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## City Council

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

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## Summary

- As the City of Cleveland and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District have halted the planned construction of a new Marion C. Seltzer school building near Cudell Commons Park, many residents are asking to be involved in deciding the park's future. Preserving the Tamir Rice Memorial and the Cudell Clocktower are particularly important to residents.
- While all legislation passed at this meeting, there were several items that received "no" votes or abstentions. Most notably, one ordinance that would increase the maximum amount that council members can receive as campaign contributions received several votes against it.
- Likely due to this being the last meeting until July 10, there were upwards of 80 total ordinances and resolutions on the agenda.

## Follow-Up Questions

- With so many of the ordinances granting different city departments the ability to do things such as procure contracts or receive grants, is there a definitive set of rules on what city officials require council approval to do?
- Where does the friction with ordinances pertaining to West Side Market improvements originate from?
- What are the concerns with several ordinances that received votes against them?

## Notes

This meeting was [Cleveland City Council](#)'s last meeting until July 10. View the agenda [here](#).

The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. because the Committee of the Whole meeting lasted until 6:45 p.m. Quorum was achieved, as all members were present.

## Public comment

Kristen Fragassi spoke out against the ongoing [Cleveland Flag Project](#). Fragassi is the great-granddaughter of Susan Hepburn, who created the current city flag. She advocated for recognizing the history of the current flag rather than focusing on spending resources creating a new one. “Paraphrasing the brilliant Jay-Z, I’m sure this city has 99 problems, but I assure you this flag ain’t one,” she said. ([More coverage by Ideastream.](#))

Ronaldo Rodriguez Jr. asked council members to use their voice to urge MetroHealth to keep their [promise to build a park](#) on West 25th Street in the Clark-Fulton neighborhood. “In an area encircled by highways and heavy industry, Clark-Fulton desperately needs this park,” Rodriguez said.

Sabrina Otis, a Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) parent, asked the council not to support a possible school levy for the district. “You guys have allowed the city [and] CMSD to build all these buildings. Where are the students? Where are the kids?” she said. “CMSD is losing students because it doesn’t have the same equality in educating the kids.”

Brenda Bickerstaff specifically questioned Council Member Michael Polensk regarding [the consent decree](#). “What influences or information [have you] given to the police department about their behavior?” she asked him.

Five different residents spoke about Cudell Commons Park. The City of Cleveland and CMSD announced that they are pausing construction plans for a proposed new Marion C. Seltzer school at the site. Residents spoke favorably of this pause but said this needs to be an opportunity to engage community members in deciding the future of the park. In particular, Friends of Cudell Park advocated that the Cudell Clocktower and Tamir Rice Memorial need to be preserved.

Samaria Rice, the mother of Tamir Rice, was among the residents who spoke at the meeting. She expressed her support for keeping the park as a park in perpetuity. “The park is such important to me because that is the last memory I have of my son,” she said.

Resident Michael Armstrong was critical of the city’s form-based code, which he said was an “upzoning scheme for investors.” He said that the city’s intentions to lower housing costs by increasing development are inaccurate, and greater development would continue to drive up costs.

## Presentations

Council Member Kevin Conwell presented Morelle McCane, a Glenville High School graduate who will be [competing in the Olympics](#) in boxing.

Council Member Danny Kelly presented firefighter John Stickovich who [risked his life to rescue](#) a baby from a house fire.

Council Member Deborah Gray recognized a resident toy company owner who was able to bring her son to the United States with help of the organization Global Cleveland.

## First reading legislation

Twenty-nine ordinances were referred. Eighteen of those permitted different department directors with the City of Cleveland to take actions such as entering into agreements, entering into contracts and applying for grants. Several more authorized the issuance and sale of bonds to provide funds for various expenses such as health initiatives, parks improvement, streets and more.

Nineteen ordinances were read in full and passed. Once again, many of these authorized city directors to enter agreements, fulfill contracts and more.

Two ordinances in this section did receive “no” votes or recusals. Council Members Charles Slife, Jenny Spencer and Rebecca Maurer voted against Ordinance [615-2024](#). The ordinance increases some limits on campaign contributions for council members. For individuals, it increases the yearly contribution limit from \$1,500 to \$3,000. For political action committees, it increases the yearly limit from \$3,000 to \$6,000.

Council Members Maurer and Brian Kazy recused (abstained) on Ordinance [647-2024](#), which would authorize “the Director of Public Works to enter into an agreement with the Cleveland Cavaliers, or its designee, to permit and accept improvements to Public Auditorium for the Cleveland Charge, an affiliate of the Cleveland Cavaliers, to conduct and host league basketball games, and to lease areas in Public Auditorium, for a term of six years.”

One emergency resolution was referred and three were passed. Of these three, one urges CMSD to rename East Professional Center to “Arnold R. Pinkney Professional Center,” and the other two pertain to liquor licenses.

## Second reading legislation

Thirty-three emergency ordinances were passed. The following ordinances received nay votes:

- [542-2024](#) received two nays from Council Members Anthony Hairston and Richard Starr. It would grant agreements with Cleveland Public Market Corp. (CPMC), or an entity affiliated with or controlled by CPMC, to provide economic development assistance for the design and construction of the improvement through the grant agreements.
- [543-2024](#) received two nays from Kazy and Starr. It authorizes an additional \$10 million for improvements to the West Side Market.
- [544-2024](#) received one nay from Kazy, which relates to the development and/or purchase agreement with TurnDev, or its designee, for the development and sale of real property and buildings located at 2530-2570 Superior Avenue as the new police headquarters.
- [581-2024](#) received one nay from Kazy, which relates to authorizing the Director of Capital Projects to apply for and accept funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation for the preliminary study of the Lakefront Pedestrian Bridge and authorizing contracts.

Many additional ordinances pertain to contracts, agreements and other logistical needs for city projects. Ordinance [522-2024](#) outlines some parameters for the construction of a Colombian Cultural Garden on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

In addition to the emergency ordinances passed on second reading, four ordinances and three resolutions were passed.

Following announcements, Council Member Joseph Jones said he doesn't believe there should be limits on funds that can be raised, as there are no limitations in other cities in Cuyahoga County. Given the three votes against 615-2024 by other council members, campaign contributions seem to be a potentially controversial issue. It is somewhat rare for legislation to receive "no" votes during council meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

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