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101st YEAR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2025

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FREE

Bedford Heights Council honors architect Madison

By Tristan Douglas

At its meeting Tuesday, March 18, Bedford Heights Council and Mayor Phillip Stevens honored trailblazing architect Robert P. Madison for contributions to the community.

Madison was born in Cleveland on July 28, 1923. He excelled in math and science in his youth and began studying architecture at Howard University in 1940. He briefly paused his studies to serve in the U.S. Army during World War II, earning three combat ribbons and the Purple Heart.

After returning to Cleveland in 1946, Madison resumed his architecture studies at Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve University). He graduated in 1948 as the first Black recipient of a bachelor's degree in architecture in Ohio. Madison went on to earn a Master's degree in architecture from Harvard University in 1952.

After a short period studying urban design in Paris, Madison returned to Cleveland in 1954 and founded Robert P. Madison International, the first Black-owned architecture firm in the Midwest.

Madison's firm has contributed to numerous high-profile projects in the Cleveland area, including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Great Lakes Science Center, the Louis Stokes Wing of the Cleveland Public Library, and Cleveland Browns Stadium. Madison also designed the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, Senegal, in 1965.

He has served the Bedford Heights community for nearly 17 years as the city's architect. Now 101, he continues to contribute his expertise to the city's architectural projects and plans to continue doing so.

(Continued on Page 4)

G.H. junior Marcus Johnson named OH Mr. Basketball

Marcus and Sonny Johnson (1998) are the first father-son duo to win the prestigious award

Junior Marcus Johnson of Garfield Heights High School was named 2025 Ohio Mr. Basketball last Thursday by the Ohio Prep Sports Media Association. Marcus Johnson, a guard for the Bulldogs team, gives his family the first father-son Mr. Basketball combination in Ohio history. His father, Sonny, now the head basketball coach at Garfield Heights, won the award as a player at Garfield Heights in 1998.

The 6'2" Johnson, who has committed to play basketball at Ohio State University, was presented with the award last weekend at the University of Dayton Arena during the OHSAA state boys basketball championships, a stage his team nearly reached before a 49-48 loss to Louisville in the Division III state semifinals. Johnson, a finalist last season as a sophomore, has been an All-Ohio first-team selection since his freshman year.

Marcus won this season's award with 110 points from the statewide panel. Delphos St. John's junior Cam Elwer was the runner-up with 48 points and Olentangy Orange senior Devin Brown placed third in the voting with 43 points. Other finalists included Steubenville senior Aiden Davis, Brunswick junior Trey Drexler, and Kettering Archbishop Alter senior RJ Greer.

Now in its 38th year, the prestigious Mr. Basketball award was first given by the Associated Press in 1988. It has been voted on by the Ohio Prep Sports Media Association since 2017.



Marcus Johnson, flanked by his mother and father, along with his siblings, received the Ohio Mr. Basketball award last weekend at the University of Dayton Arena during the OHSAA state boys basketball championships. Photo courtesy of the Garfield Heights City Schools

NEORSD sewer tunnel work goes full steam ahead in southeast area

By Ellen Psenicka

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD) recently began construction on the Southerly Tunnel and Consolidation (SOTC) Project to address combined sewer overflows (CSO), with three major construction sites going on right now in and around the Slavic Village area: E. 49 St. in the Morabito Trucking location; off Bessemer Ave., at E. 68 St., currently between Rodgers and Hoppensack; and at the soccer fields next to First Tee in Newburgh Heights.

Combined sewer overflows were the earliest sewers built around the turn of the 19th century and carry sewage and stormwater in a single pipe.

When it rains and there is a dramatic increase of water flowing through the sewers, some of the combined wastewater and stormwater is allowed to overflow into area waterways to prevent urban flooding, but this combined sewer overflow is also harmful to the environment.

Work will continue on the huge underground tunnels as part of the \$3 billion, 25-year "Project Clean Lake" program NEORSD began in 2011 to meet Clean Water

Act standards and address water quality issues. The overall goal is to reduce sewer overflow into Lake Erie and its tributaries in Greater Cleveland.

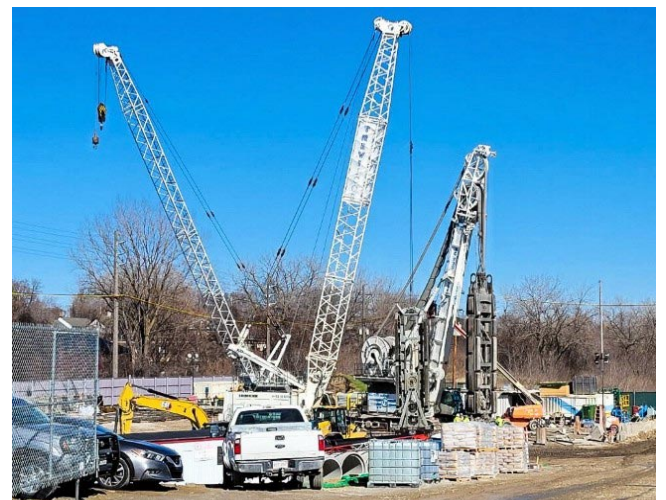
"This is a huge benefit to our neighborhood and region," said former Ward 12 Councilman Tony Brancatelli, who supported these efforts when he was on council.

SOTC includes nearly 3.5 miles of 23-ft. diameter tunnel, built in soil, 130 to 185 feet under Cleveland's Slavic Village area, and the villages of Newburgh Heights and Cuyahoga Heights.

When it rains, overflows captured by SOTC will be stored until the rain ends and it can be dewatered by the future Southerly Tunnel Dewatering Pump Station to the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Center for treatment before its release into the Cuyahoga River.

Once completed, the Southerly Tunnel System will reduce the volume of pollution discharging into the environment by 760 million gallons in a typical year, protecting the environment and improving water quality in the Cuyahoga River, said NEORSD literature explaining the process.

(Continued on Page 4)



Southerly Tunnel System work continues at the Morabito Trucking site, 3535 E. 49 St., Cleveland. There will be access to all businesses north and south of the Morabito entrance on E. 49 St., during construction.

Community police reports

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

Garfield Heights

Assault

On Friday, March 14, at 8:18 a.m., officers responded to a call from the Speedway gas station, 5122 Turney Rd., for an assault. An employee said a female had thrown a hot cup of coffee she got from the gas station in her face after getting upset at the register. Another employee confirmed the unknown female had thrown the hot coffee. The victim denied any medical treatment. The unknown female was last seen leaving the gas station and getting into a red SUV that was parked near the front door. Once the store surveillance footage and third party surveillance camera located in the parking lot is turned over, it will be attached to this report.

Felonious Assault

On March 14, at 7:35 a.m., police responded to a call from the area of Melgrove Rd. involving a vehicle that had hit a tree. When police arrived, a Hyundai was observed off the roadway in a wooded area next to an open lot at the intersection. GHFD was on scene and several paramedics

were already giving aid to the female driver who officers were told had been hit in the leg by gunfire. No one else was in the car. The victim was transported to MetroHealth Medical Center for treatment. At the hospital the victim told police she had left her house on Osborne Rd., and was taking side streets to get to the Miles Rd. area to buy food. When she reached Maplerow Ave., she heard a loud pop or bang and then started to black out. She woke up to GHFD paramedics treating her near Melgrove Rd. She said she did not know who could have shot her and remained hospitalized at the time of the report.

Recovered Stolen Auto

On March 17, at about 4:16 a.m., Garfield units got an alert via the FLOCK camera on Granger Rd. that a stolen 2021 Hyundai Kona had entered the city. An officer noticed a car matching the description parked at a gas pump in the Valero gas station at 14196 Granger Rd., with a man pumping gas into it. When the officer approached the car and verified the plate number, the male jumped into the driver's seat and fled west on Granger. The driver lost control and struck a sign and a tree on the east side of Granger, which disabled the car. The driver and passenger then both fled on foot in separate directions. Police noticed the passenger was holding what appeared to be a handgun in his right hand as he was running. They lost sight of the driver when he began jumping fences in the 5300 block of Meadow St. Several other GHPD officers and Maple Heights units arrived to establish a perimeter. Dispatch advised that city cameras showed a male, possibly the passenger suspect, waving his arms around at vehicles by the Marathon station at Broadway and McCracken Rd. When police arrived he fled south through the parking lot and was later detained at gun-point with help from several Maple Heights officers. A

loaded weapon was located in his waist band. He was taken to jail for booking. While units were still on scene, dispatch notified police that a male had walked into the Emergency Department at Marymount Hospital complaining of a head injury from playing basketball and was supposedly giving vague details to staff. His physical description from his driver's license matched that of the driver of the stolen vehicle. Case referred to Juvenile Bureau.

Theft of Motor Vehicle

On March 18, an officer met a complainant at the station who said that on March 17, between 8 and 10:30 p.m., his 2016 Ford Fusion was stolen from the parking lot of the Ionic Bar, 4912 Turney Rd. He said his daughter had been driving the car and parked it in the lot and was in the bar for about two and a half hours. When she came out of the bar the vehicle was gone. Vehicle entered into LEADS as stolen.

Criminal Damage

On March 18, at 7:08 p.m., an officer was dispatched to the Shell station at 5095 Turney Rd., where the complainant said a light skinned, black male wearing a black hooded sweatshirt and sweatpants had just broke their credit card reader, valued at \$600 to \$1000, and left walking north on Turney Rd. The store manager said at about 6:20 p.m., the suspect had approached the register and asked him to make change for a \$100 dollar bill. The manager told him he didn't have the change and the suspect became irate, began swearing and striking the Verifone Credit Card terminal causing damage to the screen and mount. The male then walked outside still yelling profanity and went north on foot. The incident was captured on the Shell station's security cameras, but the suspect was not located at the time by police.



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CITY OF BEDFORD, OHIO

List of Meetings for April 2025

Tuesday, April 1, 2025	Planning Commission (if needed) Work Session - 5:30 p.m. Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.
Monday, April 7, 2025	Council Work Session - TBD Regular Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 9, 2025	Southeast Area Law Enforcement (SEALE) Board of Trustees Meeting (if needed) Work Session - 10:00 a.m. Regular Meeting - 12:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 15, 2025	Planning Commission (if needed) Work Session - 5:30 p.m. Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.
Monday, April 21, 2025	Council Work Session - TBD Regular Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 22, 2025	Board of Zoning Appeals (if needed) Work Session - 5:30 p.m. Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

It should also be noted that the Board of Building Standards and Appeals, Civil Service Commission, Bedford Arts and Cultural Board, Bedford Historical Preservation Board, Assessment Equalization Board, Public Hearings, Planning Commission, Animal Appeals Board, Board of Zoning Appeals and Tree Board meet **as needed**. Notification of these meetings will be posted at the five most public places in the City per **Ordinance No. 8461-09**.

All Meetings will be held at Bedford City Hall, 165 Center Road, Bedford, Ohio 44146. For agendas and minutes please go to www.bedfordoh.gov, <https://bedfordoh.primegov.com/public/portal>, or call the Clerk of Council, at **440-735-6510**.

Tracy M. Simons, CMC
Clerk of Council

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CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS

2025 GRASS NUISANCE ABATEMENT SERVICES

Sealed Requests for Proposals (RFP's) will be received by the Planning and Development Department at Maple Heights City Hall, 5353 Lee Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137, until 4:00 p.m., local time, on the **16th day of April, 2025** for the **“2025 GRASS NUISANCE ABATEMENT SERVICES”** in the City of Maple Heights, Ohio. NO FAXED COPIES ACCEPTED. RFP's may be submitted in person, through the U.S. Postal Service or via e-mail to englebrechtg@mapleheightsohio.com within the solicitation period.

The Requirements for Proposals and Bidder Information Forms may be procured at the Office of the Planning and Development Director or on the City's RFP web page at:
www.citymapleheights.com/government/city-bids-rfps/.

Three (3) successful contractors will be required to register as a contractor with the Maple Heights Building Department.

RFP's are to be submitted in sealed envelopes marked, **"2025 GRASS NUISANCE ABATEMENT SERVICES."**

Geoff Englebrecht
Planning and Development Director
City of Maple Heights

PUBLISHED: The Neighborhood News
March 19, 2025
March 26, 2025
April 2, 2025

Slavic Village Development's Susan Gordon says goodbye to neighborhood friends

Hello Slavic Villagers,

Please bear with me and I apologize for any grammar issues, this is straight from the heart.

I never thought this day would come, but I received notice on Tuesday, March 18, that my position of Director of Community Building at Slavic Village Development would be eliminated. Last Friday was my last day in the office. I was 2 months shy of being employed by SVD for 19 years.

Many people who I have spoken to over the past 24-48 hours said, "It's just a job, you'll find something else." And yes, they are right, and yes, I'll be okay, but for those of you that know me, this was more than "just a job," this is who I am. This role has been more than a mere occupation for me — it has been an integral part of my identity.

I know I failed at times, I know people got frustrated with me, but I hope you all know I tried my hardest to advocate for you all, to bring more money, more resources, more power and more personal connections to you all. My background in social work brought a unique perspective to the CDC world and to the Slavic Village community specifically. I always paused and asked myself how I would feel if I lived right here and what would I do? Would I support this project, would I clean up that lot, would I call this person or that person, would I push back and how hard?

Yes, this hurts and yes, this isn't how I wanted things to end, but I am strong, I am resilient. I've got a lot of strength and grit and I learned all those qualities from each and every one of you, so thank you! Truly and dearly, thank you! Thank you for allowing me into your homes and your meetings for nearly two decades. I essentially grew up and became a true professional right in Slavic Village.

I have no idea where this twist in the journey of life will take me, maybe our paths will cross again, but please know my heart will always be in Slavic Village. Keep in touch.

Please continue to foster kindness, build common ground, and organize around shared causes, remembering that there is strength in unity. The work doesn't stop because I'm not here — engage with your neighbors, pick up trash on your morning walk, introduce yourself to new faces, and plan some fun community activities. It takes a Village and you have one!

Giant hugs to you all and thanks for an amazing 19 (almost) years.

Susan Gordon

Former director of Community Building, Slavic Village Development

Major water, sewer work approved in Maple Heights

By Judith Goldsworth

Water main and sewer line work were the focus of a number of pieces of legislation passed at last week's meeting of Maple Heights Council, including a resolution for the Libby Road Water Main Replacement and Resurfacing Project, authorizing Mayor Annette Blackwell to enter into a contract with Northeast Ohio Trenching Service, Inc., to do the work, at a cost not to exceed \$1,541,760.24.

The city was awarded a \$475,448 grant for replacement of the water main from Broadway Ave. to Lee Rd. The Ohio Public Works Commission is contributing up to 30% of the cost, up to a maximum of \$418,500, for the replacement and additional work, including resurfacing of Libby Rd.

The earliest start date for the project is Monday, May 12, to be completed within 90 days, "which will allow the roadway to be resurfaced this construction season," City Engineer Ed Hren confirmed.

Also passed was a resolution authorizing Blackwell to apply for, accept and enter into an Ohio Water Pollution Control Fund (WPCLF) agreement for construction of wastewater facilities, designating a dedicated repayment source for the loan, and authorizing the signing of contracts/documents for the Southwest Quadrant Sewer Repairs, Phase 3 Project.

"The city seeks to make improvements by improving sanitary sewers and eliminating sanitary sewer overflow," the resolution states, adding that Blackwell and Hren have advised council that the WPCLF funds may be available through the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Water Development Authority in an amount not to exceed \$208,000.

District 2 Councilwoman Toni Jones explained, "This is actually a grant for Phase 3 of the Southwest District Project which affects my district, as well as District 1. This also allows for the paving of Walvern and Morning Star."

District 1 Councilman Stafford Shenett added, "This particular resolution is a way our city can connect the funding to help pave our side streets. These types of legislation are very beneficial to our residents and to our constituents. We are trying to balance the budget, and in having the county come in and do the work, and then repave the streets, these are the types of legislation that are good for the city."

Also concerning sewer work in the city, council passed a resolution authorizing Blackwell to execute temporary sewer easement documents for public sewer facilities on private property on Rochelle Dr.

Hren has advised the city that it will require the acquisition of a temporary sewer easement at 14368 Rochelle, "for the repairs and future maintenance of the storm and sanitary sewer facilities on the property."

Council also passed a resolution supporting the Canopy Child Advocacy Center on behalf of Cuyahoga County's children, and declaring April 2025 as "Child Abuse Prevention Month" in the city.

The resolution states that during the month of April and throughout the year, "We encourage everyone to come together against child abuse and neglect, by supporting prevention programs so every child feels safe and nurtured, and each family receives the support and education needed... We all resolve to do our part to build strong children with safe, healthy futures."

Two resolutions authorizing community events in the city in 2025 were placed on first reading.

The first resolution authorizes the Community Life and Education Committee (CLEC) to expend public funds and accept private donations to host the following events: Juneteenth, Voter Registration, Hoop It Up, Unity in the Community, and Clean-Up Day.

The second resolution authorizes the use of public funds and resources, including the city's general liability insurance coverage, and the acceptance of private donations to hold District Block Parties, Trunk-Or-Treat, Thanksgiving Event, and Youth Holiday Event. Both pieces of legislation will be discussed by council before possible passage at a future meeting.

Volunteer honored

In celebration of National Women's History Month in March, longtime volunteer Alfreda Abbadini was honored by the CLEC for her work in the Maple Heights community, during a presentation at the council meeting last week.

Five other women were also honored by the CLEC for their work in the Maple Heights community at the March 5 meeting and Abbadini, who has volunteered for many years in the city, was receiving her award at the March 19 meeting.

In presenting the award, Councilwoman Edwina Agee stated, "Your dedication, your quiet strength and your unwavering commitment have not gone unnoticed. We have been noticing these for years now. This Women's Month, we celebrate you and we thank you. Congratulations."

Announcements

Council President Ron Jackson gratefully acknowledged all the get-well wishes he received during his recent illness, resulting in his absence from several council meetings. "I truly appreciate it, and it meant a lot," he said.

Councilman Timothy Tatum announced that he and Councilwoman Toni Jones will host a District 2 and 3 Joint Town Hall Meeting at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, April 9, at St. Andrew Eastern Orthodox Church, 16029 Maple Park Dr.

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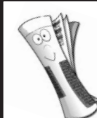
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NEORSD sewer tunnel Bedford Heights Council honors architect Madison

(Continued from Page 1)

The SOTC is expected to be completed the first quarter of 2028. Construction of the pump station will end in late 2029.

For more information on the project, visit the NEORSD website: <https://www.neorsd.org/community/about-the-project-clean-lake-program/>

(Editor's Note: Thanks go out to Tony Brancatelli and NEORSD's Angela Jones for their help with this story.)



Closure of E. 49 St. north of Fleet is expected to last 450 days from when it began on Jan. 8, 2025, as this sign on I-77 by the Fleet Ave. ramp indicates.

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(Continued from Page 1)

Madison, joined by his family, was honored with a proclamation from Mayor Stevens for his years of commitment and his groundbreaking contributions to the field of architecture. Stevens, alongside Councilwoman Kelso-Perez, expressed gratitude for Madison's service to Bedford Heights not only for the work he performs, but his role as an inspirational figure in the community.

Two resolutions passed

Council also passed two resolutions at Tuesday's meeting. The first authorizes the mayor to accept a bid for senior citizen grass cutting services for the 2025 and 2026 seasons, with a city option for the 2027 season as well.

The second piece on the agenda amended Chapter 929 "Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection Control," Chapter 1314 "Comprehensive Stormwater Management," and Chapter 1315 "Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan & Site Development" of the Bedford Heights Codified Ordinances. This piece also passed 7-0 without discussion.

Mayor's State of the City, community events scheduled

Mayor Stevens announced that he would be hosting his first State of the City Address since becoming mayor in 2024. The address will take place on Thursday, March 27, at the Bedford Heights Community Center. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m.

Also announced was the Lunch with the Bunny event, which is taking place on Saturday, April 19, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Bedford Heights Community Center. The event is free for all Bedford Heights residents, but registration is required to attend. The deadline to register is Saturday, April 5.

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Other announcements

Applications are open for the Senior / Disabled Grass Cutting Program, which provides weekly grass cutting services to registered residents beginning in mid-May. To qualify for the program, residents must be 65 or older, a disabled adult under federal disability standards, or have a spouse currently deployed on active military duty. Applications are available at the Community Life Center. A \$35 fee is due with the application.

Free branch clipping will begin north of Columbus Rd. on Monday, April 7, and south of Columbus Rd., on Tuesday, April 8. The service will continue through mid-fall on Mondays and Tuesdays. Residents can place tree or shrub clippings on their tree lawn with the cut end facing the curb to be chipped by the Public Service Department. All dirt, debris, or other materials must be removed before chipping.

Bedford Heights Summer Camp applications are open for the 2025 season. Children ages 7-12 are eligible to participate. Participants will enjoy swimming, outdoor activities, field trips, movies, sports, arts and crafts, instructional speakers and more. The camp offers 8-week and 4-week enrollment options. Registration details are available at the Bedford Heights Community Center.

Genealogical society meets

The Cuyahoga Valley Genealogical Society will hold its monthly meeting on Monday, April 7, at 7 p.m. Members and interested public are invited to attend at the Independence Civic Center in the Willow Room, 6363 Selig Blvd., Independence.

The program, entitled "From Documents to Sentences to Stories: Rebuilding Family Stories," will be presented by Sunny Morton.

Turning your genealogy research discoveries into meaningful stories can be challenging. Follow the re-creation of one family's story using hands-on, step-by-step, try-this-now story-building strategies.

Vietnam War Vets Day

The city of Garfield Heights will host the annual Vietnam War Veterans Day program on Saturday, March 29, at the Civic Center, 5407 Turney Rd. Social hour begins at 1 p.m., with the program scheduled to start at 2 p.m.

The event is sponsored by Vietnam Veterans of America Greater Cleveland Chapter #15. For more information,



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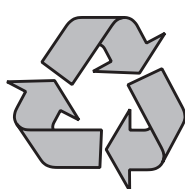
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**EASTER GREETINGS
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Garfield Hts. honors Lovas for support of childcare

By Ellen Psenicka

Garfield Heights Council met Monday night and presented Auliya Lovas with a resolution for her dedication to childcare and her contributions to the community during Women's History Month.

The resolution states: "Auliya Lovas has dedicated 27 years to the field of childcare, providing compassionate, high-quality early childhood education and ensuring that children receive the care and support they need to thrive.



Auliya Lovas (center) was honored with a resolution sponsored by Ward 2 Councilwoman Tenisha Mack (second from left), as Lovas' family members share in the moment. Photo by Wendy Walters

"Lovas turned her passion for childcare into a business, starting from her home seven years ago. Through her dedication and hard work, she established Liya's Learning Center at 4949 Turney Rd., which has proudly served the Garfield Heights community for the past two years.

"Liya's Learning Center offers a safe and nurturing environment for children, providing essential services such as nutritious meals, field trips, homework assistance, summer care programs and more, ensuring that families in Garfield Heights have access to quality childcare...

"The city of Garfield Heights recognizes and appreciates the invaluable contributions Auliya Lovas has made in uplifting families and promoting a strong foundation for the next generation."

The following legislation was also passed at Monday night's council meeting:

- Extending the city's moratorium on the issuance and processing of all licenses, permits and certificates that would enable the establishment of smoke and vape businesses in the city of Garfield Heights. The current moratorium is set to expire on April 28, 2025.

- Entering into an agreement with Public Consulting Group to participate in the Ohio Ambulance Supplemental Payment Program. According to the legislation, the current rate of Ohio Medicaid reimbursement for EMS services falls short of the actual cost of providing the services.

Public Consulting Group, the legislation notes, has worked with Ohio EMS leaders and the Ohio Department of Medicaid to establish an Ambulance Supplemental Payment Program (ASPP) in the state of Ohio which would bring increased federal Medicaid funding to the state.

- Amending appropriations for current expenditures for the city during the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2025.

- Entering into an agreement with the Public Utilities Pool of Ohio to provide general liability and property insurance to the city. The legislation endorses PEP as "the

best suited to meet the needs of the city while maintaining competitive pricing."

The next scheduled meeting of Garfield Heights Council is Monday, April 14, at 7 p.m.

St. Monica Ladies Guild to hold fashion show, lunch

The St. Monica Ladies Guild's 39th Annual Fashion Show and Luncheon will be held on Sunday, April 27, at Woodside Event Center at Archangel Michael's, 5025 E. Mill Rd., off Wallings Rd. and I-77, in Broadview Heights, at 1 p.m.; fashions by Blossoms N Bows Boutique in Sagamore Hills.

Plated dinner includes Woodside Signature Salad, vegetable medley, rolls, dessert, beverage and choice of apricot glazed chicken with oven browned potatoes or stuffed shells with ricotta cheese and marinara sauce with gluten-free substitute available.

Tickets are \$35 each. For tickets or more details, please contact Marlyn at 216-218-2482 or mpraznik@aol.com.

Genealogical society meets

The Cuyahoga Valley Genealogical Society will hold its monthly meeting on Monday, April 7, at 7 p.m. Members and interested public are invited to attend at the Independence Civic Center in the Willow Room, 6363 Selig Blvd., Independence.

The program, entitled "From Documents to Sentences to Stories: Rebuilding Family Stories," will be presented by Sunny Morton.

Turning your genealogy research discoveries into meaningful stories can be challenging. Follow the re-creation of one family's story using hands-on, step-by-step, try-this-now story-building strategies.

G.H. Ward 7 Block Watch

The Garfield Heights Ward 7 Block Watch, sponsored by Councilwoman Jenn Newrones, will meet Thursday, March 27, at 7 p.m., in the cafeteria of St. Benedict School, 13633 Rockside Rd. Nonperishable items for the St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry would be appreciated. All are welcome. For more information contact Gail, 216-662-9213.

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L.O.



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O Loving Jesus, meek Lamb of God, I, a miserable sinner, salute and worship the most Sacred Wound of Thy Shoulder on which Thou didst bear Thy heavy Cross, which so tore Thy flesh and laid bare Thy Bones as to inflict on Thee an anguish greater than any other wound of Thy Most Blessed Body. I adore Thee, O Jesus most sorrowful; I praise and glorify Thee, and give Thee thanks for this most sacred and painful wound, beseeching Thee by that exceeding pain, and by the crushing burden of Thy heavy Cross to be merciful to me, a sinner, to forgive me all my mortal and venial sins, and to lead me on towards Heaven along the Way of Thy Cross. Amen. DC

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Susan Gordon's exit from SVD rocks Slavic Village

Slavic Village residents were shaken last Wednesday by news of the abrupt departure of Slavic Village Development's longtime director of Community Building, Susan Gordon. For nearly two decades she served as the organizational wizard who inspired housewives and blue-collar factory workers to become leaders of their neighborhood.



Susan Gordon

She received notice on March 18, that her position was being eliminated.

In recent months, in the face of several other staff departures, Gordon had been taking on projects well beyond her official job description, like business development and storefront rehab. Visitors to her Broadway-East 55th office never knew who they'd find sitting in her visitor's chair. Business leaders, directors of non-profits, ministers, block club officers and private residents all came to rely on her skills as a strategist, social worker, connector of people. It was said that her list of contacts was vast. Her sunny, determined spirit changed more than a few lives.

Local activist Ed McDonald lamented Gordon's loss when he heard the news. "Susan Gordon has been with us in the trenches for the last almost 19 years. This move is a tremendous blow to the community."

Making citizen leaders

Community building is the sector of neighborhood development which empowers average residents to take responsibility for the neighborhood around them, making them grassroots leaders and unpaid extensions of the organization's mission. For nearly 19 years, Gordon

taught them how to write grants, prepare budgets, plan and execute events as disparate as street cleanups, block parties, community concerts and public gardening projects.

She also helped produce her organization's own flagship events, like the Pierogi Dash, Nite at the Races, Rooms To Let: Cle, and the Neighborhood Summit. It was all these activities big and small which, during the height of the foreclosure crisis a decade ago, made the supposedly vacant and abandoned neighborhood one of the more civically engaged, and just plain happier, places to live in Cleveland.

Under Gordon's tutelage, Slavic Villagers regularly submitted more grant applications than any other Cleveland district, bringing in thousands of dollars each year. Gordon was highly accessible to residents and this made her acutely alert to the mood of the population. She sometimes joked she got the difficult clients her fellow staffers avoided.

What's next?

In a long, emotional farewell email, Gordon said, "This role has been more than a mere occupation for me—it has been an integral part of my identity. My heart will always be in Slavic Village."

Some longtime residents fear that Gordon's departure marks the end of an era of citizen-driven activism in Slavic Village that traces back to the late 1970s. A year-long Slavic Village master planning process set to launch in April may provide answers about what happens next.

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Holy Name Elementary to hold Open House this Sat.

Holy Name Elementary School, 8328 Broadway Ave., Cleveland, will hold an Open House this Saturday, March 29, from noon to 4 p.m. Those wanting more information on enrolling or re-enrolling your children for the 2025-26 school year are invited to meet the teachers, enjoy a barbecue and games for the children. All are welcome!

Community Resource Fair

A Community Resource Fair, sponsored by Loretta's Helping Hands, will be held this Saturday, March 29, at St. Stanislaus School, 6615 Forman Ave., Cleveland, from 3 to 6 p.m. (Enter the school at side door off the parking lot.)

Come and meet the vendors, get information and resources on health, wellness and education, plus free food and refreshments. Everyone is also invited to a community meal on site, being served from 3 to 6 p.m. For more information, call 216-623-7959.

Veterans Town Hall meeting

The Concerned Veterans of Northeast Ohio will present a Town Hall meeting for all community veterans and their families on Saturday, April 12, from noon to 3 p.m., at Holy Trinity Baptist Church, 3808 E. 131 St., Cleveland, OH 44120. Free parking available across the street on E. 131 St.

All are invited to learn about the latest updates on benefits, eligibility and application processes, as well as connect with service providers and participate in a veteran's discussion and Q&A session.

For more information call 216-200-8829 and leave a message if there is no answer or email: cvono2023@gmail.com.

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www.countyplanning.us/turneyroad



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