

Public Hearing of the Cleveland Heights, Ohio City Council under Ordinance 183.01.

Mayor Wilcox asked our Council clerk, Mr. Raguz to call the roll.

Coryell	Here
Dunbar	Here
Stein	Here
Stephens	Present
Wilcox	Here
Yasinow	Here

There are 5 present your honor.

Mayor Wilcox stated we have a quorum so we can proceed. The purpose of this hearing is to examine the impact on our city, our state, and our nation of political influence by corporate entities and big money in connection with the most recent election and that being the 2014 general election. Corporate entities include business corporations and political action committees, super pacs, 501C4 groups and unions. We will hear your comments tonight. If you want to make a statement with respect to the impact of money on the 2014 general election please come to the podium and state your name. As part of our ordinance, we require that you be permitted to speak up to 5 minutes and we ask that if you have any comments in writing, if you could give them to the council clerk, Mr. Raguz, and he will assist us in preparing the minutes of this hearing which we will prepare and forward on to elected officials as provided in the ordinance. Without anything further, he asked that anyone that has a comment to make to come to the podium, restrict it to the 2014 general election.

Yes, Carla.

My name is Carla Rotenberg and I live at 3065 Berkshire Road. Yesterday was the 5th anniversary of the Citizens United Decision. That day just made evident to the world what a few thoughtful people already knew. That the ill-considered doctrines of corporate personhood and money and speech already enshrined in American Law were endangered and could eventually eclipse the constitutional rights of American citizens. Everyone here tonight already knows how Cleveland Heights voters responded to this threat, to our democracy. On behalf of Cleveland Heights, move to amend and she would like to update council and our fellow citizens about activities around the state and nationally. In the last five years, Ohio Move to Amend has grown from a few people meeting at The Peace House in University Circle to a state-wide organization with affiliated groups in fifteen communities, in

groups and 10 or more. We have gotten the move to amend calling for a Constitutional amendment banning corporate personhood and money as speech (?) and establishing local public hearings such as this one on the ballot in 6 Ohio cities, Brecksville, Newburgh Hts., Cleveland Hts., Defiance, Chagrin Falls and Mentor. The ordinance passed easily in all 6 of these communities. Furthermore, the city councils of 6 additional Ohio communities have passed resolutions fully supporting the move to amend. The city council of Akron and Cleveland Heights has passed resolutions in support. In 2015 the issue could be on the ballot in as many as 5 Ohio cities with more coming on board in 2016. The 3rd Annual Statewide gathering of Ohio Move to Amend will be March 28th in Columbus. Please plan to join us. Of course, the Move to Amend is growing nationally as well. In November there were initiatives on the ballot in two dozen communities across the country. In all, more than 600 resolutions and ballot initiatives have passed. This may be unique, once it has made it to the ballot, this issue has never failed. Not one time. Most American voters know that corporate personhood and money and speech will ultimately destroy democracy. Even so, 3 significant events during 2014 served to remind us, the McKutcheon decision of the Supreme Court increased aggregate contribution "limits on multiple congressional races to the obscene level of 2.4 million dollars per individual every two years. With it' hobby lobby decisions, Supreme Court said that their Hobby Lobby's religious beliefs mean that it need not provide employees with access to birth control as it is mandated by the affordable care act. The PD, Cheryl Harris noted "that your craft store is more pious than you are". And finally at the very end of the year, the federal budget bill passed by Congress included an increase of 800% on the limits to individual contributions to political parties. From \$97,000 to \$776,000 per contributor. They just couldn't help themselves or rather they did. So, this is our system and it is up to us as Americans to change it. Thank you Council members and fellow citizens for being here tonight and for being the change that you want to see.

Thank you.

My name is Calvin Lampkins and I live at 1582 Crest Road. He stated he here just for a moment just to say that if the Post Office is big business that is the reason he stopped voting in the year 2000. If I don't have the right to sleep properly because of being awakened by big business, I don't think my vote matters at all. When I come to speak to Council I think big business is what created the issue that has been ignored for 15 or 16 years. It amazes me that I am speaking here and you look very bright but then a 5 year old can understand this.

Thank you.

Good evening, thank you very much for letting me talk with you this evening. We're focused today on, my name is Lois Romanoff by the way. I use to live in Cleveland Heights; I lived here for almost 30 years. I now live in Cleveland. My daughter went to Cleveland Heights High School and all of her friends did very well and that is her concern this evening. She is concerned about the privatization of the public schools. She would like to talk a little about that. It is certainly an issue which affects local politics and our local communities and it is undermined by corporate money. There really is a war right now going on against public schools and I passed this out which was created by the Heights Coalition for public education and it is extremely well written with a lot of great information in it. There are 2 meetings listed in it and the first is coming up on the 28th, next week, Wednesday, The Myth of the Failing Teacher. The goal right now is privatization and high stakes testing is part of this effort. This means teachers and schools are being evaluated by their students' test scores often resulting in teachers being fired and schools being closed and given to charters and private operators. Charter schools are corporations. They are called public community schools most of the time. When they are called corporations, it is when they are in the courts of law. They are funded by tax payers so that money comes from the same pot of money that the public district schools come from. The Cleveland Heights, University Heights area, there are no charter schools but there are over 400 students living in Cleveland Heights who attend charter schools in Ohio. Ohio has about 390 charters and of those, 4 out of 5 are failing. Twenty three of those schools are performing at an average to above average range. Many Cleveland Heights and University Heights students are attending failing charter schools. One third of Ohio's charters are for profit. Funds that should be devoted to the classroom are used to advertise, recruit lobby and gain profits. Last year the 2 biggest for-profit school operators in Ohio, David Brennan, the owner of Hope Academy's and Life Skills, and William Lauger who owns ECOTT, the Electronic College of Tomorrow together gave over \$100 million dollars to the republican party as campaign contributions. In return the Ohio Republican Legislator continues to not investigate the wrongdoings of the charter schools. If you follow the money to see who is pushing the privatization of our public schools it is hedge fund managers, Pierson Testing Corporation, Bill Gates who sells needed technology to test the common core. The Walmart Foundation and the ELI Broad Foundation are some of the big ones but there are many others. These are corporate educational so-called reformers. They are saying that our public schools are failing but in fact our traditional public schools are not failing. They are working very well for most students. Graduation rates are at an all-time high. More young people than ever are entering college. Even more would be going to college if the cost were not so high. Teachers and unions are being blamed for this problem, but they are not the cause of the problem.

The cause is poverty, a lack of state funding and segregation. What she is asking is that we not abandon this very important public institution which is really one of our last remaining public institutions where we meet each other and contribute to getting to know each other.

Sally Hamley came to the podium and stated she lives at 2577 Overlook Road. She is going to talk about climate change. In all the huge issues we face, climate change is the most daunting in terms of what we are already facing in terms of crazy weather and the predictions of what may happen in the future. We hear 2 things about climate change, one is that there is scientific consensus that it is occurring and that human activity is largely the cause. Number two is that it is a hoax. She wanted to know how we know this.

Mr. Wilcox interrupted her and asked her to somehow relate this to money and politics in the 2014 election.

She summarized what was found on the NASA site, it stated that 97% of climate scientists agree that the climate is warming and very likely due to human activity. Also there was that report last year, the UN governmental panel of climate change that says that warming is unequivocal and it's extremely likely that human influence has been dominant since 1950. So we know the climate change is happening and with it comes drastic results. We are in high gear to deal with this, right?

No we are not. We are not doing nearly enough but at least our elected officials are doing their best to deal with this problem. Right??? No, wrong again. According to a common cause report, whose government, whose voice. Two out of three people believe in global warming and emission controls but a large portion of the U.S. Congress are climate claim deniers including, according to this report, 9 out of 10 Republican members. According to a report titled "How Big Business is Funding Climate Change Denial in the 113th Congress and Why It Should Stop", climate deniers received \$100 million in campaign contributions from special interests. This was only the mid-term election; imagine how much they will spend in a presidential election. This \$100 million does not include the so-called "dark money" from the special interests that don't have to report their donors. The report mentions that 160 persons are in a climate denier caucus. I will quote just a few of the members who received large donations. Dave Camp said there remains to be a great amount of uncertainty. Clearly from what I said before, these people are either ignorant of what the vast majority of scientists say or they are willfully ignoring that and you have to ask why. Another article I looked at was titled "Coke Pledge Tied to Congressional Climate Inaction" and this was printed in the New Yorker. For people that

don't know, Coke Industries is a multinational corporation. They are involved in refining and distribution of oils, chemicals, energy. The EPA reported that in 2011 they emitted over 24 million tons of CO-2 which is the equivalent of 5 million cars. According to a report I site above, the Coke brothers alone spent 6.4 million in the 2014 election. Probably not a coincidence they got 400 elected officials nationwide to sign a pledge to vote against legislation related to climate change unless there is equal amount of tax cuts. This would be practically impossible because most of the solutions to mitigate climate change are going to cost money so this in effect stops that. These 411 officeholders are at the federal and even local levels. One third of the House of Representatives and ¼ of the Senate have signed this pledge. This does not bode well for the earth, or we humans and it shows why we need to have a constitutional amendment as corporations are people and money does not equal speech because obviously the amount of money they are truly running amok in our democracy and it's clear that they are the ones that have the ears of our elected representatives and not us.

Thank You.

My name is David Baranson and I live at 3321 Silsby Road in Cleveland Heights, OH. First thank you to the Council for hosting this event but I would also like to thank all of the Cleveland Heights voters who voted this in last year the notion that corporations are not people and money is not speech. I would also like to thank a couple of local businesses who have donated some items here as we were hoping to get students involved and I do have some donated funny times from the long time business as well as some gift certificates from Mack Back (sp) and Big Fun. I think locally owned businesses are a great alternative to the multi-national corporations who all too often run our lives and our governments. Last year at this Democracy Day I spoke on a whole range of corporate control in various industries including healthcare, pharmaceuticals, weapons industries and energy industries that I think are at the top of the list in corporate control that is most abusive to our health and economy. Tonight I'm only going to focus on the state of our health care system as this continues to negatively impact not only myself and my family but also many of the kids and families I work with in school and social service settings. One thing I mentioned last year is that I previously had a job where I worked within the health insurance where I learned from the inside that it's a regular normal practice of health insurance companies to deny claims that they should be covering. That is the way they raise their profits and at the time there were no laws against that. I hope that there are now. Recently, I have introduced the Affordable Care Act which I now refer to as the Not So Affordable Care Act. This is because my company, which I have been employed at for over 15 years, has changed insurance plans at least 7 times during that time.

Recently they changed my plan in October and December. In an effort to get our employees the best deal, the problem I ran into is that I have to change doctors each time they change and I have to start over with new deductibles because of the way they figure it out on the Affordable Care Act. And, by the way, I am going to tie this into the elections and finance at the end. Because of the way they figure out the percentage of my gross salary, I am offered Affordable Care for myself because it is under the percentage, however, along with paying this large deductible and waiting to make decisions based on my health care and whether I can afford it, I also am married and have a child. The way they figure it, the plan from my company is not affordable for my family so it leaves us having to cover ourselves separately and it means I can't even get any subsidy or even apply through the Affordable Care Program for my insurance options. They can but they have included our total family income to see if they can get a subsidy even if I am not going to be covered. This is a loop hole that we are just finding out about. We are all going to have to be making decisions based on separate deductibles, high cost and health care. I can only imagine other people that are caught in such loop holes. I don't have to imagine what level of influence the health insurance industry had on the development of the Affordable Care Act. We all know they have a powerful influence over the state and federal government and how much influence they will continue to have as the Affordable Act continues to get challenged and things get changed.

Good Health to you all.

My name is Stewart Robinson and I am living at 3334 Berkeley for over 50 years. I wanted to speak about the mortgage crisis and the predatory lenders cost to the city. When Maureen O'Neil became code official she noted that many homes were blighted,

Mr. Wilcox interrupted and said "you are going to tie that to the 2014 election, right?"

He responded, "Ok".

He continued saying that she noted many homes were blighted and needed repairs. She found in many cases that many former owners were behind in their mortgage payments and were evicted by the lenders who failed to complete the foreclosure forms. The city thought they were still owned by the former occupants. These are referred to as Zombie foreclosures, thus the city assumed the vacant parcel was still a property owned. The city had to perform basic maintenance, lawn mowing, snow shoveling and minor structural repairs which on a city-wide basis, over \$100,000 a year the city

had to assume. As a solution the city enacted legislation that required lenders that the moment the home became vacant to purchase a \$10,000 bond. If the lender maintained the property until it was again inhabited, the city would return the funds. If the city incurred expenses maintaining the property until it was occupied again, the amount would be deducted from the return. The success of this law encouraged other cities, including Warren, and Canton, Ohio. If Cleveland Heights does not have such a law on the books, he hopes they would do so quickly. Another benefit of this law is that it discourages lenders to lower their predatory loan rights.

Thank You.

Hi, I'm Valerie Robinson and I live at 3334 Berkeley Road also. I am going to talk on cheating the school kids. Corporations don't pay their state taxes and think that you as a body, elected body of Cleveland Heights could have a lot of influence at the State level. It's hard for a nation to build work skills when it's corporations. The beneficiaries of half a century have largely stopped paying for education. Most of the attention to corporate tax is directed at the non-payment of federal taxes but state taxes which to a much greater extent fund k-12 are avoided at a stunning rate by America's biggest corporations. As a result, public school funding continues to be cut and the worsening performance adds fuels to the reckless demands for privatization. Inner city schools are being devastated by this process. There is a 2011 process by Citizens for Tax Justice Show that corporations pay less than half of their required state taxes which in addition to K-12 provide a significant part of pension funding. So some of the big ones were Boeing, Caterpillar, Verizon and Google. In the result of a decline in state tax money education gets cut. Overall spending on K-12 fell in 2011 for the first time since the census bureau began keeping records, three decades ago. The cuts have continued to the present day. The effects of state tax avoidance have continued to the present day. The effect of state tax avoidance is seen all around the country with impacts on schools, and pensions and housing. In Brown vs. The Board of Education, the Chief Justice, Earl Warren said education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. It is a right that must be made available to all. Education in the 1950's and beyond trained the engineers and medical specialists who built our technology and healthcare and financial industries. With the help of failed government, corporations are doing whatever they can to avoid the responsibility of sustaining our public school systems. They are starving our children instead. I would like to give you a run-down on some Ohio corporate headquarters and their 3-year tax rate from 2008-2010 and the average tax rate is 7.2%. American Electrical Power pays 1.7% of its taxes, Cliffs Natural Resources pays .6% and American Financial Group pay 7%, and Macy's pays 1.3%. Smucker's pays 2.1%, Limited Brands 2.8% and

First Energy only pays 2.9%, Proctor and Gamble 3.1%, Sherwin Williams 3.1, Kroger's 3.3%, Big Lots 3.8%, Cardinal Health 4.0%, and Parker Hannifin 4.8% so the average corporate tax rate is 6.2%. This report is from Corporate Tax Dodging in the 50 States, 2008-2010 written in 2011. I think you as a body should be going to our legislator of our state and especially since our schools here are being impacted, you should be having your say with our state legislators instead of letting the corporations have their way. We should also be pushing to amend which we did.

Thank You.

Good evening Mr. Mayor and members of Council. I live at 3016 Somerton Road in Cleveland Hts. and wish to thank you for your support of this as well as the voters of the City of Cleveland Heights in passing Issue 32 a couple of years ago. Princeton and Northwest University researchers in a study published this past September concluded that after an analysis of nearly 1800 policy issues, concluded that in fact the United States is an oligarchy not a democracy. This was looking at these issues between 1981 and 2002. The study was entitled "Testing Theories of American Politics, Elite Interest Groups and American Average Citizens". It said "Americans do enjoy many features, central to democratic governments; however the majority of the American public actually has little influence over the policy our government adopts. When the preferences of the economic elites and the strands of organized interest groups are controlled for the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near zero statistically non-significant impact upon public policy". Now this study while done last year, analyzed these policies that ended in 2002 which was 8 years before the United Decision and 12 years before the Senate rider extended the contribution limits to political parties that were previously referred to. The numbers bare out when you look at the spending of the Federal elections over the last couple of years, where we saw a continued trend, mid-terms elections. 2014 were the highest of all mid-terms ever. What broke the trend in 2014 is that there were fewer big time contributors or investors, depending how you want to look at it. Before it used to be a larger number of extremely super wealthy individuals giving more money in bigger chunks but now it is a smaller number of people giving larger chunks. Even the wealthy are having their voices drowned out not only our voices are being drowned out but even the wealthy. The problems associated with this, you have heard some and you will hear more, but they do not only affect us, they affect you as public elected officials. Certainly the cuts we have seen, and we will probably see more than you have had to deal with at the state level, those are real. These take the form of austerity measurements that certainly impact citizens but affect you as public officials in trying to balance budgets. What that does is, if it is done intentionally or not, it is creating

sort of a system where communities are having to sell off public assets to the lowest bidder. The good news is that there are people waking up and the awareness of the issues continue and the awareness of the core problem which continues which is never intended constitutional rights for the corporations and big money in elections. The idea behind what we have done here in Cleveland Heights and others around the state and country in promoting move to amend is not just focusing on changing the players of the game. This is what most elections are about. It's really about the plays of the game. That's what laws and regulations are about. It's focused on changing the rules of the game. Because the rules of the game are rigged and stacked against us. Quite honestly they are stacked against you. It is therefore why we think that to the extent you can, and you know you have all kinds of other issues. This is not your first issue, understand, respect that, however, those of you who are elected officials here in town and may be administrators, you may be in contact with your peers. There are probably other mayors that you deal with across the state. To the extent you have time, we call on you to do what you can to help us as we build a social movement to try to change the rules of the game and that can specifically take the form and I'll adhere. There are move to amend efforts going on right now in Shaker Heights and South Euclid and other parts of the state. You have a county council; they are county elected officials that obviously you are going to be sending something to. So we ask you to do what you can to bring this issue up for them and to work with us to bring us something that we can try to pass something in their community.

Thank you.

Thank you Mr. Mayor and members of council. My name is Dean Seik and I live at 2547 Bolton Road for the past 5 years and 35 years before that on Rydalmount. We gather tonight as a group of concerned citizens who believe that we have power. Indeed that is why this city like to many others passed "move to amend" so overwhelmingly. The U.S. constitution grants citizens the right to self-government, expressed through representative democracy in our three branches of government. The citizen's desires may affect corporate profits and that is the basic issue that I am here to address. What if our government gave up its, our right to make laws that protect and benefit us the people? Worse yet, what if the new government, that assumed that right to make the laws that affect all were a group of corporations with one objective only, maximizing their profit. That is the issue at stake in multi-national trade agreements, such as the Trans Pacific Partnership or TPP, as a means of maximizing corporate power, trade agreements create governing bodies that override laws passed by nations. A process established by the world trade organization has the power to demand compensation from tax payers of any nation that deprives any other

member nation of "expected future profits". A complaining corporation need only request that its governments sue for such grievance. The suit can target any law, at any level, local, state or national and the complainant need only show that such law might deprive the corporation of profits. These suits are not held in courts of law or before judges of any nation. They are held in private tribunals with 3 attorneys that are unaccountable to any electorate who render their final decisions behind closed doors. The only parties who can initiate challenges are – surprise- corporations and no regress is allowed by others who may be affected such as workers or small business owners. A defendant country that is found guilty is expected to re-write or nullify the law. Right now hundreds of multi-national corporations from various countries are seeking regress through such processes. For example, this process has been used to place in jeopardy a law passed in the U.S. that requires meat sold here identify it's country of origin because meat packers in Canada and Mexico brought suit. The process such as this will be employed through the Trans Pacific partnership. The TPP would create an unprecedented power grab by the corporations over the people of 14 nations that border the Pacific Ocean including the U.S. Regrettably, President Obama is convinced of the TPP merit and thus will be sold to the Congress and the American people add a jobs bill. However, the 29 chapters in the TTP, only 5 of them concern trade. The other 24 detail just how the corporate will be freed of any accountability to the citizens of any of its member nations. The potential results of this agreement will be disastrous for citizens and will include the following; striking down any programs that favor local or national producers, setting a low bar for labor and environmental policies, extending patent monopolies for drugs produced by pharmaceutical makers which will result in continued and expanded high prices and of course permitting big banks to operate at will with the tax payers holding the bag for any future failures. Through this six-year process that created this payment our lawmakers have been denied access to any of the proceedings until last June. We the people can stop this madness. Soon President Obama will ask for something "fast track authority" which will permit him to act alone on behalf of the Congress and me. He must not get it. I urge you to become educated about the TPP, go on line, use the resources provided by publiccitizenstrade.org. One county in Wisconsin has already become a TPP free zone; thirty years ago I helped Cleveland Hts. become a nuclear free zone.

Thank you.

Good Evening, Mayor, Council Members, my name is Ann Caruso and I live at 2273 Bellfield Avenue. I just want to talk about the result of legislation in 2014. In 2008, Ohio passed a renewable energy and conservation standards bill #221 and it was passed with all but 1 vote. Polls showed repeatedly that

Ohioans favor renewable energy by at least 72% so renewable energy is very popular in Ohio. Our renewable standards are extremely conservative, very low compared to other states. They are among the lowest in the country. They call for just 12.5% of our energy coming from renewable energy sources by 2025 and conservation being increased by 22% by 2025. Those are not outlandish demands. The bill since it was passed; it increased Ohio's renewable generation from less than 9 megawatts to 429 megawatts of wind and 25 megawatts of solar. It created 25,000 new jobs. It created 400 new companies in renewable energy and conservation. It took 9000 tons of nitrogen oxide and 10,000 tons of sulfur dioxide emissions out of our air, which translates to cleaner air and better health. The Ohio Manufacturing Association also said that it helped consumers save \$2.00 for every one dollar spent on the efficiency programs. Once it was passed, our 4 energy programs got to work. They raised \$2.7 million dollars and disbursed it to the Republicans and Democrats and our legislator, not evenly but they did fund both sides of the aisle. Last year in June, our legislator passed SP310 which froze those renewable energy standards. We can't say that those camping contributions are a direct result of SP310 being passed. There is no real way of knowing that but on the face of it, the Plain Dealer was SP310, religious coalitions were formed and lobbied against SP310 manufacturers association, the loud voice for it was the energy companies.

Thank you.

Mr. Wilcox wanted to remind you that if you have written remarks, please give them to our Clerk of Council.

It was asked if anyone needs a bathroom break. There seems to be an air of anxiety and nervousness about time so I just wanted to ask.

Mr. Wilcox replied "he did not know where she was getting that, the 5 minute limit is in the ordinance just so you know".

The woman replied she does know that and would like to ask to not be interrupted because I do have a point so I will get there, I promise. My name is Susan Miller and I live at 3165 Berkshire Road. Since 1972 when a group of Cleveland Heights citizens gathered to study and then enforce the Fair Housing Act in our community, we have held their actions in high regard. They were congratulated and thanked for their service to this community by Council on the advent of their 40th Anniversary here in this Chamber 2 years ago. I'm speaking of course about Heights Community Congress. But here in this very same community, is a corporation that flaunts the Fair Housing Act. Indeed they advertise on their web pages that they are not bound by Fair Housing Act. The business is Executive

Arrangements, 2460 Fairmount Blvd., Suite 205 in Cleveland Heights. Here is what I found when I visited their web site. We share objective and honest data so families can make informed choices. Data can be overwhelming so this could be time consuming. Then there is this, not bound by Fair Housing Act laws which force relators to neutralize information on neighborhoods and schools. Well, it is good to know that executives who contribute to our region's vitality and wealth have a welcome wagon to help them transition to their new homes, it is not good to know that this organization sells itself by stating up front that it is not bound by the law. They seem to be saying to the elite classes they serve, because you are elite, different rules apply and so, as it pertains to cities and our respective municipal revenue coffers, the persistence of any quality and corporate privileges resides with us. Justice seems to apply to some and not others, apparently. What applies to John Doe does not apply to this corporation. We are all complicit in their impunity. Why, because they represent the corporate clientele that we so ardently wish to attract, innovation, brilliance, wealth we all wish to share. Just this past year a plan was floated to build on the Portage _____ to attract wealthy residents that could bolster our municipal coffers. Would the high dollar Turkey Ridge condos be a place that Executive Arrangements could steer wealthy executives to live, perhaps, but would they with impunity in private tell potential recruits that they should figure on sending their children to privates schools if they live in our community It's difficult to know but they seem to indicate that they have that privilege not afforded the realtor. When laws are passed, campaigns are mounted to convince us one way or another. Our chamber of commerce is inevitably involved in swaying public opinion in favor of their needs and desires. Subsidies and tax abatements are handed out like party favors. Roads are built, stadiums are outfitted anew, convention center authorities are dissolved overnight and new language side steps the law. Opinions are sold to the public by the chamber and laws and taxes are determined by the collective power of the regional chamber. Who pays for these roads, these convention centers, new hotels, and new developments? John Doe the taxpayer of course. It appears that the corporate elite among us have become so comfortable in their power and impunity, that they can advertise it and we remain silent. We pay and do not question, hence, money is speech. We are let by the corporate media who is directed by the growth coalition whose executives are carefully steered to this or that protected enclave to vote and again to tax ourselves. Then the corporations can continue to instruct us as to whatever it is they need. This is not democracy, it is a corporate toxcracy (?).

Thank you.

My name is Fran Mench and I live at 3060 Chelsea Drive in Cleveland Heights. A city changes slowly and in a way that is too confusing and discorded for the people who live there to clearly understand. So, we humans usually have to make up our own narratives about how and when why our city changed. But in the case of Cleveland Heights, the how when and why of our city's currently economic problem, some people say decline, can be identified precisely and easily. The decline started in 2010 when the Oakwood Country Club, former Oakwood Country Club, (Mr. Wilcox interrupted and asked her to limit her comments to the subject at hand). "She responded it is connected if you give me time to speak". The decline started in 2010 when the Oakwood Country Club was for sale. It was not sold until December of 2010 and during the course of that year, citizens worked with the Trust for Public Land who auctioned the property. Citizens asked repeatedly for City Council at that time to work with the Trust for Public Land and MetroParks toward purchasing of the former Oakwood Country Club and turning it into a MetroPark. Everyone in leadership in this room currently and the former individuals, Ed Kelly, Bonnie Kaplan, Mark Tumeo, and Ken Montlack and the missing members are directly responsible for that refusal as is Bob Downey who was the City Manager at that time.

Mr. Wilcox interrupted saying he was having a real tough time connecting this to the 2014 election.

She answered "respectively you are taking up my time". Mr. Wilcox stated you are not getting to the topic of the ordinance.

She asked "am I finished".

Mr. Wilcox replied "if you want to be".

She stated she is not finished, if you would please let me get to that part.

Mr. Wilcox replied "tie it into the election or you will be finished".

You turned your back on the citizens, to face the smoky promises and the warm glow of First Interstate. We could have had an Acacia in our community, instead Oakwood was sold for 4 million dollars which is nothing, and dug up for a Walmart which moved from Severance Town Center and now Severance is in foreclosure and soon to be auctioned off. This relationship between government and business vs. citizens continues today. When you continue to offer tax abatements to developers to build housing that there is no market for and that research shows that residential abatement has no demonstrable benefit. You as our government have

seated your leadership to businesses and have forgotten that your responsibility is to people and the long term welfare of the community.

Thank you.

She did ask if this was being taped. Mr. Wilcox said yes.

Mr. Wilcox asked if there was anyone else.

Diane Hallum, 1059 Oxford Road, I would like to start off pointing out the money effect on the 2014 election and that Janine Boyd was put in her position, not through the election process, appointed by council to fill a vacant seat. Besides to run for re-election unopposed primarily in a community because of her name and her mother's name, because everyone knew there was no way they could fight the Democratic Party.

Ms. Stephens interrupted her saying that did not have a direct relationship, since you said something to me, when I was whispering to my colleague, out of respect to you, the respect you should have for people is that we follow the elective process and the legislation that was passed on this tonight, specifically spoke to the fact that your comments should address how corporations take over the process. You seem to want to allege that there is some nefarious scheme here. There is no scheme here.

She said this is an example of exactly where I was leading. The organization that seems to control the fact that a woman decides to run for her seat on council a week after swearing in for that position and after being re-elected announces her run for Congress taking over her mother's seat. Now leaving an empty seat right here and who will elect this representative who will now sit in that seat for the next 4 years. You will, not the citizens in this city.

Mr. Wilcox stated that in the fall of 2015 that seat will be up for election, it will only be for a few short months.

She responded that was good to hear, she did not know that. It still goes back to the influence of money on elections in this city. Primarily, it comes from the Ohio Democratic Party and the Cleveland Heights Democratic Party. I started my review for this speech by looking at campaign donations and I'm surprised at how thick those documents are when I print them out from the Board of Elections and then when you look at the percentages of those who donate and who do not live in this City or work in this City but they end up on many contracts and are involved in the development properties that countless citizens stand up and speak out against but are voted for by Council. The amount of money that exchanged hands during these

elections, since I can't get the 2014 Finance Records yet, they are not available yet, and I have to refer back to those in the past. There was thousands of dollars that each member would exchange with the Ohio Democratic Party for literature and postage, individually each of them spent about \$3-5 thousand dollars giving it to the Ohio Democratic Party in Columbus, not here, in Columbus. Those were blanket mailings; it would be like flooding our community. They in turn were receiving donations as well from the Democratic Party. When it comes to free speech in an election cycle, the only people that have speech are those who are aligned with the Ohio Democratic Party. Those who don't have close ties with that party can't get elected with the exception of Mary Dunbar. I have to applaud her. Of her donors, only 4% were outside of Cleveland Heights. She used only Cleveland Heights vendors for her literature and her mailings. The other members of the Council their donations were about 50% from people that do not live in this City and they used the Columbus, Ohio Democratic Party to pay for their mailings.

Mr. Wilcox she has about 20 seconds to wrap it up.

She continued saying this is a corporate money power situation that if you are not a party member of the Democratic Party and you are not a donor to one of the campaigns you do not get on any of the committees.

Mr. Wilcox asked her to wrap it up please.

She said I am still speaking; you interrupted me in the beginning.

Mr. Wilcox stated I have given you extra time.

She said everyone who is on the Planning Commission are donators to you guys, every one of you. People, who suddenly show up on the list, suddenly make a donation that year. I will now speak about Joseph Schifrin, a person.

Mr. Wilcox said her time is up and asked if she could at least respect the ordinance that you are supposed to be here to talk about. Either let someone else come up and speak or the hearing is going to be concluded. Everyone was to get 5 minutes so everyone would have an opportunity to speak. I even gave you extra time, I took that into account. He stated we have other matters that they have to attend to so we excuse them.

Mr. Wilcox asked if there was anyone else.

My name is Harriet Applegate and I live at 1522 Crest Road and I am actually here as the Executive Secretary of the N_____CIO, and I just want to make a quick clarification. Even though unions are considered to be covered by Citizens United Decision and it is able to give unlimited money, I think it is important to point out that unions are against Citizens United 1000% across the nation because the sheer amount of money that corporations give and that pour into the political process, no union, no worker, no international union, no matter how large could ever even begin to dream that they could make a difference compared to corporate money. I just wanted to come to clarify that unions are not for Citizens United and that we are very happy that this city passed this ordinance and to thank you very much for having this hearing.

I'm Nina McCullen and I use to live in Cleveland Heights. I do still have an investment property 2924 East Derbyshire Road. I wasn't going to speak, but the 2014 election and I have been active in local things as much as I could be. I was a neighborhood leader in the 2008 campaign; I just want to say that the money in politics and the influence of corporations has made me so discouraged that I don't feel so much a part of the process anymore. I think all of us in this last election, we were flooded, our e-mails were flooded, and our phones were flooded begging you for contributions over and over again. I'm a registered Democrat so I was getting calls mainly from all levels of the Democratic Party, state and local and it was overwhelming. I gave what I could, but I knew that it was not going to make much difference that the amount of money from the enormous givers just overwhelms what we citizens can do or even the unions. When I register voters I see more cynicism about what is happening. As Greg said, we the citizens know it but confirmed by academics that we have lost and are not just losing what we thought we had in the Democratic system. So I think if we can all work together and put our energies into efforts like this "Move to Amend" that is what we have to do. We the people have to come together to reclaim what we have lost because most of us are feeling that our elected officials have been bought off and spend 90% of their time trying to raise money for their upcoming election so what time do they have to focus on the people's business and represent our interest. I am hoping things will change and I think it's exciting the Move to Amend is catching on moving across the country in so many communities and this is what we have to do.

Mr. Wilcox stated that before he concludes the hearing, Ms. Stephens stated she would like to make a statement.

Move to Amend made a significant stride getting council to be educated about the legislation that passed at a National level and how it potentially affects the community. In our holding the public hearing that not only looks

at the letter of the law but the spirit of the law, we ask people to focus on things that make it feel that corporations are taking over the process, not personal vendettas on specific issues. In the future, we would like to include you to come and speak or to call us but to focus on the things especially in relation to this "Move to Amend". If you did not like something we did in the past, feel free to come and address us on that issue, but realize that you will have a limited amount of time on that issue. We would like to fully expand how we help you move forward with this. For example, Greg's comments that led us in steps on how to do something that makes a positive change for this community and other communities in this state or Nina's statement about us believing in the process and helping other good people to find what we should do. That's what we need from you. If you want us to respond so that we can help you move forward with this and you want us in our personal time when we meet other elected officials to encourage them to believe that this is the way their community should go or on a Country level or a state level, how we should interact especially with members of the other party because this will not be approved at a state level exclusively by democrats in a legislature that is primarily republican. We must find friends and people who believe in basic American statutes and the principals that most of us were raised on and find commonalities that will help them vote to support things that are really about why America belongs to Americans, not to corporations.

Thank you.

Jeff wanted to thank everyone for participating and applaud your spirit of independent thinking and belief in democracy and your caring about the future of our political process. It makes me proud to be a resident of Cleveland Heights and a member of Council. Just being able to attend this event since it celebrates our tradition in believing in social justice, equality, and freedom of speech. All of those things that we stand for and our goal of being a progressive, socially just diverse sustainable community. I'm happy that you were all here, it inspires and makes me proud to be part of this.

Mr. Wilcox wanted to thank Greg and others that have been involved in this and brought this to the voters of Cleveland Heights; they have done a great job. I will say that I do speak to other elected officials about this issue in other cities to try to get them to put things on the ballot and hopefully with enough cities around the country doing this maybe it will make an impact in Washington. I know that Senator Sherrod Brown has had petitions out there to try to get this going. It is an important issue and Greg made a good point because it will affect us here in Cleveland Heights because the legislator balanced their budget last time by cutting funding to the city and we are in tough times because of that. It all relates back to the amount of money that

goes into the political campaigns. I do have to say another thing, I appreciate the spirit of a lot of the people in this room. I don't think a forum like this is to stand up and slander someone. For the record, no one up here was ever offered the opportunity to sell Oakwood to MetroParks that is just not true. The other thing is to suggest that all of us get contributions from everybody on the Planning Commission, it is just a lie. This is freedom of speech, I understand that, but when it is directed to an individual and it slanders them I just don't think that is appropriate.

Mr. Wilcox concluded the hearing at 7:13 PM and these will be posted on our web site by March 1st. Thank you everyone for coming and being here.