

## Library Board Meeting 092324

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### **Vikas Turakhia**

And we are going to go into Executive Session. You guys can all wait here and we are going to go upstairs to a meeting room.

### **Annette M. Iwamoto**

I'll, I'll make a motion to go into executive session to discuss the sale for purchase of real estate.

### **Tyler McTigue**

I second

### **Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Carlisle,

### **Patti Carlyle**

Yes,

### **Deborah Herrmann**

Mrs. Iwamoto

### **Annette M. Iwamoto**

Yes,

### **Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Soto-Schwartz

### **Melissa Soto-Schwartz**

yes,

### **Deborah Herrmann**

Mr. McTigue,

### **Vikas Turakhia**

yes.

**Tyler McTigue**

Yes.

**Deborah Herrmann**

Mr. Turakhia

**Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Turnberrez

**Hallie Turnberrez**

Yes

**Vikas Turakhia**

Hi So library board [inaudible] your [inaudible] welcomes comments from the residents of our community. Please note that [inaudible] tape recorded and your statement is part of a public record. We ask that you limit your remarks to no more than five minutes, and that you state your name and address for the record. The board will allocate 30 minutes for public comment. The agenda for this meeting is set in advance, so no discussion or comments will be placed at this time. However, the board will give careful considerations your concerns and will respond. We have, just so you're aware, we have nine people that have signed up. We will be capping discussion at 30 minutes. So those you that come up to speak, be courteous to make sure you try to give everyone time.

**Vikas Turakhia**

First. We have Lee Chilcote.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[inaudible].

**Vikas Turakhia**

That's just, that's recording for [inaudible].

**Lee Chilcote**

Good evening. My name is Lee Chilcote, I live at 2322 Delamere drive in Cleveland Heights. I've been a supporter of Cleveland Heights. I've been a patron in this library for over 50 years. I'm here to support the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. proposal, and I'm asking you to support us. This is a proposal for [inaudible] we need to make it happen. I'm going to talk about the transfer. The proposed transfer involves only air rights, um, and not the land. The approach has been vetted and fully supported by your professional, Riverstone engineering survey, which you're using for the park, as well as the Chicago Title insurance company. The structure will protect the library while creating independent ownership pathways for Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Operations. Coventry P.E.A.C.E. building would be self managed by Coventry P.E.A.C.E. The Building was operated in that way for a two year period in 2020-2022. And was operated successfully at better than break even [inaudible] by Coventry P.E.A.C.E., has a certified property manager that will ensure successful operations, and we've given you a financial forecast that shows that this can be successfully operated, Capital Repairs. Peace Building has undergone two

evaluations by qualified engineers, both of whom confirmed that the building is in good condition. The roof was assessed and no immediate repairs need to be made. While three of the four HVAC units are currently providing cooling. All of them work for heating purposes. The facade is found to be in good condition, by your own report. A proposal from Comfort Systems, our selection, has been obtained offering full replacement of four HVAC units LED lighting and other improvements at approximately 1.25 million with the lead time of just four months. There's no crisis or emergency here. These things can be done in a [inaudible] way. Funding. Coventry P.E.A.C.E. is uniquely positioned to access grants, loans, private donations. Two members of the leadership of Coventry P.E.A.C.E. have decades of experience in arranging for these loans, grants and private donations. The Issue of Closure. The arts organization currently located in the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Building are facing closure or relocation by December 31 unless there's a mutually agreed one year extension. Key anchor tenants have indicated that announcements regarding their future will be made in coming weeks, as they require. They require sufficient lead time in order to secure new leases and operate. What's the Bottom Line of All This? It's this - the P.E.A.C.E. Building as envisioned by Coventry P.E.A.C.E. will complement the library's village, the Library's vision for the playground, the neighborhood's vision for a robust Coventry village and the community's vision for Home of the Arts. Please Library board tear down the wall that exists between the community and this board. Thank you.

**Lee Chilcote**

[clapping]

**Nancy Levin**

If you're going to clap after each [inaudible] that's using up your 30 minutes.

**Nancy Levin**

[inaudible]

**Vikas Turakhia**

Next we have Fern Haught.

**Fern Haught**

Hello, I'm Fern Haught. I live in the country neighborhood on heights Boulevard. I'm a resident of Cleveland Heights and a resident artist at ARTFUL in the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. campus. And I'm a resident of the city who utilizes our library's great important services. I think that it has become abundantly clear through the library's own poll and community listening session that your public does not want the organizations removed and the building to be demolished. I have much respect for my local library system and all of the people who work there, and I hope that the library will do what the community has been incredibly clear that they want, and take steps to move forward and transfer the building to Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Coventry P.E.A.C.E. has shown the capability to secure funding for improvements to the building if they are given ownership of the space. This is not a dilapidated building. It is structurally sound, and the community supports the future success of this building. Personally, I also think the board members [inaudible] facade collapses that occurred in Cleveland Heights is disrespectful to the small businesses that have been affected [inaudible]. The board has spoken many times, on their fiduciary responsibilities, and I think the preservation of the biggest employer in Coventry

is directly tied to that. I love the Coventry area, or have watched it change over a decade. I have watched now storefronts sit empty, but when I attend the important Coventry village events that are hosted there, partnering both with Coventry P.E.A.C.E. campus and the library, such as P.E.A.C.E. Pops, the Lantern Festival, the Music Hop, the Pekar Park comic festival, I see the hope for a revitalized Coventry neighborhood. The small businesses left in the area cannot afford to lose the patronage of the many guests who are brought the area by events and programming run within the P.E.A.C.E. building. On the library site, you state the P.E.A.C.E. Park area will be attractive to families, both in the Cleveland Heights, University Heights community, and also surrounding communities to help make the Coventry neighborhood an attractive destination for all [inaudible]. The very future and success of Heights libraries, I think also, specifically Coventry library, is dependent upon the neighborhood's success. Those things are tied together. Also as a disabled taxpayer here at the area, I hope you have believed [inaudible] of how important this already ADA accessible building is to the hundreds, perhaps 1000s, of disabled people who use this space for attending programs. There is not another comparable space located in Cleveland Heights [inaudible] the area. Many disabled artists, including myself, would be forced to do backtracking in our careers and lose this safe [inaudible] space that we have been allowed to grow. I do not have the privilege of, I think, just any small office or art studio in a world that unfortunately, often does not prioritize or care for my existence in public. All of us who would be losing the space would have to consider, where else we could possibly acquire a place that has elevators, ramps and accessible bathrooms and accessible parking lots. These are many things that abled people are not forced to confront the realities of in their daily lives. And the reality is that space will often not exist. The loss of this successful space would be long felt and devastating to the Coventry Village community, and Cleveland Heights as a whole. Thank you for your time listening to your community about this issue, and I hope you will listen to their message to you and the message from the city leaders in CH and UH to take the steps [inaudible] Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[inaudible]

**Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

**Vikas Turakhia**

We have Michael Brennan.

**Michael Brennan**

Good evening. My name is Michael Brennan. I'm the Mayor of the city of University Heights. My residential address is 3814 Washington Blvd., University Heights [inaudible]. [inaudible] this opportunity to speak. I think all of you have received my letter, I hope you have all had the opportunity to look at it. I'm going to speed up a little bit because I realize [inaudible] here. I'm not. I'm not going to read the whole letter here. We don't have that kind of time, and [inaudible] I've already sent to you. I will say this, I know that there's a proposal, and you may consider that, and you may not [inaudible] but as a community that values arts and culture, is proud that we are home to many artists and nonprofit organizations, we need an arts center, such as the one at Coventry P.E.A.C.E. At a minimum, we, the cities, the library and the organization should work together to explore a new structure that will create a

path for handing over operations so that they can continue to be an [inaudible] community asset for a long time to come. As I stated in the letter, I proposed that Heights libraries, Cleveland Heights and University Heights work together to find a way forward for Coventry P.E.A.C.E.

**Michael Brennan**

At the onset, I am prepared to devote city staff time [inaudible] guidance towards this goal. This isn't in the letter, but I [inaudible] failed to mention this part. I [inaudible] just over two hours ago that we closed on the sale of University Square.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

**Michael Brennan**

When the foreclosure happened on University Square, there was an 18 to 24 month plan to turn it around and sell it. That was in 2015. I've been Mayor since the year 2018. I began working on University Square as Mayor-elect in December 2017. I have devoted the better part of last seven years to making this happen, and the city nine years to making this happen, and from perseverance and teamwork and working together we got it done. And two weeks ago, two weeks ago, I was preparing how I was going to bring the news to the community that this fell through and this wasn't going to happen. And we still pulled it off. So, I share that because I know that you've been through this a long time. Nancy, I know you've been through this a long time. But I know how it feels to play long ball and feel like you're not winning. And to know that you've given it your best effort and you know that you're having a hard time. I know about this whole thing, and that's why I wrote the letter I wrote. We have this conversation. The survey tells us that, that people want to see the cities devote attention and resources to this. If this cannot be resolved today, then let's work together, going forward, to find a way that University Heights, Cleveland Heights, the library board, and all the stakeholders, so that Coventry P.E.A.C.E. can move forward. Thank you.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

**Vikas Turakhia**

[inaudible] Judith Ryder.

**Judith Ryder**

Hi. [inaudible] I'm Judith Ryder. I live at 30[inaudible] Lincoln Boulevard, and I come to these meetings with broad experience in the arts. I have lived and worked in the field of arts and arts education all my life. I see the immense benefit for people of all circumstances, and that includes people with disabilities. And so certainly, during the talk about the accessibility of that building is really, really important. It's incredibly important. And so, I endorse the things that are said, certainly [inaudible] consider releasing that building to the ownership and management of Coventry P.E.A.C.E. And I [inaudible] my incredible respect for the library. I run Cleveland Arts Education Consortium. Nancy, thank you for being part of the panel for [inaudible] at CSU a while ago. And I, I want to let you know that our membership is organizational, and it is small and large organizations, and it includes the Cleveland Public Library as a

leadership [inaudible] with us. And so it is incredibly important that you recognize the immense support for the arts, not only [inaudible] and it's really, really immensely important, and that you understand the verve which the community speaks about the P.E.A.C.E. campus. I think it has a real chance [inaudible]... more ways and can bring the library together [inaudible]. So I thank you for considering and weighing all of these pieces of information. There's a lot of technical information out there. Weigh it carefully. Please come back with support to endorse the ownership change, to Coventry P.E.A.C.E. So I thank you [inaudible].

### **Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

### **Vikas Turakhia**

Brady Dindia.

### **Brady Dindia**

Good evening. My name is Brady Dindia, as most of you know, I am a resident of University Heights, and I live on Westwood road.

### **Brady Dindia**

Imagine a couple who has grown apart. They decide to separate, but they share a deep love for their children, their community, Their children, in this case, represent our neighborhood, and the families and individuals we all serve. Though the couple no longer shares the same home, their commitment to their children's well being remains unshaken. They know that co-parenting isn't about the house they used to share. It's about nurturing their children in the neighborhood they love. That's what truly matters. Coventry peace and the library are like that couple, and our neighborhood is our shared responsibility. Alongside the Coventry business district the cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights and the residents we are all stakeholders in this family. Five out of six of these groups have voiced their opposition to demolishing the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. building. Many have even volunteered resources to ensure it remains a thriving center of arts, culture and education. Coventry P.E.A.C.E. is fully committed to peacefully coexisting, to co-parenting this neighborhood, because it's in our DNA to serve. By embracing this responsibility, we ensure this community has spaces for learning, creativity and connection, spaces where people of all backgrounds come together to thrive. We aren't asking the library to continue maintaining this house. We're asking for the opportunity to continue what we've already proven, to do, we can do, manage it ourselves. Coventry P.E.A.C.E. has done this even through the hardships of the covid pandemic, covering expenses, recruiting tenants, contributing to capital projects and ending with a surplus.

### **Brady Dindia**

While no official calculations have been presented, the investments the library has made, whether financial or otherwise, have helped realize the community's 2018 vision, a vision you supported and fought for and stated to the community that you were dedicated to. Back in 2018 you took action when the property was at risk of being developed, purchasing the six acre property from the school board for \$1 and saving it from outside development. Today, that vision is coming to life, a beautiful park, a beloved library, a historic business district, a historic business district that's about to get a bunch of new

investment, actually, and a growing hub of arts, culture and education. These are your contributions, a lasting legacy you helped build. Now we ask you to pass the baton, allowing Coventry piece to take full ownership while you continue to serve residents through your essential services. You saved this space, empowering nonprofits to fill essential gaps in services that neither the library nor the city could provide. And now, at this pivotal crossroad, crossroads, you hold the power to shape a future that builds on this legacy, or one that diminishes it. By embracing this transition, the library can take pride in knowing it was the hero when this campus faced its previous threat, and upheld valid, values of your community by serving as a steward to help realize the full vision the residents have, have for this campus. This is not about giving up the space. It's about investing in the community you're meant to serve and ensuring that the neighborhood we all love continues to flourish. Together, we can build a vibrant hub of creativity, education and collaboration that this community truly needs and has made it known they also desire. So tonight, I ask you to trust that this family can work together by allowing Coventry peace to take ownership, you are helping co-parent a brighter future for our entire neighborhood, a future where your legacy of saving this campus shines as a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations to come.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

**Vikas Turakhia**

Marty Gelfand

**Marty Gelfand**

Hi. Good evening.. I'm Marty Gelfand, 3049 Meadowbrook Boulevard. I grew up, I spent the first 18 years of my life in Cleveland Heights, and I spent the last 22 years of my life in the Cleveland Heights - University Heights Library District. [inaudible] those years in South Euclid, and the last four years over here on Meadowbrook Boulevard, and my daughter has spent most of her time with [inaudible] elementary school years over at Lake Erie Ink, and she's now very active at ARTFUL, and their projects, and so we're very invested in what goes on in the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. building. And I'm very proud of the building. I'm proud of the organizations. [inaudible] Yesterday, my wife and I were drying herbs and hot peppers in our kitchen, and we were listening to the Pretenders on our smart speaker, and a song came on that caught my attention. I always thought it was called, Went Back to Ohio, but it's actually, My City is Gone. But I found that out when I looked up the lyrics, just a few of the lyrics [inaudible] but I'm going to sing,

**Unidentified Speaker**

[laughter]

**Marty Gelfand**

I went back to Ohio. My city was gone. There was no train station. There was no downtown. I went back to Ohio, but my pretty countryside had been paved down the middle by a government that has no pride.

## **Marty Gelfand**

Now this song could be, could be looked at very generally, as nostalgia for times that inevitably change, things that change. It can also be looked at very specifically. Chrissy Hind, who wrote it, is from Akron, and for those of you who've ever gone to Akron, you can see how downtown Akron was just completely devastated. The train station was torn down. [inaudible] I disagree with some lyrics in the song. I don't think that the government had no pride when, what happened, happened. They were involved with urban renewal. They were doing something that was [inaudible] country. They were looking forward to better structures, better things in the future, but they had to get rid of these older things that were in the way. And I think they had a lot of pride in what they were doing at the time. But I think, you know, with pride, and I think that the library board in deciding what to do with the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. building, I think you should be proud of what you do. It's. Whatever it is you do. You should take pride in it. But I think there's another side of pride, and it's not the opposite of pride, I think it runs in conjunction with pride and that's humility. And with humility, we think about the things you do, and if you question, you know, is it really the right thing? How can I know that it's the right thing? And one of the ways that we temper our pride with our humility is by talking to the people who are going to be affected by it. I don't know how much the people down in, the leaders down in Akron, talked with the residents of , of Akron at the time that they were doing the urban renewal, slum clearance, whatever it was they were doing. But I think the people down there weren't terribly happy with the results. And I think that, you don't need to talk to me, you don't need to talk to all the people in the room, but at least talk to our leaders. Talk to Mayor Brennan, who represents about a third of the people who live in this library district, talk to the president of our council, Tony Cuda, or members, Gail Larson or Jim Petras who are in the room. Talk to them. If you, you've tried to talk to them before and it didn't work out, try again. And I will tell them the same thing. Try again. Talk to each other. Temper your pride with your humility and do the right thing, because I think you've heard enough from the people in this room that we really love that building, and we love what's going on, more than the building itself, what's going on in the building. So I just ask that you talk to the people who are going to be affected by your decision.

## **Unidentified Speaker**

[inaudible]

## **Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

## **Steve Presser**

I'm Steve Presser. I live at 26[inaudible] East Overlook. My wife and I have lived in the Coventry Village neighborhood for 42 years. I am a founding member and present President of Heights Arts which will be celebrating 25 years [inaudible]. I am a lover of our library system. [inaudible] library [inaudible]. Why I love [inaudible] I love what the library has done as a progressive thinking organization, by annexing the building across the street, putting a bridge, welcoming Obama to our community, basically saving them a place to be, [inaudible] a wonderful idea. I love that the library, and hopefully the community, will support the reconstruction of rebuilding of the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. park, like us, which is instrumental in our community. My wife and I moved to Coventry for many reasons, probably the most important [inaudible] school [inaudible], I was a active member of the Coventry commercial district for 28 years. My wife being an incredible artist being involved in Parade The Circle for nearly 30 years, me being

around a lot of artists, I understand what arts mean to our community, and arts truly enrich the lives of those around us. We have an organization called Coventry P.E.A.C.E., but within that organization, there are so many different smaller organizations [inaudible] arts. Lake Erie Ink, ARTFUL, and on, and on, and on. And in a day and age where communities are shrinking, people are leaving commercial districts, where we need to have community involvement that is collaborative, cooperative [inaudible] community, it would be a tragedy, a literal tragedy, to lose Coventry elementary school and not keep Coventry P.E.A.C.E. there. Because what we've seen is, quite frankly, a downturn in Coventry commercial district, and I, like many others, believe it is just a little bit of a dip and hopefully it will turn up, but to have the ability to have a strong presence of a community organization, well many organizations in Coventry P.E.A.C.E., and to have just a wonderful, wonderful Coventry library corner there, and soon to have an incredible playground, to have that collaborative consortium, three powerful entities can only help and benefit Coventry commercial district. And for those of us who live nearby, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that there is softness and weakness in the chain, and it will start affecting property values, and there's people who start talking and [inaudible] go up. What we have here is the ability for the library to continue to be visionary, continue to be progressive, to understand what community means our [inaudible] and to go ahead and make a decision which seems to be collectively supported by many in the community here. A lot of smarter people than myself understand the importance of keeping, retaining the school, under the leadership, and the vision of Coventry P.E.A.C.E.

### **Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

### **Vikas Turakhia**

We have hit 30 minutes, but we have two people left. We're gonna, we're gonna let you speak so you get a chance to say what you want to say. We're going to ask you to limit it to two minutes, if possible. First we have Catherine Chilcote.

### **Catherine Chilcote**

Hi. I appreciate you giving the time. I represent Building Bridges Artist Collaborative one of the non-profits in Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Resident of Cleveland Heights. I just want to stress that we're at a moment, right now, where we really need to value the Creative Capital that all these arts organizations are bringing [inaudible]. I've been involved with many different economic development missions throughout this county to spur our economy from arts and right now you have so many treasured leaders right in the center of this suburb. And Cleveland Heights has the possibility of really being a creative enterprise of this whole county, if it isn't already. So please treasure the minds that you have here that are bringing forward the art. And it isn't just about saving the building. It's about being able to retain us, being able to keep us and value us in this economy. If you just take this building away, there might not be another structure here that we can exist in. And It's not just about us as tenants. It's that we've invested so much in the use City at-large [inaudible] here. I, really it's very risky to even consider turning us away in that way. Some of you writers, some of you, all of you read, obviously, and we greatly treasure the library, so will you please [inaudible] any doubts you have.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

**Vikas Turakhia**

Tony Cuda.

**Annette M. Iwamoto**

Thank you for allowing me to speak. I'm Tony Cuda, I'm a long time resident of Cleveland Heights. City Council President. And I consider myself a member of the arts community. I played, one of the first gigs I ever played was in the Tigers den at Cleveland Heights High. A really, really great memory for me. I received some really thoughtful emails from many of the board members here, and I take very seriously the hard numbers that you all have to look at. I got your email today. And I would never minimize that, nor would I ever minimize the contribution of the tenants at Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus. Both of those things are very important. In emails, one of the things you talked about, I think you all said this, this is that, like City Council and the government entities, if we're going to talk about this and do a resolution, which we were looking at very seriously, we should be bringing something to the table. And in the spirit of what Marty Gelphan was talking about and Mayor Brennan. Let's see what we can do together. I hope that's part of the conversation that you're going to have in a few minutes. That's really all I have to say.

**Nancy Levin**

I'm a little distracted, because I feel like I'd like to address some of the concerns that were mentioned tonight. I had already worked on a public comment, so, do you agree that I can go straight to that?

**Unidentified Speaker**

[clapping]

**Unidentified Speaker**

[meeting went on and covered other matters before Nancy Levin gave her report]

**Vikas Turakhia**

[inaudible]

**Nancy Levin**

So, I am not as eloquent as many of you. But I do very much thank you for your comments. We know how important the activities of these organizations at Coventry P.E.A.C.E. are to you and the people you serve. While that weighs heavily on all of our minds, I think we still need to focus on financial sustainability, and I did smile for when Brady brought up the metaphor of a divorce. When I went through a divorce, I did so because we did not agree on...

**Coventry PEACE Note**

[We have redacted the next few sentences due to the fact that these were personal comments, having nothing to do with the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. issue, involving a person who was not in attendance and

able to refute Nancy Levin's statements. We have no desire to disseminate disparaging comments regarding a matter that has nothing to do with this matter. If you wish to know what Nancy Levin said, you will need to contact the Library and request an official transcript.]

**Nancy Levin**

And I think what's missing is, in this discussion, is the finances. So, I'd like to just talk about that a minute, and Marty, I grew up in Akron. I was there when they tore down all that stuff [inaudible]. Chrissy Hines went to my high school. And. I think we have to focus on the future, and try not to [inaudible] nostalgia. But we do have to face some real serious facts. I, we employ 151 people as of today. During the pandemic, we were down to somewhere in the 100, so we've gotten finally back to our pre-pandemic stage. Our full payroll is about \$5 million dollars and, If we put the money into the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus that represents half our payroll. So in a way, what we're being asked is to put aside the needs of the library for the needs of Coventry P.E.A.C.E.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[crowd reacts]

**Unidentified Speaker**

No.

**Nancy Levin**

You all have had your chance to talk. Many, many times. And what you are saying that you, we should just give it to you.

**Unidentified Speaker**

Yes.

**Nancy Levin**

Well, what about the over \$500,000 that's been spent [inaudible]?

**Unidentified Speaker**

[crowd reacts]

**Nancy Levin**

Please let me finish.

**Vikas Turakhia**

[bangs on table]

**Vikas Turakhia**

Look. This is not a back and forth. You had a chance to comment. We listened very respectfully. I ask that you listen to Nancy, very respectfully.

**Nancy Levin**

You want to hear what we think, I'm trying to tell what we think. So we can discuss it [inaudible]. But this is a very large building, 60 something thousand square feet. Right now it's about 40% occupied. Do, I'm trying to separate your clear attachment to the building with what I believe, and what the library needs to consider is practical.

**Nancy Levin**

Ever since it became our property into 2018, the occupancy has gone down, not up. Now that may be because of the pandemic. I'm not blaming anyone. Family Connections left, Ensemble Theatre left. Those are big tenants, and it is a problem. So we hired a real estate company to try to help us get that building occupied. We brought in. We did hire, yes we did, and we, we added three tenants in that time. That's a [inaudible]. Three tenants isn't going to cut it. I see your advertising for new spaces in ARTFUL and I have probably received three or four calls in the last six months for people who wish to look at the space. So take that for what it is. I don't know if it means that it would come to fruition or not. But, we're at a crossroads here. Putting up walls on the mezzanine and in other places does actually interfere with the flow of air in the building. A HVAC designer designs the airflow for a school and we're not using it that same way. And I'm worried that our, the HVAC, which is very strained, and the air conditioning is not working. We put in temporary units, and we suffered very hot days. And I don't think anyone should be subjected to that. The library cares about the building being maintained in a proper way so that people are not suffering while they are working. I've worked in un-airconditioned buildings it's not good for you. So these are some of the concerns that the library faces. That \$14,000 that we spent, that was to re-install the steel supports for the front door. So I know that the cornice is not falling down, but there are still structural things that we need to look at in the building. That front door could be kicked in. Your safety could be compromised. Until we fix it. So, we find out things aren't working, we fix them. And we do that right now because we're the landlord and it is the right thing [inaudible] to do. So, asking us to transfer the building for \$1 which was a symbolic thing that happened, that was a transfer of government to government. That is a very different thing than what you're asking. And that is the dilemma [inaudible] that we're going to figure out today. If the cities wish to address this issue with us, I think it really does fall into the realm of economic development. You can, we agreed that having people working in the neighborhood is important, and if that is so, then where is the money going to come from that will help the library recoup what they have lost, and keep the building running? I don't know? And it's a problem. Again, something we have to consider. The decisions made tonight, do not preclude us from coming up with other solutions for this problem. I asked for, for six months time to consider all the options, and I need six months time. I was disappointed that the idea of doing a facility study and talk about demolition got blown out of proportion, as if it were going to happen tomorrow. I don't think that's the Library's intention. I would say it right now, you have to study it, because we [inaudible] to do it. So I, I hope that we can simmer down some of that drama and, and not talk about demolition while we're trying to find out what is necessary and what's not necessary, and how this building can be used. It takes time, so I, I want to request of you to give us that time.

**Nancy Levin**

I know also that you're facing a lease deadline in about a month. I know that. We're trying very hard to make things happen. We have spoken to City Council members. We have spoken to developers. We

have spoken to other possible tenants that might be able to offset some of this emptiness in the building. We're doing a lot of work behind the scenes.

**Nancy Levin**

We're not?

**Nancy Levin**

Please. Calm down. Let's, let's try to work on this problem without some of the drama. Okay? [inaudible] itself. And I think that we are trying to have discussions. We're trying to also communicate our side of these things without disparaging anybody, we don't mean to. And I think that maybe all I have to say, Oh, I do want to point out that, that Patti did a pretty serious study of arts campuses all over in other cities, and she mentions in the report that she wrote for me, and [inaudible] what it takes to really run an arts organization that serves a whole city. And I know that we will disagree about this, but the library has found, more than once, we had three different leases that we are not satisfied with the finances of the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. tenants as they exist today. I'm just telling you that. So, something else will have to come of this. We will need to be more communicative [inaudible].

**Melissa Soto-Schwartz**

I'd like to add [inaudible] relatively new to this board. January will mark my second year. So by and large, this year, I have sat quietly because there are senior members who have been here since 2018, and have a lot of knowledge and experience with this particular [inaudible], but what I'd like to do tonight is just spend a few minutes and say, number one thank you to everyone who has shown up. We do listen to you, our jobs as trustees is to listen to people. We generally do not interact with you individually. We cannot answer individual emails on legal advice. So we don't answer individual emails, but we do read them. Nancy is correct, however, in the sense that, overly emotional responses and people, for example, standing up, and it isn't just [inaudible] in the city council I see members [inaudible] you have some experience and berate you. That's not going to necessarily get anyone to change their minds in any way, shape, or form. Tonight, everyone has been so generous, and gracious in their presentations. I've noted a real shift in your presentations tonight. So I genuinely want to thank all of you in your gracious presentations. It was a marked difference. And I do want you to know that none of us in any way, shape or form, has taken any of this lightly. All of us, for various reasons, signed on to do this work voluntarily. Which, for some reason, I don't know why, some members on their side remark about that. That aside, I just wanted to know we are all trying to do, do what we think is in the best interest of everyone. And because this is a passionate subject, no one here belittles, or in any way, shape or form, thinks the work of what artists do, the work of the creativity you bring here [inaudible] no meaning. My God, I really appreciate it, somebody here tonight said, you wouldn't be sitting here on the board if you didn't value the arts. That is so true. But what is also true, and none of us takes lightly, is our bosses are the tax payers, and it didn't become [inaudible] to me [inaudible] politicians started to really kind of have that sink in, until they started seeing the numbers. And so it is difficult, and hopefully, as Nancy was just saying, it's, it's the economic issue. If we can somehow, some ways, we don't have immediate resolution yet, but what I have seen in only the two years I have been here is that, as a trustee of the library, when it comes to this particular property, the trustees have had to authorize and sign off, [inaudible] every single [inaudible], deficit for two years straight. That's just in two years. And money in [inaudible], and I have to make those decisions saying, Oh man, yeah,

for two years, the [inaudible] the taxpayers [inaudible] resolution. [inaudible] Thank you all the members of council, the representatives, the Mayor [inaudible] back [inaudible] constituents [inaudible]. I'll be quiet now. I just wanted you to know that we are listening, and I think it was Marty that said [inaudible]. Thank you.

**Vikas Turakhia**

Any unfinished business?

**Vikas Turakhia**

New business?

**Vikas Turakhia**

Yeah, we do have a resolution here under new business. The rejection of continued offers to purchase the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. building, whereas the Library Board has previously directed the library director to reject any unsolicited offers to purchase any library owned real property, including the Coventry school building, unless otherwise corrected by action on this board. And whereas the board wishes to provide further direction regarding offers to purchase the Coventry school building, following receipt of the latest offer from Coventry P.E.A.C.E., Inc, to purchase the building for \$1 and their petitioning of the city of Cleveland Heights City Council for support of the same. Now therefore, be it resolved that the Library Board of Trustees is not considering selling, or otherwise conveying the Coventry school building to Coventry PEACE, Inc, or otherwise, and intends to maintain ownership of the same at this time. Resolved further, the board directs the library director to reject all offers to purchase the Coventry school building, including the offer from Coventry P.E.A.C.E., Inc., and to focus on the feasibility and cost scenarios of options for the property that do not involve sale or transfer of the building. Um, I make a motion, and a second?

**Tyler McTigue**

And discussion? Nancy, for the audience's sake, can you clarify what this resolution is saying?

**Patti Carlyle**

I'll second.

**Nancy Levin**

Well, one of the things is that if we were to sell the property, while it is not in Ohio revised code that we have to do competitive bidding, it is in our bylaws that we would have to do competitive bidding. And I still think that option is on the table until it's removed. As I said earlier, we have many, many options to explore, and, um, I think transferring the property to an entity that does not have the financial resources in hand to operate it would be irresponsible of the Library.

**Unidentified Speaker**

[inaudible]

**Hallie Turnberrez**

Just briefly. [inaudible] mask off [inaudible]. I'm not ill, I just traveled. So. So, I'm the newest member [inaudible] a little bit before, and she kind of discussed about her process and getting up to speed here. My process has been, has been, faster and has really been alongside all of you. I started learning about this issue with you. Some of my first impressions were from Annette and Dana's discussions of their experience, with your organizations and with their children. So I've been on my, on my own journey here. And you know, quickly I got yelled at, pretty quickly before doing anything, before knowing anything, and that that was a little bit of a shock coming in, trying to, trying to maintain objectivity, is challenging when you get yelled at, so I've done my best to continue, and I feel that I've asked some questions that haven't been answered. And perhaps I haven't been clear, and perhaps, or perhaps, there isn't a good answer, I'm not sure, but I have no doubt about the wonderful things you all provide, these amazing, important opportunities, the specific suitability of the Building being an important asset, I have no doubt, no doubt. All I asked is, okay, in my duty as a fiduciary to, to the library, what do I [inaudible]? And, and it has not, that has not been resolved for me with the answers from the arts community that is advocating for the library, continuing to work with the P.E.A.C.E. campus.

**OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENT**

[overhead announcement] May we have your attention please. The library will close in 15 minutes, and all computers and copiers will shut down in five minutes. Please be aware that all library doors will be locked in 15 minutes. Please check out your materials now. Thank you.

**Hallie Turnberrez**

I don't have a past number of years of, of experience trying to work, work on this issue. I'm new, and so I'm asking, I'm saying this is an amazing thing. How do we, how do we do this? And the more information I learned is that we've tried, we've tried this time, and we've tried in this way, and we've tried in that way. And so I keep posing the question, what's different now? What has changed? Why will it work this time? Please answer me. Give me, I want that. I want that answer. I want it to work. But I am not and so that's what I'm telling you right now, is, is that I have continually been trying to learn and trying to ask how it will be different, how I can fulfill my duty as a fiduciary, because I don't think it would be responsible to transfer it to an entity where it will fail. Or where it does not work, where there isn't enough indication that it will succeed. So that's what I wanted to add.

**Deborah Herrmann**

Anybody else?

**Nancy Levin**

The only thing I would like to say, and this is, I'm sure I'll be booed again, um, from my analysis, the tenants in the building, the smaller tenants in the building, if they were compelled to move to another location, would survive and continue to serve as they have done. And this is my analysis. The one that I worry about is ARTFUL, because they use the most amount of space, they have the need to have more flexibility in how the spaces are configured, and there are a lot of people involved. So, I have gone to the city. I went to economic development department and planning. I said, can you tell me if there are any buildings available in Cleveland Heights? I understand that that is their job, to help market

buildings. The answer I got was not complete, I'd have to say, they said, not at the rate they're paying now. And I don't know what that means, because how can they say what the rate of leasing would be? I just wanted to know if there was space available. I read in the county council Michael Hauser's report yesterday online, he was all excited about Park Synagogue and how that is also going to be developed as an arts community. And so I'm curious about that as a place for some of these tenants [inaudible]. I'm also curious about the one in East Cleveland that's coming up. I'm curious about other spaces, other, I see empty buildings all around Cleveland Heights. I don't know yet if that is viable, a viable option for anybody. But if Lake Erie Ink, or Reaching Heights, wanted to move out, I'm pretty sure they could relocate, and I will say, I've taken leave here, that the library would be probably willing to help with moving expenses just to make it a softer landing. Not, because it's going to replace anything. I'm not silly enough to make that, but keeping this very large building, wasn't designed for this, and is inefficient in many ways. I also think needs to be considered as a real problem. So, I, I'm already trying to think about the next step in this very long story, about what? So what if you weren't in the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. building, what would you do? And I think that question needs to be answered as well. Because everything, there are options, I think Mark Chupp said, [inaudible] many alternatives, many solutions possible, and, um, I think it's our job to also think about those other solutions and what would happen after, if that. If we pursue this course, what will happen? And I think that, I think that, I'm going to try to be digging into more in the next few months. I know it's not my job to solve this problem, but again, we care. And, um, I think that, that is a viable path that we should be looking into.

#### **Annette M. Iwamoto**

So, I think I've spoken to city council, I spoke, I've forwarded emails I received to Library Board members. Something that just keeps occupying my thoughts and my time, someone who has lost sleep thinking about what the possibilities are, but I think about, you know, coming on to the library board and always being struck by how forward thinking the library administration has been about what the needs are of our buildings. And I brought up the facade collapses in Cleveland Heights, not because I felt Coventry P.E.A.C.E. was about to collapse, that it wasn't structurally sound, but those things, like that happen when we're not forward thinking. And so, I think about all of the investments we've made [inaudible] in our buildings, Noble, Coventry, University Heights, we talked about [inaudible] Lee Road, as well as in our staff and, and, and the way we changed the, the salary scale to, to fit the needs of the times. We have to invest in [inaudible] longevity. I think that the community that is here in the room is asking us to do something that's outside our scope of work, is really more in this community development, economic development realm. And you know, I'm talking to my family about these decisions that are coming up against, and they're like, well, that's funny, we have major issues in our library. I'm from Arizona, and the Pima County Library is currently talking about closing buildings and to use, because they don't have the financial capacity to staff and keep these buildings open, including the downtown library. And so, you know, I write these things down because when you have your complex, difficult decisions, you've got to think of what those guiding, guiding thoughts are that help you reach the right decision. So, I'm looking at building sustainability. What our fiduciary responsibility is, being a responsible steward of our property. If you were at the committee meeting, you would have set, heard me say the same things, because that's what I continue to lean on. But you know, when I think that, I think about the decision that we have to make, it's really important to me, that we are not, I'm not passing on a problem to the next board that, that I'm not serving on the board any longer. Who's going to have to be making decisions? Like the Pima County Library Board is making. We're not there. We're

not making those types of decisions, but it's forward thinking that it's going to get us so that we can continue to respond to the public needs and adapt in ways that and be responsive to library services that are needed [inaudible].

**Melissa Soto-Schwartz**

One thing I would add, too. When the issues of the facades collapsing. This did come up in the planning committee earlier in the month, and as a trustee, I mentioned the issue of liability. Because when we talk about structural integrity, one thing I always worry about is what happens to the people inside the building we are responsible for? We knew back in January. Yes, people are here right now. Y'all come to meetings right now. That's why you, couldn't come to our meetings anytime. Back in January, nobody was coming to our meetings. [inaudible] But my point is, when we were first hearing about these problems in the roof, right? We were like, oh my, yeah. We gotta get this stuff taken care of as soon as we can. And so we did the, the the immediate repair that we could at the time.

**Nancy Levin**

\$90,000 dollars.

**Melissa Soto-Schwartz**

Yeah. 90 grand, back in January. We knew, you know, but this, it's gonna be, it's gonna be long term, 2.8, because we thought, after that, if that roof collapses in the middle of Winter it's going to be hell. So it's, you know, you can't, you see, this is the thing. And when I kept hearing in the presentations, in the big proposal, that was initially, before, not the one, the big proposal you all put together, was, well, we've been paying my rent, so we can certainly, but we can pay for this whole thing. We should cover everything. No. This is a massive piece of property. The sort of structural upkeep and maintenance costs so much more than just [inaudible] costs, [inaudible] people [inaudible] Do you know how much it takes just to take out your garbage?

**OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENT**

[overhead announcement] May we have your attention please. The library will close in five minutes....

**Unidentified Speaker**

We're not idiots.

**Unidentified Speaker**

Wait. Wait. Wait.

**Nancy Levin**

We're not having a disussion.

**OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENT**

[inaudible] library doors...

**Unidentified Speaker**

We want to hear you. We can't hear you.

## **OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENT**

[inaudible] please check out all materials. Thank you.

### **Melissa Soto-Schwartz**

So when I look at the, those, what I heard, and this is what makes me also [inaudible] I looked at the proposal that Krista put in front of us. She put this package together [inaudible] Well we all paid, we paid our rent [inaudible] we were going to do this, and this, and this. Okay. We do this. Hello. He's going to switch [inaudible]. Ethically, going off of the fast record, ethically as a fiduciary, is it good for me knowing that financially they're not going to be able to make this? Is it the ethical thing for me to say, turn it over to that, sit back and watch?

### **Dana Fluellen**

I know we're gonna vote so, so I'll add quickly, and I'm not a quick spoken person, but I will try. When we are dealing with the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. campus, the arts community, etc, it creates great difficulty in me not to be able to speak from a non board member perspective, because I think what you guys do is fantastic. I have stated, too, that my youngest two children are artists, and that, Brady knows, she's seen me there at [inaudible] at least, [inaudible] participated in so many things that you guys have touched on. My oldest Sister is, is is an artist, and I just really think you're fabulous. But, I don't meant to say but. And so, sometimes when we're in this position, you guys sitting there, and we're up here at these tables. It's difficult for us not to convey but I'll speak, especially for myself, that it's not with disrespect. It's not with malintent that you stand your ground and that we're in a different position. And I. Just, you know, want to acknowledge before we move on to, you know, the part that's not as pretty as what [inaudible] is fabulous. Who could live in this community and not respect and love art slash artists, etcetera, but in this world, you know, we have an obligation to sustain library, and I think that often times we moved away from that. And one of the things I lean very heavily on, is Deb, because she's so good at what she does. Nancy's leadership and also how we want to reward the whole community by being a great heights library. We can't just reward one entity. That does not minimize who you guys are, but we have obligations to, not just taxpayers, we have obligations to your whole community, even non-tax payers. We have obligations to patrons who patron us outside of the Cleveland Heights, University Heights Library. That means they're using other library system, we respect and deal with each other on levels that if you don't do this thing here, or what they do for a living. All the people that work for this system, and these are hard working people who deserve us to give them work. We are so focused, at times, at serving this P.E.A.C.E. campus that it, in my humble opinion, deters from us doing good librarying. And so it is. I just want to acknowledge to you that you know this is not lightly taken. This is not easy, and I don't speak from that lane very much, unless you deal with me personally, and that's not sending an email to me yesterday. I'm, I live in this community. I'm available all the time, but that is not the view, viewership, which we approach this issue. So, I just want you guys to know I think you're great. Just doesn't get said enough, and it's super valuable, and I know it will [inaudible]. I don't know exactly how, and I said that in the letter to city council.

## **OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENT**

May we have your attention please. The library is now closed.

**Dana Fluellen**

It's with humility that I, Dana Fluellen, say, I don't know what was coming next, but I'm willing, you know, to get to work. But right now it's in this role, a board of trustee member,

**Vikas Turakhia**

um, I, I spoke on this a lot. I think, I think other members have said, kind of reflects my thinking. You know, my thinking. One thing that, you know, we are hearing from a lot of people is that we need an art center. We're hearing from city people, we need an art center. The arts are important, and we agree. The arts are important.

**Vikas Turakhia**

We haven't actually heard really much of a financial commitment. To me, when we have city council, we have mayors, and they're saying that the city needs an art center. The arts are important, but we're not seeing any sort of commitment to that, that feels like. Those feels like empty words, right? They're not addressing the core issue that's kind of driving all this conversation, which are the finances. So, you know, we have reached out to city council. We have spoken to city at city council meetings. We've asked for a meeting. We'd like to have one strategy

**Nancy Levin**

[inaudible] We've had meetings. [inaudible] individuals.

**Vikas Turakhia**

With individuals, right? We've had meetings with individuals. But, we haven't seen the sort of, you know, actual commitment, you know, some, any standing behind those words of we need an art center, coming from the city. We haven't seen anything other than just the words. And I think that's really important to point out.

**Nancy Levin**

Well. Tony. I think significant amount of money, it has to be enough to help shoulder the burden. And I see you saying that's not true. You talked about some amounts of money. Yes, we have.

**Vikas Turakhia**

I guess, money that adequately addresses the issues that we're talking about.

**Nancy Levin**

Right. But.

**Tony Cuda**

If...

**Vikas Turakhia**

Right? [inaudible] Yes. [inaudible]

**Tony Cuda**

[inaudible]

**Vikas Turakhia**

So, I'm, I'm making a correction.

**Tony Cuda**

Ok.

**Vikas Turakhia**

Any other comments? Um, Debbie [inaudible] roll?

**Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Carlisle?

**Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Fluellen?

**Patti Carlyle**

Yes.

**Dana Fluellen**

Yes.

**Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Iwamota?

**Annette M. Iwamoto**

Yes.

**Deborah Herrmann**

Mr. McTigue?

**Tyler McTigue**

Yes.

**Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Soto-Schwartz?

**Melissa Soto-Schwartz**

Yes.

**Deborah Herrmann**

Mr. Turakhia?

**Vikas Turakhia**

Yes.,

**Deborah Herrmann**

Ms. Turnberrez?

**Hallie Turnberrez**

Yes.

**Vikas Turakhia**

[inaudible] adjourned.