whether it aligns with the decision to cut down the trees and "disposing of" the park. Eysenbach said the Cleveland Planning Commission and Cleveland Landmarks Commission approved a site plan that goes against City Council's legislation.

Diana Sette, resident of Ward 15: Sette stated that there are benefits of nature including psychosocial, emotional, physical, cognitive, aesthetic, spiritual and economic values. She said the United Nations put out a report saying we have [two years to save the planet from catastrophe](#). She said that even though Bibb wasn't mayor when council decided on the Cudell Park land swap, he should stop the construction plans. She said that if he doesn't fix it, his legacy will be a "climate clown."

Dean Van Farowe, resident of Ward 15: He offered a solution for the Cudell Park situation. He said Clark school will be finished in 2025 and the new Seltzer building is supposed to start construction in the spring of 2025. He suggested that, if they waited, they could use Clark school, which is only six minutes away. He called on council to make amends with the community.

Antoine Tolbert, also known as Chairman Fahiem, resident of the Buckeye area: He said his organization, New Era Cleveland, teaches and mentors young children. He said on April 26 they were met with hostility from Ward 4 Council Member Deborah Gray in a public rec center. He said she asked security to have a community organizer and the young members of his organization removed. He said he will not stop his or his organization's acts of philanthropy and helping the community.

Some highlights of the legislative action:

FIRST READING LEGISLATION

- Emergency Ordinances Referred

521-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE To discontinue the Divisions of Recreation and Park Maintenance and Properties and the Office of Special Events and Marketing, by repealing various sections of Chapter 131, as amended and enacted by various ordinances; to amend Section 131.02 relating to the duties of the Director of Public Works; to create the Department of Parks and Recreation; to enact new Sections 133.01 to Sections 133.46; and to amend various other sections of the codified ordinances, as amended and enacted by various ordinances, relating to the foregoing changes.

522-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE To supplement the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, by enacting new Section

559.248 relating to the creation of the Colombian Cultural Garden at 1325 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

525-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing the Director of the Community Relations Board to enter into a contract with The Presidents' Council Business Chambers, fiscal agent for The Mt. Pleasant Ministerial Alliance, ICONS, and Children at Play Edutainment for professional services necessary to develop and implement young adult violence intervention and prevention programs and strategies to reduce violent activity on streets in high "hot spot" areas, and for other community violence intervention work, for one year with three one-year options to renew, exercisable by the Director of the Community Relations Board.

- Emergency Ordinances Read in Full and Passed

528-2024 An Emergency Ordinance Amending Section 1 of Ordinance No. 271-2024, passed March 4, 2024, authorizing the Director of the Department of Public Works to enter into an agreement with the Cleveland Cultural Gardens Federation for the 2023 One World Day Expo.

- Ordinances Referred

529-2024 AN ORDINANCE To supplement the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, by enacting new Section 347.191; and to amend Sections 343.01, 343.11 and 345.02, as amended by various ordinances, relating to adult use marijuana.

- Emergency Resolutions Referred

530-2024 AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION Urging the Administration's Department of Public Works, Division of Recreation to improve pool policies for the benefit of resident patrons this summer.

- Emergency Resolutions Read in Full and Adopted

535-2024 AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION Objecting to the transfer of ownership and location of C2 Liquor Permit to 3228 West 65th Street.

SECOND READING LEGISLATION

•Emergency Ordinances Passed

105-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing the Director of Public Safety to enter into a grant agreement with Crime Stoppers of Cuyahoga County, Inc. to carry out the public purpose of providing community outreach to educate people about the Crime Stoppers process in order to increase reporting of crimes and improve public safety in the City and surrounding region.

261-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Designating the Jesse Owens House as a Cleveland Landmark.

306-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing the Director of Public Works to exercise the first option to renew Contract No. RC 2022-25 with Rumpke of Ohio Inc. for the transfer, disposal and processing of recyclable materials.

308-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing the Director of Public Works to enter into one or more contracts with Case Western Reserve University to provide a youth summer sports, nutrition, health, and life skills development program for 2024 under the National Youth Sports Program supported by Case Western Reserve University.

309-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing the Director of Public Works to enter into a contract with the Northeast Ohio Muni Football League aka Cleveland Municipal Football Association dba Cleveland Muni Football League to conduct a city-wide youth football program.

328-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing the Director of Public Works to enter into an agreement with the Neighborhood Leadership Institute to implement educational, recreational, and cultural programs in various school buildings and other facilities during evening hours, provide leadership training, and supervise the summer tennis program.

391-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing and directing the Director of Law to fully enforce the provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 9.67, that imposes restrictions on the owner of a professional sports

team that uses a tax-supported facility, and that receives financial assistance from the state or the city.

406-2024 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE Authorizing the Mayor and the Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies to sell certain City-owned properties no longer needed for the City's public use located at 1848 East 101st Street and 9910 Woodward Avenue to Gordon Crossing Land Co., LLC for purposes of future development.

Miscellaneous

Council Member Starr: He said anybody with the background of Phillip McHugh, the city's senior advisor for Public Safety, wouldn't pass the vetting process for police. McHugh is the former college roommate of Bibb.

Starr referenced a [federal civil rights lawsuit](#) brought against McHugh when he worked in Washington, D.C. He said McHugh [wrote the job description for the role of senior advisor](#), which was newly created. Starr said that someone who has a history of allegedly violating civil rights shouldn't advise public safety.

He referenced [the firing of Jakimah Dye](#) for an accident while having children in a city car. Starr said McHugh got his job without merit but because of a relationship.

Council Member Conwell: He started by saying happy Mother's Day. He thanked the Building and Housing and Health departments. They are rehabbing Parkplace and put families up in hotels/motels. He said he shut down the Family Dollar on East 105 Street. He said he told the manager to clean up the garbage outside but the manager didn't know he was a council member and disregarded him. Because of this, Conwell shut the Family Dollar down 24 hours later.

He also mentioned McHugh. He asked how the city can train the police to move in the right direction if it hires an adviser like him. He said that the police should have the characteristics of honesty, credibility and integrity. He said his people (Ward 9) are against hiring McHugh. He said a lot of the people in his ward are from different places and came here to get away from a man like McHugh.

Griffin: He stated that he and other members of the council are also concerned. He said he has spoken with the mayor, but council members don't have the ability to remove someone in that position. He said his main concern is the perception of public safety and

they will discuss the issue more during the Public Safety Committee meeting on May 15. He said many council members have expressed concern.

Starr: He spoke again to say they can make policies that make it so that senior-level positions have to be approved by council, like Cuyahoga County Council does.

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