



# CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

## MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2004

Council Committee of the Whole of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, met on the above date at 6:24 p.m.

Edward Kelley, presiding

Council Members present: Caplan, Dietrich, Evans, Hicks, Kelley, Montlack, Wilcox

Council Members absent: None

Staff present: Carter, Czaga, Downey, Gibbon, Malone, Niermann O'Neil, Ruane, Wong, Zins

Topic of discussion included general information pertaining to the City Manager's weekly memo.

Committee of the Whole adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The Council of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, met on the above date at 7:45 p.m.

Edward Kelley, presiding

Council Members present: Caplan, Dietrich, Evans, Hicks, Kelley, Montlack, Wilcox

Council Members absent: None

Staff present: Carter, Czaga, Downey, Gibbon, Malone, Niermann O'Neil, Ruane, Wong, Zins

The minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held Tuesday, February 17, 2004 were approved and signed by Mayor Kelley along with the ordinances and resolutions passed at that meeting.

"My name is Wilbur Earl Kellon, Jr. I reside at 3837 Montevista, Cleveland Heights, Ohio."

Mayor Kelley added, "Welcome, Mr. Kellon. It's been a while."

Mr. Kellon responded, "It's been about five years. I stand before you, Mayor Kelley, City Council, citizens of Cleveland Heights, as a parent and as a citizen of this community. First of all, let me say that for all of you that are going out tomorrow to vote, please vote for the levy. Vote for the children, if nothing else, vote for the children. The reason I stand before you today is because of an event that took place on February 24, 2004 at Cleveland Heights High School at a basketball game, Cleveland Heights

versus Maple Heights. This story is about a kid that was dragged out of the stands, dragged down the stairs onto the basketball court by our police department, was slammed down and handcuffed. This kid (I'll tell you a little history) has been a citizen of this community as long as he is old, he is a product of the Cleveland Heights School System, he is an average student with exceptional talents. He has represented this community since the age of eight on a national level as well as on a local level in the areas of track and field. He is most recently a winner in the scholastic art competition held here in Cleveland - first place gold key winner in ceramics and glass. He is a three-time Nike National Hurdle qualifier, in which he's represented his city. He has represented his school and represented them well. This year, he has qualified for making nationals again in the hurdles and is one of the fastest hurdlers in the country. He most recently, on Tuesday, heard that his 4x2 relay squad which he anchors has qualified for Nike Nationals and he was in celebration at this game. When he was arrested by our police department, he was released into his family's custody because he is a minor, he's 17 years old. This kid, the next day when he attended school, was suspended. He was suspended for five days. The parent was told that this child was suspended under a Class A offense for disorderly conduct because he was seen by one of the unit principals running from the police, instigated this melee that happened which was witnessed by several hundred people and they said he instigated this issue. Again, I want you to bear closely with me that the unit principal said that he ran out onto the court and created a problem where they stopped the game. Of course, this unit principal said he was there, and [he] was there by all accounts. This unit principal was also able to get a couple of the other administrators to corroborate his story. The parent saw written documentation that this indeed did transpire. Since then, the parent has appealed the suspension. This child has no record currently with the police department. As of Friday, the parent was informed that the suspension had been rescinded and the child went back to school that day. I will tell you that there were several administrators present at this event. One young lady, who said she was willing to appear at the hearing on Thursday, which would have been the 26<sup>th</sup>, by Friday, she told me that she could not participate. How did that happen? We've got some issues here and if you haven't already guessed, that child was my child. That child's name is Evan Kellon. This child that has represented this community, that child that has never been in trouble, but yet, still he was treated like a common criminal. He was conspired against, by his administration, in a school where he's supposed to be safe. I received a phone call today as a parent and when I saw 371 I got scared because maybe my son's back in school and maybe there's some reprisal, maybe there's another conspiracy against him. That was not the case. It was a call to see how I was doing. But I tell you I was very unsettled because I saw the 371 number. I'm here as a citizen, as a parent concerned because I know that we are in a process where we are talking about taking security out of our schools and replacing them with our police department. I would say that's a problem because of what just happened to my son. He's alright physically, mentally, he's of broken spirit. I would say there's a cancer that lies within the bowels of our school system. Anytime an administrator would conspire and lie on a child there's a problem. What are the solutions? If we are going to replace - if we're going to replace our security in our schools where our community sends their children to be educated every day and we're going to change that system - then if we're going to introduce a police force that's basically trying to deal with criminals - then we need to have some sensitivity training. We need to have a group of officers that are trained to deal with our adolescents, trained to deal with our children versus just introducing them randomly because they don't know our children. They didn't know my son. All they saw was baggy pants and designer sneakers and a throw-bag. It didn't have to be my son, it could have been somebody else. I'm here because something needs to be done before something else happens to someone else's child. I could easily walk away. I told you five years ago, I'm in this community and I want to be part of the solution. I could have walked away then. I could walk away now. My children are done in 100 days. They are seniors at Cleveland Heights High School. They're moving on to college. They have scholarships, offers and things like that. But I choose to come forth here tonight, to let folks know in the community what's going on. What happened to my son could very well be your son - your daughter. Again, the administration piece needs to be dealt. This child has not been apologized to. I was apolo-

gized to, but I wasn't the one that was dragged out to the middle of the floor and humiliated and dragged across the floor and out in handcuffs. I wasn't the one that was double penalized with a suspension only to have it dropped because of the fact that they found out that the statements that were made were not true. I stand here humbly before you to be a chain agent in the process of what happens with the rest of the community's children. I thank you for your time. I fear no reprisal. I hope there are no reprisals and I hope there's no bad feelings. I have them because it happened to my child. I wanted to share my story with you and the community. Thank you."

Mayor Kelley responded, "Thank you, Mr. Kellon. Just so you know I want to touch on one of your points. The idea of putting the police force at Cleveland Heights High School - that is not on the table or not on the agenda at least from our point of view. We had talked maybe a superintendent ago or two about using some of our police training for some of the security there - some of the training that we do at our police academy we had offered the Superintendent Masem and then the next superintendent the opportunity to have some training done and some of that aspects for some of the security personnel - it's never been worked out. But as far as our police going on and being the security for the high school - that is not on the table - it wasn't on the table yesterday - it's not on the table today - and it's not on the table tomorrow. And as far as your son or what actually happened, obviously, I don't have any of the details, that was one game I did not attend. I'm not happy with what has happened but obviously you were able to work things out in a positive opportunity later on in the week."

Mr. Kellon spoke from the floor but was too far from the microphone to be heard. The following was able to be heard from the floor by Mr. Kellon, "- and the administration choose not to talk to me. How can I have children in the school system and not have them talk to me? When I walk in the school, security knows to call people that know that I'm in the building."

Mayor Kelley continued, "Not to tell you what you should do, but my guess is you're going to be at the next school board meeting to move this forward."

Mr. Kellon responded, "Absolutely."

Mayor Kelley concluded, "I thank you for coming tonight and sharing this unfortunate experience with this City Council and this City Manager who also serves as the safety director."

Marianna Stein, 2727 Lancashire, stated, "For the past couple weeks or so or more, I've been eating and breathing candidates' names for the Democratic party. But I would like to say to this gentleman that all my children went to Heights High and I graduated from there. One of my children at Hebrew Academy that got hurt by a teacher and I can sympathize with you *[sic]*. At the same time, I think nobody is perfect and probably the system isn't perfect, but we need to keep abreast of what's going on and be involved, but I think that Heights' schools and generally Cleveland Heights' programs are better than most places and even though I have seen less perfect police departments sometime police *[sic]* - but that's individuals usually - and I think we have the best services than most people have - in Cleveland, it takes two and a half hours in an emergency for somebody to show up, but at the same time I do hope that the levy is going to go through for the Heights' schools because we do need that. I hope that everybody remains involved and tomorrow is election day and I've been running quite a bit. I think I'll just stop at this point. Good luck to everybody."

## **REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER**

Mr. Downey stated, "Thank you very much, your Honor. I have several items this evening. The first of which is to request authority to advertise for bids for the 2004 Street Resurfacing Program and

the 2004 Surface Treatment Program.”

Mayor Kelley made them a matter of record and referred them to the Municipal Services Committee of Council.

Council Member Hicks requested that the City Manager be given the authority as requested.

Second by Council Member Dietrich.

Roll Call: Ayes: Caplan, Dietrich, Evans, Hicks, Kelley, Montlack, Wilcox

Nays: None

**Motion passed**

Mr. Downey continued, “Thank you very much, your Honor. Also, in your packets Council received a copy of Bid Document No. 2004-06, it is also known as the Edgehill Road sanitary and storm sewer replacement project. I’d like to report to Council that the lowest and best bidder is Northeast Ohio Trenching Services, Inc., in the amount of \$396,000.00.<sup>1</sup> Your Honor, I would request that the bid tabulation and the award of contract be made a matter of record.”

Mayor Kelley made it a matter of record.

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE/CLERK OF COUNCIL**

Mr. Malone stated, “Thank you, your Honor. I have no report tonight.”

#### **REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Vice Mayor Montlack stated, “Thank you, your Honor. I have no report tonight.”

#### **REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Council Member Evans stated, “Thank you, your Honor. Ordinance No. 163-2003(PSH) is on our agenda, but we’d like to table that for further in the year.”

Mayor Kelley tabled Ordinance No. 163-2003(PSH) for a later date.

Council Member Evans continued, “Resolution No. 42-2004(PSH), recognizing March, 2004 as American Red Cross Month; and declaring an emergency. Whereas, in 1943 Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed the first Red Cross Month to recognize the tireless and brave efforts of the American Red Cross volunteers who assisted our armed forces and their families during World War II. Today nearly two thousand Red Cross volunteers and staff members serve the greater Cleveland community by tending to victims of floods and other local disasters, helping families communicate quickly with military personnel when emergencies occur, and serving as instructors in first aid and safety education. This Council wishes to join with other communities throughout the nation in proclaiming March, 2004 as American Red Cross Month. Section 1 designates March, 2004 as American Red Cross Month. Section 2 is notice of passage and Section 3 declares this to be passed as an emergency measure. I’d like to submit Resolution No. 42-2004(PSH) for passage this evening.”

Mayor Kelley accepted Resolution No. 42-2004.

Roll Call: Ayes: Dietrich, Evans, Hicks, Kelley, Montlack, Wilcox, Caplan

Nays: None

**Resolution passed**

## **REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Council Member Dietrich stated, "Thank you. I have two pieces of legislation. The first is Ordinance No. 43-2004(AS) and this is one of those things that we do every year, it's kind of a housekeeping one, it establishes the salary schedules, position classifications and other compensation for officers and employees of the City. The salaries and classifications in this Ordinance go into effect April 1, 2004 and in addition the salary of any employee can be reduced or increased by the City Manager or his designee, but not above the amounts specifically fixed herein. Now, this is a 23 page document, so luckily for you I will not read the whole thing and I'll just highlight what is different this year from usual. The salary ranges for non-contractual employees increased by 3% and then for the contractual employees who are under union agreements; the fire and police salaries increased 3%, public works union salaries increased 4% and currently under negotiation are the joint fire dispatch. If anybody wants the details, the whole ordinance is available on file at the Clerk of Council's office and I offer Ordinance No. 43-2004(AS) on first reading only."

Mayor Kelley accepted Ordinance No. 43-2004(AS), first reading only for tonight."

Council Member Dietrich continued, "I have Resolution No. 44-2004(AS), affirming the policy of pick-up of contributions to the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund for eligible participating employees; and declaring an emergency. Eligible employees of our Cleveland Heights Police and Fire Departments participate in the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund ("OP&F"); and Council has previously adopted a pick-up of all of the ten percent (10%) mandatory contribution under the Ohio Revised Code for participating employees. But now, the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund has adopted new procedures for reporting new forms that have something to do with their tax reporting and so they have requested that all participating communities reaffirm and restate their prior resolutions, so that really is what we are doing right now. We are just restating that we continue to pick-up all the ten percent (10%) mandatory contributions by employees to our members of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund through payroll deduction or by payment of the contribution on behalf of the employee, as the case is now. And contributions, even though designated as employee contributions for state law purposes are paid by the City of Cleveland Heights. The contributions will not be reported in the gross income of the employee for tax reporting purposes for federal or state income tax withholding taxes until distributed from the pension fund, but the contributions will be included in the gross income of the employee for employment tax purposes as the contributions are made to the pension fund. The employees shall not have an option of choosing to receive the contributed amount directly instead of being paid to the pension fund. Section 6 is notice of passage and Section 7 declares this to be an emergency and I offer Resolution No. 44-2004(AS)."

Mayor Kelley accepted Resolution No. 44-2004(AS).

Roll Call: Ayes: Evans, Hicks, Kelley, Montlack, Wilcox, Caplan, Dietrich

Nays: None

**Resolution passed**

Council Member Dietrich concluded, "It's always tempting tonight to tell people to vote and to tell them how you'd like them to vote, but by the time people see this on tv that will all be over. So that concludes my report."

## REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Council Member Caplan stated, "Thank you. I have no legislation this evening. I do want to first of all congratulate and thank our staff, the recreation/ community services staff. We just had a weekend of a wonderful event. It was the short track speed skating event. People came from 33 states here and competed with - Bonnie Blair was here - she didn't compete, but she was here for all the events. Apolo Ohno competed and, of course, won and if you read the newspapers, we were in the paper everyday; Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and today (Monday). It was wonderful, it was exciting, it was wonderful to see the families who really worked very hard for their children and travel all over the country for their children because they have a dream and they're helping their children achieve their dream. It was a wonderful event. So thank you to the staff. We looked great and the people who were here really appreciated what the City of Cleveland Heights and our staff did for them. So thank you.

If you think you haven't seen ice skating and you want to see some more, Wednesday becomes a Robinson Tournament and you can go and see hockey for the next several days starting on Wednesday, so it's wonderful what is going on in the city.

You should have gotten your books, so you already can begin to get tickets for Cain Park for the summer season. We encourage you to do so. Again, it's too late to tell you to vote if you're watching this so we'll be interested to see the outcome of the election tomorrow. That's all for tonight. Thank you."

## REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Council Member Wilcox stated, "Thank you, your Honor. There is one piece of legislation from the Finance Committee tonight and that is Resolution No. 45-2004(F), authorizing the reprogramming and reallocation of Community Development Block Grant Funds; and declaring an emergency. There are a number of important community development projects which need funding and the City staff has made a recommendation for the reprogramming of available funds and the proposed reprogramming of the additional funds has been approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee. So therefore, this Resolution authorizes the reallocation and reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant Funds: \$7,629.00 from our Winterization Program to the Short Term Deferred Loan Program for the purpose of having more impact of our housing programs currently. Section 2 authorizes the City Manager to enter into agreements to implement this change. Section 3 is notice of passage and Section 4 declares this to be an emergency measure. I offer Resolution No. 45-2004(F) for passage tonight."

Mayor Kelley accepted Resolution No. 45-2004(F).

Roll Call: Ayes: Hicks, Kelley, Montlack, Wilcox, Caplan, Dietrich, Evans

Nays: None

**Resolution passed**

Council Member Wilcox continued, "Thank you, your Honor. I do have one comment I wanted to make tonight. I feel compelled tonight to voice my opposition to the lawsuit that was recently filed by Councilman Hicks against the City of Cleveland Heights. I believe that the will of the voters, as expressed on November 4, 2003, should be upheld. While I respect those, including my council colleague, who disagree with the enactment of the domestic registry ordinance through our city charter initiative process, I don't think that it is valid for a council person to file a lawsuit against the city, to challenge the ordinance once it has been duly enacted by the city's residents. Councilman Hicks'

rationale for filing this lawsuit (at least as stated to the press) is that he acted not as a council person but as a taxpayer and he is doing nothing to interfere with the enforcement of the registry. I find it incredible that no other taxpayer in the city was available to file this lawsuit. Moreover, Councilman Hicks' lawyer was quoted in the Sun Press as saying, 'We want the registry thrown out by the court, so that it no longer can be enforced and implemented by the city.' Also, the letter his lawyer sent to our law director on January 14<sup>th</sup>, requesting the lawsuit be brought to enjoin the city from enforcing this law, was copied to the Honorable Jimmie Hicks, Jr. A title, I only know to be associated with his role as a council person. I am disappointed that Councilman Hicks and his lawyer ignored the response of our law director indicating that a lawsuit would be without merit. I would quote Councilman Hicks own words at our Council meeting on November 17, 2003 and ask him to reconsider this lawsuit. Those comments are contained in the minutes of the November 17, 2003 meeting, which had been approved by Council previously. These minutes, as always, are sent out for review by council members, and were approved, without comment, and I quote as follows, 'In 2001, I said that I would uphold the laws and I've sworn to uphold the laws of this community and that is now - the domestic partner registry - is now an ordinance of this community and I will uphold it and uphold the right of anyone to register their relationship as long as it exists on the books of the City of Cleveland Heights. I mean that's what I've sworn to do. I do not like it anymore now than before the election, but that doesn't matter.' Later on Councilman Hicks states the following, 'There is one problem I do have and that's people that have called me after the election to find out what they could do now, to oppose Issue 35, and the answer to that question is nothing. We had our opportunity and we were not successful. Mrs. Redhed is correct about monitoring the tax dollars spent and that will be done to make sure that the taxpayers are not going to be charged anything for the registry as promised and I think Mayor Kelley and everyone on Council, especially our attorneys on Council understand exactly how the legislation was drafted and will make sure that the city adheres to it, especially the City Manager and the law director will make sure that the city adheres to it and that it gives residents exactly what it's supposed to give them.' Although we on Council, may change our mind on issues, I believe what we say at these Council meetings should mean something. Our words should especially mean something when we talk about upholding the ordinances of the city and particularly those passed by the voters of the city. That concludes my report."

### **REPORT OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Council Member Hicks stated, "Thank you, your Honor. I have two pieces of legislation this evening. First I have Resolution No. 46-2004(MS), authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with CT Consultants, Inc. for engineering and support services relative to the planning and implementation of the City's year 2004 street surface treatment program; providing compensation therefor; and declaring an emergency. The City Manager is authorized to enter into an agreement with CT Consultants, Inc. as a consulting engineer for the hereinafter described services to be performed in connection with the City's year 2004 street surface treatment program. The services to be provided by the engineer are as set forth in the proposal dated February 11, 2004 on file with the Clerk of Council, which among other obligations contains the following detailed services to be performed:

- Preparation of a detailed list of the estimated quantities of work for bidding by contractors along with the bid tabulation forms.
- Preparation of the necessary contract documents including, but not limited to, legal notices, information and instructions to bidders, general conditions and the detailed specifications.
- Analysis and evaluation of the bids received and the recommendation of a qualified contractor who offers the best performance for the lowest price.

- Preparation of a construction contract document package for the successful bidder.
- Provision of field engineering and contract administration services as needed for the duration of the contract.
- Processing the contractor's monthly estimates.

Your Honor, I offer Resolution No. 46-2004(MS) for passage this evening."

Mayor Kelley accepted Resolution No. 46-2004(MS) for passage.

Roll Call: Ayes: Kelley, Montlack, Wilcox, Caplan, Dietrich, Evans, Hicks

Nays: None

**Resolution passed**

Council Member Hicks continued, "Your Honor, I have Resolution No. 47-2004(MS), authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Mackay Engineering & Surveying Company for professional services for the Queenston Area Waterline Cleaning and Relining Project; providing compensation therefor; and declaring an emergency. The City Manager is hereby, authorized to enter into an agreement with Mackay Engineering & Surveying Company for professional services for the Queenston Area Waterline Cleaning and Relining Project. The scope of the work shall be as set forth in the Engineer's proposal dated February 10, 2004, a copy of which is on file with the Clerk of Council. Compensation for such services shall be at the Engineer's usual hourly rates, with total fees and expenses not to exceed the sum of Forty-five Thousand One Hundred Fifty-eight Dollars (\$45,158.00). The agreement and any related documents shall be approved as to form by the Director of Law. Your Honor, I offer Resolution No. 47-2004(MS) for passage this evening."

Mayor Kelley accepted Resolution No. 47-2004(MS) for passage.

Roll Call: Ayes: Montlack, Wilcox, Caplan, Dietrich, Evans, Hicks, Kelley

Nays: None

**Resolution passed**

Council Member Hicks continued, "Thank you, your Honor. That's all the legislation that I have but I do have a couple of comments that I would like to make. First, for Mr. Kellon, as he spoke he basically was verbalizing my worst nightmare, having four sons, as he described what happened to his son - that's a nightmare for me as my sons become teenagers and they begin to dress like any other teenager - begin to look like any other teenager and especially for black males, having been a black male teenager, having had the same fears of police officers - that's a fear of mine and I don't want that to happen to my child. As you spoke and I hope that - I mean I know that the City Manager will get us the information from the police department as to the circumstances surrounding the arrest of your son and we'll know the incident. I did not hear you talk about unnecessary force. I did not hear you talk about, that the arrest was unsubstantiated - but I'm just saying [at that point Mr. Kellon said something from the floor, but was unclear on the tape]. I wasn't trying to have that conversation but if that is the truth - but if that is how you feel those are some things that we need to know. [Again, Mr. Kellon spoke from the floor and it was unclear]. We can't get that on record because you're not at the microphone, but I do want to hear that. I want to have a conversation with you on that and we want to talk about that because like I said that is a nightmare of mine with four sons, and so we want to make sure that

everything regarding that is looked into and that you're comfortable with what that is and again, I want to know what that is because my son is at the high school. My son attends games and I want to know exactly what the situation was in that particular instance.

I do owe an apology to the residents of the City of Cleveland Heights and a thank you to one of my council members and the thank you goes to Councilwoman Bonnie Caplan, who in the last time when we had a meeting, she came over to me and commented on the statement that I made about the word *picnic* which was a term that I had heard often referred to as the creation of it being - coming from the south of referring to lynchings and she had told me that the origin of that word was from France. So I took her comment to heart and did some research. I called the Pan-African Studies Department at Kent State University. I called the Smithsonian, the Anacosta Museum & Center for African American History and Culture in D.C., because that term I had heard often for a long time and so to my dismay I found out that there was no historical documents saying that lynchings - connecting lynchings to the word 'picnic'. What I was told that lynchings were sometimes events that were planned in advance, made out to be gala events and families and children were present, but there were not any documented sources that called those picnics. I did find out that there were twenty-nine (29) meanings for the word picnic not just one and one of those meanings was barbeque. In further studying this, 'cause I did not want to mislead anyone when I said that, found out that the word *barbeque* can be used for picnic and that the word barbeque was referred to as in lynchings because after the African men and women were lynched they were set on fire and jokingly referred to as *barbeques* and that was documented on post cards. Again, I have to apologize, although that was something that I read somewhere about picnics meaning pick-a-niger and hang 'em, that was not the origin of the word picnic, but it did not mean that someone did not jokingly refer to a picnic as that event. And so, I want to set the record straight with that, that those events did happen. They were gala events. They did bring families, but they were never called picnics as documented. They were called barbeques. And again, I want to thank Councilwoman Caplan for allowing me to do some research so that I had my facts correct the next time that I would mention this, this particular event not only at council meetings but with anyone even as I discussed this history with my children so that they will never forget the events that took place and the atrocities that happened to the African American people.

Finally, I want to say to my Councilman Dennis Wilcox, who I have the utmost respect for, both his comments and his counsel and I respect his opinion and he is entitled to his opinion. In terms of the lawsuit, I do not want to discuss that as I sit behind this bench. I believe that I have several titles that the word 'Honorable' could be referred to such as Reverend, such as Police Chaplain, such as a man in this community and so I believe that everything that I do is honorable. But, again, I do not wish to discuss that lawsuit, again behind this bench and that I have a right to my opinion and I am willing to stand by everything that I say and do as both a councilman and a taxpayer of this community. Thank you, your Honor."

## **REPORT OF THE MAYOR**

Mayor Kelley commented, "I, too want to comment on the great job at the US National Speed Skating Champion. I want to thank the Ohio Speed Skating Association and the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission for a really - I don't want to call it a partnership they formed with us - sure they rented our building but we really worked together, probably to make this the best event it could be. If any of the comments of the people that participated or the people that came to view the event or the people from the 33 states that had over 300 competitors here were any indication, we got excellent A+ ratings and we'd love to have them back in the future - or other

events. It is our community jewel, our community center, but it's one of the reasons we held out and built an Olympic size ice skating rink and we didn't give into the (I have different names for the people that opposed us and I won't say it, this is a family channel). So I won't say what I affectionately call them when I'm behind closed doors, but it was one of the reasons that we stuck to an Olympic track not just for our community but to bring in people from across the country and across the nation and into Canada and when we had the minority figure skating we reached all the way to California and brought people into our community - to learn from them - to have these kind of competitions, to open our doors and be inviting and that's why we have a community center - not just for our community but for the community across the country and into Canada and therefore and other places. That's why we are such a great diverse community and not just for Cleveland Heights only.

I want to also recognize some of our key staff people: Larry Shaw, Mark Vasiloff, Kelly Taylor, Mike Discenzo, and Gus Barnwell who turned 65 the week before, for their yeomen and yeowoman's work to make this happen. I know Kelly Taylor, in particular, she worked for months and weeks in advance to make this happen and it would be a shame if we didn't recognize the Coventry merchants who donated so much time, effort and food to make this thing such a great affair and to make things happen down there. It was certainly a lot of hard work, time and dedication to make this happen, but this was an event that Cleveland Heights can be proud of for years and years to come. I think they'll be coming back in 2005 for the 2006 Olympic games and what have you. It was a great event and just to see all the hard work, it was like clock work, but it was a true Cleveland Heights effort of our staff really rising to the occasion, much as they do at Cain Park, at our community center, at our ball fields. This is what it is about at Cleveland Heights, running the extra mile and doing things to make things happen. We probably had about close to 7,000 people in and out of that community center from all across the country over the weekend doing things. We had a lot of media attention, not just the Plain Dealer, the Sun Press. We had tv coverage, things were happening. A lot of things were happening that we didn't even know about, right Susanna? It was a good time for all and we had some big skaters there, Apolo, but we had some younger people there that were enjoying it. I think it was just as much fun to talk to people that had skaters in the nine and ten and eleven year old group, as it was some of the older more sophisticated Olympians that were here. It was a good time all around again. Kudos to our staff. It was fun to see them working and really - well, it wasn't fun - but the 12 to 14 to 16 hour days they did. And usually, you tell them to take a rest, but they're running right into the Raymond Robinson Tournament which begins Wednesday night and goes through the weekend, probably to late on Sunday night. So if you caught a taste of speed skating and you're looking for a little hockey come to the community center this weekend and see it. It was a great time - good time by all and again thank you to our staff.

This meeting will be adjourned at 8:35 p.m. Our next meeting will be Monday, March 15, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. Thank you for coming."

Respectfully submitted,

Edward J. Kelley, Mayor  
President of Council

Thomas K. Malone  
Clerk of Council

/mwc