Mayor Justin M. Bibb
601 Lakeside Avenue, Room 227
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Mayor Bibb,

100 years ago Frank and Emma Cudell gave the land that is now Cudell Park to the city of Cleveland. The property's 1906 deed restrictions mandated that the donated land would remain a green space forever. Now, the City of Cleveland is trying to trade away this public park to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for construction of a new Marion-Seltzer Elementary School building. In exchange for this beloved community park, the City received the Watterson-Lake site in Ward 15 and the Harry E. Davis site in Wade Park, both of which the city hopes to offer to developers. The neighborhood surrounding Cudell Park was not consulted when making this land deal.

CMSD would like to destroy 44% of the green space in Cudell Park, replace the current building with a parking lot, and remove 40 trees including a majestic Bald Cypress and other legacy trees near the clock tower. Despite a public outcry about the loss of the park, CMSD has refused to change their plan. A neighborhood organization, Friends of Cudell Commons Park, took the case to court, was granted a restraining order in September, and is now waiting for a response from the newly assigned Judge Ashley Kilbane.

Cleveland's Climate Action Plan asserts its commitment to Clean Water and Vibrant Green Spaces. Maintaining neighborhood parks and building our tree canopy is crucial to the well-being of our communities and to the fulfillment of the city's Climate Action Plan.

There are well documented reasons why old trees must be protected. 1-Trees take in carbon dioxide, reducing the buildup of this greenhouse gas that is warming our planet. Older, larger trees store much more carbon than young trees, so the old trees at Cudell offer greater benefits than small trees planted elsewhere. 2-Trees remove particulate matter that is dangerous for our lungs. "More trees in cities, especially in lower-income neighborhoods close to highways and factories, can reduce ailments like asthma and heart disease that cause 5% of deaths worldwide." (Nature Conservancy) 3-Green spaces promote exercise leading to better mental and physical health. 4-Trees provide a home to countless species that help us maintain the diversity that we all need. 5-Trees provide shade and lower temperatures. 6-Trees filter our water, making drinking water cleaner and healthier "by removing pollutants and sediments from rainfall and then slowly releasing the water back into waterways and underground aquifers. " (Nature Conservancy)

Abandoned buildings and empty lots are found throughout the Cudell Park area. Alternate locations are available for the Marion C Seltzer School construction. Cudell residents should not have to choose between a good school for their children or a park for the community.

I urge you to create a new plan in a transparent manner and with meaningful community involvement that preserves the historic Cudell Park for this and future generations.

Respectfully,

West Shore FaCT: Faith Communities Together for a Sustainable Future

Northeast Ohio Sierra Club

Linda New

Timothy New

Fred White

Michael O'Boyle

Sheila Armstrong

Kathryn Almquist

Dorothy Faller

Deborah Kuhn

Cheryl Maude

Kathleen Russell

David Simons

Doreen Dever Papajcik

Susan Greene

Michael Melampy

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Tris Roberts

Randy Cunningham

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Grace Ciptak

Steve McPhee

Kim Mann