

**From:** Joel Goldman <jgoldman@j-dek.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 13, 2025 10:54 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Livable Neighborhoods Initiative



Hi,

I was thrilled to see that you have posted the proposed zoning amendments, specifically with regards to places of worship. Accommodations for smaller houses of worship is something we have all been anxiously awaiting.

I urge the Mayor et al to move forward finalizing the amendments as quickly as possible. This has full approval of our community and will benefit the quality of life of so many. It will be another great reason to be a proud resident of Cleveland Heights!

With appreciation,

Joel Goldman

3683 Severn Rd

Cleveland Heights OH

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Joel Goldman  
J-Dek Investments Ltd  
31100 Solon Rd  
Solon, Oh 44139  
Office: 440.248.3722  
Cell: 216.513.9693  
e mail: [JGoldman@j-dek.com](mailto:JGoldman@j-dek.com)

**From:** mayer hirschman <mhman@att.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 16, 2025 11:50 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Places of worship initiative

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To whom it may concern,  
I think this would be a great idea. I look forward to its implementation. It will enhance quality of life in Cleveland Heights.

Sincerely,  
Mayer Hirschman  
3589 Shannon rd.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** High Rock Pest Control <morris@highrockpestcontrol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 3:18 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Proposed Zoning Amendments on Places of Worship



Dear Planning Board,

I am writing as a resident of Cleveland Heights to express my strong support for the proposed zoning amendments that would make it easier to build places of worship in residential areas.

Cleveland Heights has a long-standing reputation for inclusivity and community engagement, and this amendment aligns with those values by allowing residents of diverse faiths to have accessible places to gather and worship. I believe that integrating places of worship within residential areas fosters a stronger sense of community, enhances neighborhood cohesion, and supports the spiritual and social well-being of our residents.

I appreciate the city's commitment to ensuring that Cleveland Heights remains a welcoming and accommodating place for all. I encourage you and the council to move forward with this amendment, as it will contribute positively to the character and inclusivity of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out if there is anything I can do to further support this initiative.

Best regards,

**Moshe Rokowsky**  
3621 Severn Road  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**From:** Chana Aminifard <chana.amiini@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 20, 2025 1:27 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Allowing for "Neighborhood places of worship"



Hello

I would greatly support allowing local neighborhood places of worship. This would make the synagogues much safer since now I worry about my children crossing Taylor Road. Also, I see how hard it is for my parents to walk and the need for places of worship throughout the neighborhood.

Thank you

C Hellman

**From:** karr family <abkarr@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 20, 2025 1:44 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Neighborhood Place of Worship



I wanted to endorse the proposal to allow a Neighborhood Place of Worship. It would be very helpful to not walk so far especially during the cold winter months with young children. Thanks for your help

ahron karr

**From:** Yeruchim Mann <ymann92@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:34 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Neighborhood Place of Worship Zoning Proposal



Dear Members of the Cleveland Heights Planning Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed “Neighborhood Place of Worship” zoning ordinance. This change is essential for allowing religious communities like mine to continue thriving in Cleveland Heights while improving accessibility, safety, and neighborhood cohesion.

As a member of a local congregation, I have seen firsthand how the current zoning limitations create challenges for our community. Overcrowding in existing places of worship has become a growing issue, making it difficult for families and older members to participate fully in religious life. The ability to establish places of worship closer to residential areas would ease the burden of long walks for elderly members and parents with young children, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to participate in religious services and activities.

Additionally, this change would enhance safety in our neighborhoods. Currently, large numbers of congregants must walk long distances along busy streets, particularly on the Sabbath and holidays when many may not drive. Allowing smaller, well-placed places of worship would reduce congestion in high-traffic areas and improve pedestrian safety.

Beyond these immediate benefits, this zoning adjustment would strengthen Cleveland Heights as a welcoming and vibrant community. Making it easier for faith-based groups to establish gathering spaces encourages new families to move in, reinforcing the city's reputation as an inclusive and desirable place to live.

I appreciate the hard work of the Planning and Development Department in reintroducing this proposal and urge the Planning Board and City Council to support its passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,  
Yeruchim Mann

**From:** Jake Koval <jkoval@mazelcompany.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2025 11:20 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Cleveland Heights Zoning for Neighborhood Places of Worship



Dear City Officials,

I have been a proud resident of Cleveland Heights for many years, and I deeply value the community here. However, as I've gotten older, one of my biggest challenges has been attending my place of worship due to its distance from my home.

Many seniors like myself rely on walking to get to services, but for those with mobility issues or health concerns, this can become an impossible task. Some of us are fortunate enough to have family or friends to assist us, but many do not, and this means missing out on an essential part of our lives.

The proposed amendment allowing for "Neighborhood Places of Worship" would make a significant difference for older residents. It would allow us to remain active participants in our community and continue practicing our faith without having to rely on others. I urge you to support this change and help make Cleveland Heights a city that truly values all of its residents, regardless of age or physical ability.

Sincerely,  
Jake Koval  
3708 Severn Road  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

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**From:** Laya Morgenstern <layamorgenstern@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2025 11:22 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Cleveland Heights Zoning for Neighborhood Places of Worship



Dear Council Members,

I am writing as a parent of young children to ask for your support of the proposed zoning amendment allowing for "Neighborhood Places of Worship."

For families like mine, attending religious services is not just a spiritual experience but a cornerstone of our children's education and upbringing. However, when the nearest place of worship is far away, it becomes a real challenge to attend regularly. Walking long distances with small children, especially in bad weather, is difficult and often unsafe.

This amendment would provide a practical solution, making it easier for families to participate in their religious and communal life while also improving safety on busy streets. It would also help prevent overcrowding in existing places of worship, ensuring a more comfortable experience for everyone. I appreciate your consideration and urge you to vote in favor of this meaningful change.

Sincerely,

Laya Morgenstern

3743 Bendemeer Road

Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**From:** Rachel Koval <kovalrochel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2025 11:28 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Neighborhood Places of Worship



Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed zoning amendment allowing for "Neighborhood Places of Worship." As a senior citizen and longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, I have seen firsthand how difficult it can be for older individuals and young families to safely and easily access their places of worship under the current zoning laws.

For seniors like myself, walking long distances to attend religious services is often a serious challenge. Many of us struggle with mobility issues, and during the winter months, icy sidewalks and harsh weather conditions make the journey even more dangerous. Sadly, some of my friends have had to stop attending services altogether simply because they cannot walk the necessary distance. This amendment would allow places of worship to be closer to where people live, making it much easier for seniors to remain active members of the community.

At the same time, I see how young families in our neighborhood struggle as well. Parents with small children often have to walk long distances, pushing strollers or carrying little ones in all types of weather. Having a place of worship within walking distance would make it far easier for families to participate in religious and communal life. It would also reduce the congestion on major roads like Taylor Road, improving safety for everyone—whether they are walking, driving, or cycling.

By approving this amendment, you would be making Cleveland Heights a more welcoming and accessible place for people of all ages. It would:

- **Improve accessibility** for seniors and those with mobility challenges.
- **Ease the burden on young families** who struggle with long walks to services.
- **Enhance safety** by reducing congestion and large crowds on busy streets.
- **Strengthen our community** by allowing everyone—young and old—to fully participate in religious and social life.

Cleveland Heights has always been known for its commitment to inclusivity and community well-being. This proposal is a simple yet impactful way to make sure that all residents, regardless of age or physical ability, have the opportunity to connect with their faith and their neighbors.

I urge you to support this amendment for the benefit of our entire community.

Rachel Koval  
3708 Severn Road  
Cleveland Heights

**From:** Neeland, Ian Jason <ian.Neeland@UHhospitals.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2025 1:52 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Cc:** jgoldman@j-dek.com; jessicacohen1@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Support for Houses of Worship zoning code amendments



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Dear Mayor and Council,

As a Cleveland Heights resident and taxpayer, I want to communicate my strong support for the zoning code amendments for Houses of Worship in Cleveland Heights. Houses of Worship are cornerstones of our community and provide a safe, wholesome, and inclusive space to congregate, communicate, and support each other. Cleveland Heights has always been an inclusive and diverse community and these amendments will go a long way in solidifying that reputation and providing safe spaces for worship. It is imperative that these amendments are moved forward to Council and passed in Council to allow all community members in Cleveland Heights to live their lives to the fullest and in the most productive way. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Dr. Ian Neeland  
Cleveland Heights, OH

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**From:** Chris Brace <csb.brace@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 22, 2025 11:19 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Places of Worship Zoning Changes



Hey folks!

Had a chance to review the Places of Worship draft zoning amendment; I just wanted to say that I'm very strongly in support of zoning reform, and am glad to see changes to our code to make it more flexible.

Couple of quick comments:

- Very enthusiastic about 1161.05 - MODIFICATION OF NUMBER OF REQUIRED PARKING SPACES.
  - Many places of worship near me are close to substantial shared parking lots. Glad to see this policy allows for those places to reduce their requirements in light of that.
  - Wish there was a more affirmative measure for this that didn't require conditional approval; proximity to transit stops, perhaps? Or being in a multifamily zone?
- Noted a weird oversight in 1165.07 EXTERIOR LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS.
  - The largest source of nuisance lighting I see is not excessively bright lights, but excessively harsh lights. With both CESAP and Sustainability initiatives now targeting warmer toned lights for exterior use citywide, would it make sense to include a similar requirement in 1165.07?
  - Specific issue: careless landlords often use the cheapest bulbs to buy and run, which tend to be 4000k-5000k harsh white LED bulbs. These are awful to look at, reduce property value, create excessive glare, reduce quality of sleep, etc.
  - Proposal: addition of a section 1165.07 (a) (3) reading something like: "No exterior light visible from the property line may have a rated color temperature greater than 3300 kelvin."

I'm aware that the last one isn't directly relevant to this zoning change; more of an oversight in the general zoning code that's been annoying me lately, ever since my landlord installed a harsh white light right outside my bedroom...

Regardless, it really is an increasingly common annoyance in the denser parts of the city, and I could imagine it causing some contention for a gathering place in a neighborhood district as well.

In any case, thanks for putting in the hard work to revise this code, and excited to see the results of the Livable Neighborhoods initiative as well!

Best,  
-Chris Brace

**From:** Steven Rivkin <srivkin90@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2025 1:25 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Proposed Zoning Change - Neighborhood Houses of Worship



Gentlemen;

I am writing to you regarding the proposed zoning change to allow Neighborhood Houses of Worship in Cleveland Heights.

I am urging the proposal to be adopted. In recent years, especially in the Orthodox Jewish community, there has been a shift from the larger more centralized houses of worship, towards a smaller format. As with any changes, the effects can be good or bad, however, usually they are representative of the current needs of a particular community. In this case, it will potentially result in better traffic safety, as there will be less pedestrians on a day of worship, a more attractive community, and more convenience for all residents, regardless of denomination.

Sincerely,

Steven Rivkin  
3736 Shannon  
Cleveland Heights

**From:** Joseph DeWitt-Foy <joedewittfoy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2025 7:12 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Livable Neighborhoods (How We Pray) Feedback



Hello,

I'm writing to provide feedback on the Livable Neighborhoods proposed zoning changes. Thank you for the work you're doing to update our zoning code and related regulations.

While I feel these changes are well intentioned and moving in the right direction, the process outlined feels overly complicated and restrictive for what would largely be gatherings of individuals in homes, something that happens unregulated in homes all over Cleveland Heights on a daily basis. In particular, mandating a Parking Management Plan feels unnecessary and counterproductive. If the intention is to allow flexible spaces in various neighborhoods for people to gather in prayer, we should not assume every individual will travel to these locations in a car, especially given driving restrictions specifically associated with days of congregation. Further, when people travel by car in Cleveland Heights they are generally allowed to park their cars on city streets, barring specific times and locations. Individual property owners have no ownership of the public right of way in front of their property, and as such have no legitimate objection to someone else using that space. Parking mandates reinforce auto-dependency and we should be moving away from that practice as Cleveland Heights seeks to be more welcoming to diverse modes of transportation, this initiative seems like a perfect place to start. My suggestion is to remove the requirement for developing and seeking approval for a Parking Management Plan, and just let people figure out how they're going to move about the city on their own. The City does not need to be in the business of micromanaging these details.

Thank you,  
Joe DeWitt-Foy

**From:** Lauren Smith <lconochan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2025 9:13 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Zoning Changes for small places of worship

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While I appreciate the sentiment behind the change, it seems as though this will become a loophole for religious groups to claim a residence and cease paying taxes on the basis of being a religious organization.

I think that this becomes a Pandora's box. When opened, I am sure there will be people/organizations trying to create loopholes to avoid paying taxes. I would hate for the city to lose out on tax dollars because of this zoning change.

Lauren Smith

**From:** Ag G <ageretz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2025 3:02 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for the "Neighborhood Place of Worship" Initiative



Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the "Neighborhood Place of Worship" proposal, which I understand is part of the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative. While I believe this change will benefit all residents of Cleveland Heights, I would like to specifically highlight the positive impact it would have on the Orthodox Jewish community.

As our Orthodox community has expanded primarily eastward from Taylor Road, many of our older, established synagogues are now located on the outskirts of our neighborhood, making them less accessible to many of our families. Although I am a member of Kahal Yereim on Taylor Rd, it is clear that as our community continues to grow, we must adapt our laws to meet the changing needs of the residents. The influx of new families has resulted in overcrowded synagogues, particularly on Saturdays. Special occasions, such as holidays or bar mitzvahs, often make it difficult to find seating, forcing attendees to stand in the aisles.

Additionally, as you may be aware, Orthodox Jews are prohibited from operating motor vehicles on the Sabbath. This restriction makes it increasingly impractical for our elderly citizens to travel to Taylor Road, and we want to ensure they are able to fully participate in our religious services. The same applies to families with young children who may not be able to walk such a long distance. Furthermore, as our teenagers begin to participate in prayer services, it would be far safer for them to attend a service within our neighborhood rather than walking alone on Taylor Road after dark.

By supporting the "Neighborhood Place of Worship," the City Council can help ensure that all members of our community, regardless of age or mobility, can continue to practice their faith and remain an active part of our vibrant neighborhood.

Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,  
Aryeh Geretz  
3673 Severn Rd  
[ageretz@gmail.com](mailto:ageretz@gmail.com)

**From:** Elliot Graiser <egrainer@noienhancements.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2025 3:50 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** support of Neighborhood Place of Worship



To whom it may concern,  
I would like to convey my support for the proposed legislation to allow for neighborhood places of worship. This will help eliminate overcrowding in the existing places of worship and improve overall safety of our residents by removing overcrowded conditions from the existing houses of worship on S. Taylor Rd, which is a busy traffic street. It will allow for families like mine to have our children attend services without having to worry about busy streets. This legislation also enables older community members, who may have difficulty walking, better access to places of worship, eliminating longer walking distances to existing places of worship. Please understand that our The entire initiative will help make Cleveland Heights a more attractive place for outsiders to move in, and attract the kind of residents we are looking for, who seek peaceful, quiet streets where our children and elderly can walk safely to pray.

Thank you,

Elliot Graiser  
3626 Bendemeer Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118



**Elliot Graiser**  
General Manager  
o (216) 800-6664 ext. 101  
d (216) 298-0824  
c (216) 973-7833  
[NOIEnhancements.com](http://NOIEnhancements.com)

**From:** hill froggy <hillely58@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2025 9:35 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Neighborhood initiative

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To whom it may concern:

It was brought to my attention the recent initiative to allow variances for neighborhood places of worship. I am a resident of Cleveland heights of close to 2 decades and can sincerely affirm that this is a truly beneficial undertaking. The benefit the constituents will experience would be beyond optimal. We have a beautiful harmonious and peaceful community that just looks to go about their business unhindered and without fanfare. Please grant us our peaceful needs and desires, and allow us to just go about our religious and faithful lives.

**From:** Rabbi Resnick <rabbiyresnick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 25, 2025 4:09 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Neighborhood Place of Worship



To whom this email concerns,

I sent this email to you emploring that you strongly consider zoning our neighborhood place of Worship. The fact that there is a different place of Worship away from the busy Taylor Rd where the bulk of the other places of Worship are makes it safer for my younger children to attend the services.

In addition, since there are more places of Worship, there will not be any safety concerns about overcrowding in the already full places of Worship.

The fact that there is a different place of Worship which is much safer and closer to my house allows lots more people to walk to services on the weekends. This is especially true for the older people in the community who require assistance to attend services. Since it is closer to their residence it will pose much less of a difficulty for them to attend services as well.

Thank you in advance for considering zoning a neighborhood place of Worship!

Joseph Resnick  
732 278 4877

**From:** Shua Snitzer <yshnitz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 25, 2025 4:17 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Neighborhood Place of Worship



To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you regarding the proposal of "Neighborhood Place of Worship" to be added to the city's zoning code.

I believe this is very important for the city as it will help the city of Cleveland Hts grow for a number of reasons. By allowing for new places of worship to open up:

1. It will eliminate overcrowding in the existing places of worship by allowing for new places to open up.
2. It will eliminate longer walking distances to existing places of worship on the Sabbath and holidays when we don't drive. This helps our older and handicapped community members who have difficulty walking.
3. It will make it easier to bring younger children to religious prayers and activities.
4. It will improve safety (less crowds on Sabbath and holidays on busy streets such as Taylor Road).
5. It will make Cleveland Heights more attractive to outsiders to move in.

Thank you,  
Joshua Snitzer

**From:** Ariella Vale <ariellavale@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2025 7:55 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Neighborhood Place of Worship



To Whom it May Concern,  
It has come to our attention that on April 7th, Neighborhood Places of Worship will be discussed again. We are thrilled to hear this as we've been hoping for a long time for Synagogues in the neighborhood to be allowed to expand to accommodate the quickly growing Jewish community here in Cleveland Heights. Many newcomers are unable to procure a seat due to the large crowds. There is also a need for more Synagogues further up towards Staunton from as many families with children are moving to that area.

Thank you for your consideration!

**From:** irwin.richman@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2025 9:52 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Neighborhood Places of Worship



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To: Cleveland Heights City Council  
Re: Neighborhood Places of Worship

My family and I would like to express our support for the proposed addition of Neighborhood Places of Worship in the city. In my twenty-five years' residency, I have enjoyed seeing the growing strength of our special Cleveland Heights neighborhood. It is a benefit to the community as a whole.

Moving ahead with the Neighborhood Places of Worship will allow this organic growth to continue, making the city of Cleveland Heights increasingly viable and desirable as a place to live and work.

We urge you to vote the Neighborhood Places of Worship regulations into existence.

Sincerely yours,  
Sally Henning, Esq.  
Irwin Richman  
And Family

**From:** Sarah Nocar <[sarah.nocar@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nocar@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2025 11:02 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Re: Questions about the proposed zoning changes



Which of the steps are you on now? How are you taking public comment? How have you solicited it? How long will the public have to comment on it?

On Wed, Mar 26, 2025, 15:03 Planning Department <[planning@clevelandheights.gov](mailto:planning@clevelandheights.gov)> wrote:

Yes – and looking for input.

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**From:** Sarah Nocar <[sarah.nocar@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nocar@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2025 1:20 PM  
**To:** Planning Department <[planning@clevelandheights.gov](mailto:planning@clevelandheights.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Questions about the proposed zoning changes

Okay, so it's currently being proposed to the community?

On Wed, Mar 26, 2025, 13:10 Planning Department <[planning@clevelandheights.gov](mailto:planning@clevelandheights.gov)> wrote:

Ms. Nocar,

The Livable Neighborhoods Initiative is an active one by the City of Cleveland Heights. Nothing has been adopted. The first phase of it is currently out for informal review by the community, with the formal Council approval process potentially starting on April 7<sup>th</sup>. That process has a number of steps and takes a couple of months before consideration of adoption.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.clevelandheights.gov/1514/Zoning-Amendments>



**Planning Department**

City of Cleveland Heights  
40 Severance Circle  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
[planning@clevelandheights.gov](mailto:planning@clevelandheights.gov)  
[www.ClevelandHeights.gov](http://www.ClevelandHeights.gov)



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**From:** Sarah Nocar <[sarah.nocar@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nocar@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 25, 2025 2:43 PM  
**To:** Planning Department <[planning@clevelandheights.gov](mailto:planning@clevelandheights.gov)>  
**Subject:** Questions about the proposed zoning changes

Is the "Livable Neighborhoods Initiative" already adopted? When was this adopted? How and by who?

Or is that what is being proposed?

--  
Sarah L. Nocar  
[sarah.nocar@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nocar@gmail.com)  
614.893.4943

**From:** B. Seligman <seligman120@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2025 11:45 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** neighborhood place of worship proposal



Hi,

My name is Ben Seligman and I'm a CPA who lives in Cleveland Heights. I am contacting you regarding the neighborhood place of worship proposal. For religious purposes, it is very important that I live close to my synagogue, and currently my synagogue is at capacity and needs a small expansion to serve its congregants. I moved here two years ago, and the local synagogues were one of the major factors and my ability to move here. I believe people in my situation will be discouraged from moving here if the synagogues are not close to their homes and comfortable to worship in, without overcrowding.

Thank you for your consideration and have a wonderful day.

Ben Seligman

**From:** Chana Chaya Gardner <ccgeretz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2025 1:54 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Neighborhood Place of Worship Proposal



Dear Planning & Development Team,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the proposed "Neighborhood Place of Worship" zoning change. As a resident of Cleveland Heights, I see firsthand how much this would benefit our community.

Right now, many of us—including families with young kids and elderly members—have to walk long distances to get to a place of worship. This can be especially difficult in bad weather or for those with mobility challenges. Allowing smaller, neighborhood-based places of worship would make it so much easier for people to attend services without struggling to get there.

Beyond that, Cleveland Heights is known for being welcoming and diverse. Updating the zoning to allow for neighborhood places of worship would make our city even more attractive to new families looking to move in and be part of a strong, thriving community.

I really appreciate all the work that's gone into getting this proposal back in front of the City Council, and I hope to see it pass. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Best,  
Chana Gardner  
Harvey Rd, Cleveland Heights resident

**From:** S Kimmel <stacikimmel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 28, 2025 11:12 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Please approve the Neighborhood Place of Worship zoning change



Dear City Council members:

We recently moved to Cleveland Heights 2 ½ years ago and one of the main draws which brought us to this community was the tolerant religious atmosphere and community-centered lifestyle.

One downside we've noticed, however, is the lack of worship options in the interior of the community. Having a synagogue in the interior of the community would specifically benefit families who live further away from Taylor Road. For instance, there are many families with little kids who are unable to walk long distances, and these families are prevented from attending religious services simply due to distance. Also, older or disabled individuals who physically can't walk long distances are effectively stuck at home with no options during religious holidays.

Approving the Neighborhood Place of Worship will solve these problems. It will also affirm Cleveland Heights's position as a city which recognizes and understands the specific and unique needs of religious families.

More importantly, approving the Neighborhood Place of Worship will have a ***real and immediate positive impact*** on community members young and old by allowing them to have a place of worship closer to their own home.

**Please approve the Neighborhood Place of Worship.**

It brings a needed benefit to our community.

Sincerely,  
Staci Kimmel

**From:** Meir Auslander <auslanderm@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 31, 2025 6:10 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Neighborhood Place of Worship (3682 Shannon Road)



To Whom it may concern

This is to **support** the upcoming proposal to make **3682 Shannon Road**, Ohel Sarah an official Neighborhood Place of Worship: This change would be a wonderful Service to the Cleveland Heights Jewish community. Ohel Sara is already an invaluable asset to the community serving the worship and torah scholarship services needs of all. With its superb leadership and top-notch programming staff, this shul serves the needs of the community around the clock and throughout the entire year. With the growing size of the community it serves to relieve overcrowding in the Taylor-road shuls and also makes it easier for those living on the later blocks of the neighborhood to bring their younger children for prayers and activities on days that we don't drive. In addition, it provides a unique open environment for anyone who wants to benefit via investing their time at a wonderful jewish religious institution.

There is no doubt that allowing Ohel Sarah to grow to its full potential will make Cleveland Heights a more attractive place to live and raise a Religious Jewish family. Please pass the legislation to make **Ohel Sarah, 3682 Shannon Road**, an official **Neighborhood Place of Worship**.

Sincerely,  
Meyer Auslander

**From:** rivka leah hirschfeld <rlhirschfeld613@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 10:01 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** the new shul



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its rivka leah hirschfeld i am emailing you about letting my father shul moving to new closer place . i will be much easier for my parents to walk to .  
. and my nieces and nephews can walk to shul them self when they come , it will be much better for them . i wont have to walk so far in the winter .

**From:** Rabbi Ariel Klein <kleina@hac1.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 2, 2025 2:24 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Neighborhood Places of Worship Zoning



Ariel & Shalva Klein  
3563 Bendemeer Rd Cleveland Hts, OH,44118

[kleina@hac1.org](mailto:kleina@hac1.org)

April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025

Cleveland City Planning Commission  
City of Cleveland

Dear City Planning Commission,

We are writing to express our deep support for the proposed zoning amendment that would allow places of worship to be established within residential neighborhoods. This change is something our community truly needs.

For many of us, our places of worship are more than just buildings. They are centers of faith, connection, and stability. They are places where we come together not only to pray but to support one another, celebrate together, and find comfort in difficult times. Right now, many of these places are located along busy roads, making them less accessible and creating challenges for families with young children, older individuals, and those who cannot drive. Having places of worship within our neighborhoods would make it easier and safer for people to participate fully in their faith without unnecessary obstacles.

This change would also strengthen the fabric of our community. When a place of worship is close to home, it becomes a natural part of daily life. It fosters a sense of belonging and makes it easier for neighbors to come together in meaningful ways. It also encourages a culture of warmth and openness, where faith is not something distant but something woven into the heart of where we live.

We hope you will consider the impact that this proposal will have on so many individuals and families in our community. Approving this change would not only address logistical concerns but would help ensure that places of worship remain accessible, welcoming, and truly part of the community they serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ariel & Shalva Klein

(216) 789-6458

**From:** raphael solomon <raphael.chanie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 5:10 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Houses of Worship



It has come to my attention that there is a proposed amendment for houses of worship to be allowed to be located in single family neighborhoods.

I am an educator, and I fully endorse this proposal. The fact that children will be able to walk safely to places of study, teens having a productive outlet and listening ear and bringing a vibrancy to the community, gives it my full support.

Wishing you the very best,  
Sincerely,  
Raphael Solomon  
3562 Bainbridge Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
440-668-8276

**From:** Moshe Schubert <moishelaschubert@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 5:14 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Houses of Worship Zoning Amendments



I would like to encourage the Mayor and the City to forward the zoning amendments which allow for residential houses of worship to the City Council for approval.  
moshe schubert

**From:** Deena Linden <deenalinden@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 6:15 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Zoning for synagogues



Hi thanks for considering the amendments of the Cleveland heights zoning laws. Please allow this to go through to enable the continuity of religious growth in our neighborhood.

All the best!  
Deena Linden

**From:** Michael Bending <michael.a.bending@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 6:18 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Comment on the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative



To whom it may concern

I just wanted to express my appreciation and show support for the Livable Neighborhood Initiative.

Being a former streetcar suburb, Cleveland Heights has a deep history of dense walkable urbanism; the kind of history that you can see in the way our city has been built. While we are not as dense as we used to be, the bones are there and we have a somewhat unique opportunity to increase the urban density of our city without deeply disrupting the character of communities. The types of suggestions in the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative have the opportunity to do just that. I feel like if I were to go over all the benefits this type of change to our zoning would get us that I'd be preaching to the choir; instead I'll just emphasize the types of things this plan might have when it has more details:

1.) More by right zoning; less discretionary zoning.

Discretionary zoning can make development based on "who you know" and can put hurdles in place that make it much more difficult to build things in our city compared to 'by right' zoning

2.) Lowering or even eliminating parking minimums.

Cleveland Heights is an over parking-lotted city. We use so much space for parking. Designing off street parking for peak parking usage is bad land use. It'll be difficult to transform zoning in the city if we focus too much on having enough parking. Some parking plans and other steps for parking may be necessary; but overall let's not sacrifice our neighborhoods on the altar of plentiful parking.

Thank you guys so much for your time and I look forward to seeing how the initiative develops!

--Michael Bending

**From:** Yitzchok goldsmith <yitzchokgoldsmith8@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 6:21 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Updated zoning code for Houses of Worship



Hi. As a resident of Cleveland Heights for over 5 years now, I wanted to share my excitement for the city working on updating the zoning codes in our neighborhood to allow for houses of worship! Thank you for all you are doing and looking forward to good tidings!

All the best,  
Yitzchok Goldsmith

**From:** Moshe Reznik <mreznik613@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 6:50 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Houses of Worship Zoning Amendments



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hi just wanted to let you know that my wife and i are both pro these changes and we ask that you do what you can to get it approved.  
Thank you

**From:** S. Hellman <selmahellman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 7:35 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Zoning to allow Residential Houses of Worship



I have been a resident of Cleveland Heights for over forty years. Remarkably, we have lived in the same home and enjoyed wonderful neighbors of all ethnicities. We are enriched by the diversity and conveniences of the neighborhood. It is important for us to be able to attend religious services on a regular basis. We believe that a community of faith is stable and committed to its neighborhood, unlikely to move to greener pastures but rather invest in local shops and local institutions thus enriching the neighborhood for everybody. As we age, my husband finds it hard to walk to the established synagogues on Taylor Road. We are appreciative of the small synagogues closer to our home; this is one of the reasons we do not want to move from the neighborhood.

Please allow zoning for residential houses of worship so we can continue to live in the Cleveland Heights that we love.  
Thank you.

--

Selma Hellman

**From:** Leebby Manies <tagc36@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 8:22 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Houses of Worship



I moved to Cleve. Hts when I was 8 years old and have always loved this location. I appreciate the safety and security that Cleve Hts has to offer. Where I live there is very little crime and neighbors are nice and friendly to each other. There is a strong feeling of unity. I am so happy that now as I am getting older, younger growing families are moving in. This is what gives the community stability. To ensure that this trend continues to thrive we must make sure that their needs are fulfilled. Multiple houses of worship on various streets is one way to be sure that this will continue. People want to have these houses near where they live and not have to walk down to Taylor. Again, as I am getting on in years I am so appreciative that I have a synagogue right at my corner. I still remember the 15 minute trek to pray every Saturday on those frigid below zero days. Please make sure this doesn't happen to the younger generation. People who go to pray are almost always well rounded, pro-family, safe and crime-free people. People that YOU want in Cleveland Heights. I am sure that you will make a wise decision and have the people's best interest in mind.

At this time we also want to thank Eric Zamft, the city's planning and development director for taking the time and energy to fulfill the neighborhood needs.

Baruch Chaim and Leebby Manies

**From:** Baruch Kleinman <bkleinm1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 9:24 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Support for Livable Neighborhoods Initiative and Ordinance No. 031-2024



I'm writing to congratulate Mr. Eric Zamft and the Planning and Development department for championing this effort and bringing this Ordinance forward to the City Council..

This initiative is long overdue and it is my belief that these changes will only benefit Cleveland Heights. This will help Cleveland Hts. thrive and become an even more attractive community for new residents. The proposed amendments to code will not only serve as guidelines for the prospective Houses of Worship, but will provide assurance to neighboring residents that these Houses of Worship will not impede on their privacy and properties. This initiative will also serve as a model for other cities that have similar challenges with rapidly growing communities.

I've been a resident of the Cleveland Hts Jewish community for almost 60 yrs. My childhood home was on Beechwood near Compton. As a student of the Hebrew Academy I would almost always walk to school and knew every sidewalk crack on Altamont, Desota and Berkeley. I went away for high school and college but returned shortly after marriage. I purchased my own home in 1990 on upper Bendemeer where my wife and I raised our family and still live today. We are proud to have married children that also own their own homes in Cleveland Hts. The recent influx of new young families can be somewhat overwhelming but at the same time very much welcomed. There is definitely a need for more Houses of worship to serve our neighborhoods.

I urge the city council to adopt this amendment and act swiftly and put it into law.

Thank You,

--  
Baruch Kleinman

**From:** Rebecca Fertel <rivky@fertelarch.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 9:47 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Places of Worship - Zoning Amendment



I am writing to express my support for the proposed zoning amendment that would establish neighborhood places of worship as a distinct category in the zoning code.

In my community along Taylor Road, between Washington and Euclid Heights Boulevards, several small congregations of 10-50 individuals gather for prayer. These groups seek to operate safely and responsibly. However, the current zoning code lacks a specific classification for such gatherings; its requirements are designed for larger congregations with more substantial budgets. Consequently, these smaller groups often operate out of private homes, which may not be suitably designed for this purpose and could inadvertently compromise the health, safety, and welfare of their occupants. Moreover, regulating prayer groups in private homes presents significant enforcement challenges.

As an architect and a member of the Taylor Road community, I believe the proposed zoning amendment would benefit both small congregations and the broader community. It establishes a framework for a new and necessary building type that currently does not exist within the city.

I urge the Council to approve the proposed zoning amendments. I commend the city's Planning and Community Development Department for their vision in pursuing this important change.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca

Rebecca Fertel, Architect, LEED AP BD+C  
3429 Blanche Avenue  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
mobile: [445 352-0086](tel:4453520086)  
email: [rivky@fertelarch.com](mailto:rivky@fertelarch.com)



**From:** YB Kessin <ybkessin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 11:22 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Houses of worship zoning amendments



To whom it may concern,  
I have heard, and am very excited about, the proposed zoning amendments to allow residential houses of worship. I believe it will prove to be a boon to our cities economy and societal infrastructure as a whole.  
With high regard,  
Yehuda Kessin

**From:** Eliyahu Kirstein <elikirstein@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 4, 2025 10:20 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Houses of Worship



To Whom it may concern,

I heard about the amendments being worked on regarding Houses of Worship, and I just wanted to mention how much I appreciate all the work that is being put in.

Thank you very much,  
Eli Kirstein

**From:** marcie <marciejbone@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 4, 2025 11:08 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** House of Worship



These are some of the issues that the planning commission should take into account.

1. Safety

Corners are for picking up and dropping off school children. Cars are parked along the main street and counter streets with no regard for the children.

2. Privacy to neighboring houses

3. Parking

Parking is a major issue. There is no parking for the neighbors as they are used most of the day with comings and goings.

Cars don't properly stop at signs because they can't see oncoming traffic.

There's not enough room on the street when cars are parked so buses, trucks and cars drive on tree lawns.

Other questions.

How are Houses of Worship going to be monitored?

Are Houses of Worship going to be able to level 2 or 3 houses to make a large structure.

These are some of the concerns that I can think of.

Sincerely,  
Marcie J.

**From:** irwin@erietechgroup.com  
**Sent:** Friday, April 4, 2025 12:15 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** In support of houses of worship in Cleveland Heights



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Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to you in support of allowing houses of worship to be located in our community.

They will only enhance, strengthen and perpetuate loyal segments of Cleveland Height's population.

Regardless of their affiliation, a community house of worship will attract the kind of citizens any community should be happy to have.

Sincerely yours,

Irwin Richman  
Erie Tech Group, LLC  
1755 Janette Ave.  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**From:** karr family <abkarr@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 4, 2025 1:19 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** New zoning



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We would find the new zoning rules allowing a house of worship to be very helpful. Continue with your good work

Thanks  
Bayla karr

**From:** Shalom Karr <shalomkarr@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 4, 2025 6:16 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Fwd: Cleveland Heights City News—Friday, April 4, 2025 Supporting Community Growth: Zoning Amendments for Houses of Worship



Dear Honorable Members of the Cleveland Heights Government,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my support for the proposed zoning amendments that would allow houses of worship in single-family neighborhoods in Cleveland Heights. The Planning Commission, led by Mrs. Chavi Cohen and Mr. Eleizer (Eric) Zamft, has been instrumental in modernizing our zoning code since 2022. These amendments are part of the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, which aims to enhance the livability of our neighborhoods by addressing modern community needs.

Currently, Cleveland Heights' Zoning Code does not permit houses of worship in single-family neighborhoods. However, the proposed changes will create new zoning requirements for residential places of worship, promoting inclusivity and diversity. These amendments were finalized in December 2023 and have been awaited for over a year and a half. They are now available for public review and are set to be considered by City Council on April 7th.

The amendments outline detailed regulations for neighborhood places of worship, such as a maximum floor area of 8,000 square feet and specific conditions for social functions held at these establishments. These regulations ensure that such facilities fit harmoniously into residential areas while adhering to zoning standards.

By updating our zoning regulations, we can align with modern religious practices, align with federal laws like RLUIPA, and prevent costly litigation experienced by neighboring cities.

The proposed amendments will provide a framework for small places of worship to thrive in single-family neighborhoods, ensuring they blend architecturally and do not cause undue disturbances. This aligns with similar efforts in other cities, such as Beachwood's recent zoning code updates, which permitted home-based places of worship.

I believe these changes are crucial for fostering diversity and inclusivity. They will allow for the construction of new synagogues and the legalization of existing ones, provided they meet certain standards. This will not only enrich our community culturally but also ensure safer operations for these institutions.

I encourage you to support these amendments at the April 7th City Council meeting. After the Planning Commission approves them, they will return to the Council for a public hearing and final approval.

Please approve Ordinance No. 245-2024  
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,  
Sholom Karr  
Email: ShalomKarr@Gmail.com  
Phone: (216) 451-6698

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**From:**  
City of Cleveland Heights <press@clevelandheights.gov>

**Sent:** April 4, 2025 5:35:29 PM EDT  
**To:**  
shalomkarr@gmail.com

**Subject:**  
Cleveland Heights City News—Friday, April 4, 2025

# The City of Cleveland Heights CITY NEWS

*Friday, April 4, 2025*



**From:** Moshe Dovek <dovekmoshe@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 6, 2025 10:02 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Zoning Amendments



The proposed amendment to allow residential Synagogues in Cleveland Heights will be a tremendous factor in generating growth and family life in Cleveland Heights. We ask you to seriously consider the obvious benefits this will have on the Cleveland Heights community.

**From:** Baruch Fertel <bfertelmd@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 6, 2025 2:29 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** House of worship zoning amendments

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To whom it may concern

I strongly support these proposed amendments. These are common sense laws that will maintain public safety and still respect the right to worship.

Council is to be commended for encouraging lawful behavior and making it easy to do the right thing

Baruch S. Fertel, MD MPA

## **Planning Department**

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**From:** Sara Berger <bergerqueen0@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 12:06 AM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** "Neighborhood Place of Worship"  
**Attachments:** DirshuLetterhead.doc



Please see the attached letter regarding today's proposal. Thank you  
Moshe Y. Berger

# KOLLEL DIRSHU INTERNATIONAL

Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Berger  
*Director*

## CLEVELAND BRANCH

Rabbi Yitzchok Margareten  
*Maggid Shiur*

April 4,2025

To the esteemed members of City Council,

It has come to my attention that a proposal is being presented regarding “neighborhood places of worship”. I strongly feel that this issue will greatly enhance our growing neighborhood. Neighborhood places of worship would enable young families and the elderly to easily access prayer services, since within the Orthodox Jewish faith, one does not drive on the Sabbath or holidays. Having places of worship located within the neighborhood would be a great benefit to both those segments of the community. In addition, the establishment of such houses of worship would be a positive reflection on the commitment of Cleveland Heights to accommodate all faiths, and the continued focus on family values. Our neighborhood is attracting numerous young families, and many are investing in their homes, so that this area has become one of “prime real estate” and a first-choice option for families looking to relocate. My own daughter moved here from Detroit with a large family; both she and her husband are employed environment. Please give this proposal due thought, and see fit to pass it in a timely manner. There are many who look forward to the opportunity to make a long-term commitment to Cleveland Heights, and this proposal will help make that happen.

Sincerely yours,

Moshe Y. Berger

*Director Kollel Dirshu – Cleveland Heights Branch*

*An international program for the advancement of Torah study*

## Planning Department

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**From:** Isabel Davis <idavis@petassure.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 8, 2025 2:59 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Houses of worship location



To whom it may concern:

My husband and I are both senior citizens. It is very difficult for us to walk from the third block of Severn (where we live) to Taylor Road, where our synagogue is.

We very much encourage the planning board to vote in favor of having houses of worship closer to where people live, rather than just on the main streets.

Thank you.

Isabel Davis  
3755 Severn Road  
Cleveland Heights OH 44118

## Eric Zamft

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**From:** Malia Lewis <malia\_lewis@chuh.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 26, 2025 6:15 PM  
**To:** Eric Zamft  
**Cc:** Mayor Kahlil Seren; Elizabeth Kirby  
**Subject:** Places of Worship zoning changes



Dear Mr Zamft,

I am writing about the proposed zoning changes to allow neighborhood places of worship.

As a Jew, I understand the need for being able to walk to shul on Shabbat. As a public official, I understand the need to implement codes and regulations which keep all our community members safe.

Therefore I want to emphasise the importance of making sure that life safety codes are implemented and enforced when altering an existing house or building a new synagogue from scratch.

Residential floors are typically engineered to accommodate a static load of 50 pounds per square foot, which is sufficient for furniture, people living in a house, and a great many books in bookcases (usually along walls where bending load is less of an issue). That load rating is not strong enough for a great many worshippers close together in the middle of a room. Please ensure that neighborhood places of worship are built to withstand much larger static and dynamic loads. Houses are full of potential hazards for crowds: narrow doorways which cannot fit a stretcher, single steep staircases to basements and attics, doors which open from hallways into main rooms, dormer windows which do not allow a body to climb out. Please make sure the neighborhood places of worship are sprinklered, have multiple means of egress, doors with crash bars which open out from a potentially crowded room, and all the usual safety measures for a public use building.

Parking would not be an issue on Friday night and Saturday, but what about during the work week? Too many cars parked along the street for early morning minyan could impede regular traffic, including school buses picking up children. When bus drivers cannot pull close to the sidewalk, children are forced to walk into the street to board the bus. So there need to be parking plans for neighborhood places of worship which take into account the different parking needs of different days of the week.

My last concern, as a school board member, is around real estate taxes. If a rabbi's house is enlarged to serve as a shul, will taxes still be assessed on the living quarters? Or will the whole property become tax-exempt? During a time when public education is under attack both at the state and the federal level, I want to implore you not to remove critical income from the local schools. The more properties pay real estate taxes, the lighter the financial load for everyone in the community.

Thank you for taking these thoughts into consideration. I have copied Mayor Seren and Superintendent Kirby above, that they may be aware of my concerns.

Sincerely,  
Malia Lewis

--

Malia Lewis

[malia\\_lewis@chuh.org](mailto:malia_lewis@chuh.org) (**not** m\_lewis)

CH-UH Board of Education

**Mission:** Our schools provide a challenging and engaging education to prepare all our students to become responsible citizens and succeed in college and career.

**Vision:** The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Schools educate students by embracing diversity, ensuring equitable experiences and fostering outstanding teaching and learning to develop academically prepared critical thinkers who contribute positively and compete successfully in the world.



## **Planning Department**

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**From:** Susan Jhirad <sjhirad@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 26, 2025 8:41 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Clergy living in proposed Neighborhood Houses of worship

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Can you clarify if will be prohibited for clergy to live in a neighborhood house of worship with the proposed amendment changes? It is not specifically addressed in the amendment. My understanding if not addressed it is prohibited. Can you clarify if my understand is correct?

Thanks,  
Susan

## Planning Department

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**From:** Chris and Bonnie Persson <perscb@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 28, 2025 12:40 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Zoning change for residential house of worship



My husband and I were at the public meeting last night. Until we received the email from the City on Friday 5/23, and an email from Tony Cuda, we had no idea that this was being proposed at all. While this may have been communicated via the City's website, we doubt very much that many residents even look at that unless they need to contact a certain department. This was never in the Sun News or The Heights Observer. In our opinion, a notification should have been sent to all Cleveland Heights residents to notify them of what was being proposed. One should definitely go out now before it is voted on in June.

You mentioned the cost of \$0.47/person in increase property taxes but did not specify if this was per day, week, month or year. Nor did you specify if this was also per new residential houses of worship that crop up. Cleveland Heights property taxes are very high now and residents do not need to be burdened further with something like this.

You asked that I send you info on the Church I spoke about at last night's meeting. It is on the corner of Hampshire Road and Superior. You can't miss it. It is a typical church with a steeple. It is a very old church building with minimal parking, hence the street parking on Hampshire, Radnor and Poyer.

We are opposed to this proposal and foresee many problems for the City if this should pass with parking, noise and strangers being in their neighborhoods.

Sincerely,  
Bonita and Chris Persson

**From:** Jaime Hosticka, MEd LPCC <therapist@lakeandsky.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 28, 2025 1:39 PM  
**Subject:** Public Meeting, 5/27/2025



Dear Councilpersons and others,

My name is James Hosticka. I attended last night's meeting about zoning changes to accommodate religious congregations in homes.

I won't iterate the all of points I made last night. I still stand by the picture I painted. Unless you want me to. Then I will. You don't.

At the same time, I did hear some sincere concerns from neighbors who are for this change. I have just a couple things to say. I really appreciate your listening.

**-1-**

As it stands now, I think the proposed changes are so dreadfully non-specific as to give no assurance to opponents of the measure that we will have any recourse or actionable options. Can we buckle that down? I don't want to get into a list of all the delightful specifications you do have to make this work. Instead just do the opposite. I would encourage you to take an honest look at the conditions you don't have or the holes that are there. Don't look at this like somebody who is acting in good faith. Look at it with a creative mind. Instead of looking at how this benefits sincere worshipers and selling that, look at it like a hustler and look for all the ways you could bend it. Look at it like somebody who is incompetent or who loses interest, and look at all the ways they could skate by. Just look. if you're going to well, sledding is fun, please look with caution and put chains in the tires before you drive into the snow. And please, if you send me an email, don't have reassurances. We heard enough sales last night.

**-2-**

One thing I'd like to address is how all of this came about. I think myself and my neighbors are feeling a bit distressed at the ex post facto creation of a rule to accommodate anybody who has been thus far breaking it. Folks have said to me "Well, it's happening. What are we supposed to do?" My answer is, you give citations and fines. That's what you do with violations. It sets a really bad tone to allow violations of clearly written rules to pass notwithstanding any belief system.

At the moment, the narrative of this approach reads with so much latitude that constituents are to look in the cracks for suspicion whether it's merited or not.

If a person in a Pinto is consistently going 45 in a 25 mph zone, we don't let it slide until we finally write an exception allowing Pintos to go 45 mph. What we should have been doing is giving the Pinto a ticket until we actually found the solution. What we should have been doing is treating all of these instances as violations. What we should have been doing is making the Pinto driver make the case to the community he needs a change. And then we re-wrote the rules, and then we say "Great. Now go 45 in a 25."

But the current order of events creates a narrative that has some folks around me people confused and feeling that there are other-thans in the community.

Clean-burning governance in CH has been a huge problem in the past few years. And when there is already anger about poor governance, it's not good the time to give the impression that governance is not just ineffective but also pliable.

I think it would do a lot of good to just take a moment or two to step out and publicly speak to that point.

—3—

After listening to some of the speakers, I did feel some softening about my own stance. Rabbi Aharon Lebovics, in his simple and clarifying sincerity, spoke to my sensitivity practicality more than anybody else did. So, this morning I had my own idea. I'm sure it's loaded with problems, but perhaps just listen to the spirit of it and see where it takes you.

I think it might be useful if neighbor input were codified in a very specific way—not "considered" but codified. With some clear benchmarks it may feel less like this is the subjective decision of a small group, but the decision of the community itself. Also, keep in mind, that group itself has baked-in problems. What happens one day when silent antisemites, islamophobes, or Christian Nationalists are sitting on the commission? Because that's going to happen.

So, here's my perhaps extreme but effective idea:

Assume every house has 8 adjacent properties (including property across the street/s). Maybe give those eight most immediate properties an aggregate veto power. A religious entity had to make their case in the neighborhood at large, but also specifically and directly to those eight neighbors—not to the commission. And if out of eight homes, three neighbors say "No way" then the religious entity has go back, revise their pitch, and try again. So long as there are three hold-outs it's a no.

Why three? Well, because that specifically protect the Jewish community while also protecting uninterested parties. My Jewish brothers and sisters around Severn and Staunton already have community support. So any shul will easily get eight out of eight surrounding houses. That's an established community, a community of faith, and the leaders will likely have worked out the kinks and found a suitable location ahead of time. So, eight out of eight, and it can move on to the commission.

Now lets say a fundamentalist Christian minister wants to open a old fashioned revival worship over on Demington where maybe more stuffy people live. Sorry Demington. That minister will be unlikely to get that support. Regularly he gets only two out of eight homes, and those are the weird neighbors anyway. The most adjacent community just doesn't support it. It's not for them. he can keep trying, but eventually moves on.

What about a Muslim who wants to host prayer service regularly in a small space? He finds a home in the Somerton-Wilton area. Despite not being a Muslim community, the population there may be more progressive or curious. He will very likely be able to get enough of support to get six out of eight homes. So then it can move to the commission.

Something like this protects religious people who have developed active areas of the map. This also protects neighborhoods that are simply uninterested in having homes by them converted. And it allows more relaxed areas to welcome worshipers who maybe aren't of their own kind.

I wonder if something like this might create a built-in guarantee of fitment—or close to it. This, in tandem with other more stringent specifics in the code that should already be added (see #1), might solve some issues. It doesn't solve your tax property problem though. So... oops. Good luck with that.

Please just be open.

So, have at it. Think about it. Throw it away. Do neither. Curse my name. Regardless, enjoy your afternoon.

James Hosticka, LPCC  
216.543.5792

## Eric Zamft

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**From:** Mary Eke <mteke@att.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2025 12:38 AM  
**To:** Eric Zamft  
**Subject:** 5/27/2025 Public Hearing on Zoning

[STOP -- THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL -- This Email originated outside of The Cleveland Heights system -- THINK Before You Click the Link]

Good evening Eric,

I want to thank you and Karen Knittel for your presentation regarding the potential zoning changes for places of worship in residential neighborhoods. It was very informative and detailed. I want to address a couple of things which residents stated at the meeting because I have concerns about them as well.

There is a church named United Temple Spiritual Church which is located at 14284 Superior Rd. on the corner of Hampshire Rd. A resident at the meeting had concerns about the number of vehicles which are parked in that neighborhood during their church services. I do not live near there, but this property in the photo below, which I took today, has been in disrepair for quite a long time, perhaps longer than ten years. It's hard to understand why this property has not been maintained, and why there has not been any code enforcement with regard to its exterior. As far as I am aware, it does not have any parking in close proximity to the church.

There is also a church named New Spirit Revival Center at 3130 Mayfield Rd., and this property has had a very large, brown tarp covering the crumbling steps to the main entrance for several years. It is visible from the street. Last October, I discussed it with Eric Elmi, the Chief of the Building Department, because I thought it might be within his purview since it is not a residential building. He drove past it, and confirmed what I told him. We had a rather lengthy discussion about code enforcement as it relates to commercial buildings, particularly the recent facade collapses of commercial properties in the city. He did state that Housing would inspect and oversee any repairs to this building, he discussed it with them and stated that it would be addressed. I believe that he did that, but as of today, there is no compliance from this church. When I drove by this afternoon, the tarp is still in place, and there does not appear to be any work done to the steps. This could be weather-related, but as I said earlier, this has been a problem for years. Aside from aesthetics, this is just not safe. Again, no enforcement regarding repairs.

These are not zoning code violations, but I'm bringing them up because they are valid concerns. Parking is an issue with several congregations in this city, and that can have a real impact on a neighborhood. Maintenance is already an issue with some institutions as well as residential properties, so how will it be enforced with these places of worship?

There was also a concern raised about noise and disruption. I do think that it's reasonable for people who buy homes in residential areas to expect that there can be an occasional issue with noise, a temporary increase in the number of people or vehicles, or anything which occurs in a group gathering, as long as it doesn't violate anyone's safety or the law. But if there is constant disruption because, for example, the religious entity decides to pursue ventures on the property due to the need to generate revenue, then how fair is that to the adjacent neighbors and the neighborhood in general? There are many religious institutions in this city which do not cause any disruption, they maintain their properties and have parking lots which accommodate their congregations. But what happens when they don't, or the noise, vehicular traffic, etc., become a constant issue? Wouldn't that resemble, to varying degrees, a situation where one is living close to a commercial area? Given a preference, I would think that most people would probably choose to live in a residential area over a commercial one.

Another resident was concerned about property tax increases. Unless it's a minimal amount, I cannot imagine that this would go over well in our highly taxed community. I don't believe that there will be numerous places of worship springing up on every street here, but if the idea is that there will be an influx of these properties, I don't think that citizens here would want to pay additionally for that, especially if these properties are deemed a nuisance or do not follow the codes or the law. As one resident stated at the meeting, there are grifters, even in religious communities. Residents might just decide that it's not worth it to live near these properties, then vote with their feet, and take our property tax revenue with them.

Personally, I'm not opposed to the idea of places of worship in neighborhoods, but if I were to encounter these issues above, when there's already a lack of code violation enforcement with respect to commercial and residential properties, then what recourse

would I have? Unless our code enforcement improves, along with a much-needed change in elected leadership, I am concerned that this will present another round of challenges which would be difficult for this city to overcome.

I hope that as this moves forward, there is substantial discussion about these concerns and the proactive measures which will be taken to ensure stability in our neighborhoods. As always, thank you for your leadership in the planning department. I value your analysis and feedback, and it's always insightful, comprehensive and thoughtful.

Sincerely,

Theresa Eke  
1521 Rydalmount Rd.



## Planning Department

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**From:** Julie Hammond Gierke <juliehammondgierke@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 10:21 PM  
**To:** Mayor; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch; Planning Department  
**Cc:** Matt Gierke Gmail  
**Subject:** Resident feedback: Neighborhood Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments



Mayor Seren, City Council members, and planning department staff,

We are submitting this letter in regards to the proposed *Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments*.

In short, the proposed legislation - in particular the provision that would allow *Neighborhood Places of Worship* in residentially zoned neighborhoods - creates an unacceptable level of uncertainty and risk for existing and prospective residents and homeowners within residentially zoned neighborhoods. The challenges arising from the proposed legislation cannot be suitably mitigated by conditional use permits, regulations or any additional oversight mechanisms.

The negative effects of allowing Neighborhood Places of Worship in residential neighborhoods are plentiful - increased traffic, crowding and parking in a manner inconsistent with residential neighborhoods, noise, regular comings and goings of large groups, visual implications, signage, homes renovated in ways that will prevent them from easily reconverting to single family home use (kitchens removed, walls opened up, sprinkler systems installed), loss of property tax revenue - and perhaps most importantly - the reduction of home values near these properties.

These negative effects will not be borne solely by residents adjacent to approved Neighborhood Places of Worship, but by all residents in Cleveland Heights. This is because the mere potential of Neighborhood Places of Worship popping up in residential neighborhoods throughout the city creates a broad-based new uncertainty and risk for residential property owners and renters alike that will generally serve to hurt property values and reduce the desirability of residence and homeownership in the city.

For example -

- Home values in neighborhoods with single family homes converted to Neighborhood Places of Worship will fall, creating pockets of our city that families may no longer see as desirable.
- The mere possibility that any residential neighborhood could soon house a Neighborhood Place of Worship might be reason enough for prospective residents to choose to buy in other suburbs where there is not this uncertainty.
- This legislation could create 'resident flight' as current residents might choose to sell their home before a neighborhood place of worship becomes a reality on their street and a risk to their home value.
- The price to purchase a single family home is not so high that it would be a barrier to entry for churches/places of worship. A mortgage on a single family home is likely less expensive than rent within a larger church building, thereby increasing the likelihood that more Neighborhood Places of Worship will be created.

- Existing home owners and landlords will be discouraged from further investment in their houses due to the increased uncertainty and risk to property value this would cause.
- Loss of property tax revenue
- Homes must first be purchased before the owners can apply for a conditional use permit to create a Neighborhood Place of Worship. If the conditional use is rejected, the neighborhood now has a church owned home that cannot be occupied and may sit vacant.
- To comply with the conditional use regulations, worship homes cannot have kitchens - just 'warming kitchen equipment' - so this will create single family homes renovated in a way that they cannot easily revert back to single family occupancy. What if the place of worship folds or the conditional permit is at some later date rejected?
- When a conditional use permit is applied for to convert a residence to a place of worship, only the immediately adjacent properties will be notified by letter, roughly 13 to 14 homes, the same process as if a neighbor was applying to build an addition on their home. As such, the burden of contesting the permit falls to a very small group of individuals, when in fact the wider neighborhood will be affected.

Current legislation says that conditional use shall only be permitted in a residential district when such use conforms to the following standards:

- That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare;
- That the conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and that such use will not essentially change the character of the same area;
- That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;
- That the conditional use shall be in conformance with the parking standards of Chapter 1161, that it shall not create an undue parking shortage, and any impacts neighboring streets, homes, and/or businesses must be minimized to the extent possible;

The proposed legislation around zoning for Neighborhood Places of Worship conflicts with each of these standards; Neighborhood Places of Worship will change the character of residential neighborhoods, they will cause property values to fall, and they will negatively impact quality of life for residents within affected residential neighborhoods.

Cleveland Heights is a great city for many reasons, but as with all places it is not without its challenges (both real and perceived). As such, we face constant competition with other nearby communities and suburbs to both retain and attract residents and to strengthen our tax base in further support of the community. Let's avoid the needless creation of new reasons for people to prefer living elsewhere.

Rather, city staff and Council should consider more suitable ways to meet the need for - and right to - accessible local worship spaces. For example, instead of creating this legislation for the wider city, why not allow residents on a census block level to apply for special zoning status that allows for Neighborhood Places of Worship? If a certain threshold of residents within a census block sign a petition to allow it, then conditional use permits could be issued within that specific residential area.

Or another alternative - the community has no shortage of vacant commercial spaces of various types, sizes and locations throughout the city (including many small vacant storefronts and buildings suited for smaller groups that the legislation aims to support). These may provide a more logically natural fit for such worship gathering needs. And what's more, a focus on supporting use of commercial spaces could reinforce the strength of our business districts in the process by addressing vacancy issues and increasing foot traffic around local businesses - a win-win outcome, rather than the win-lose tradeoff presented now.

Whatever the right alternative, the currently proposed legislation creates unacceptable new uncertainties and as a result reduces the desirability of residence and homeownership in our city's residentially zoned neighborhoods - it should be withdrawn from consideration in its current form.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Matt and Julie Gierke  
216-272-5205

## Planning Department

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**From:** Jennifer Corso <jennifercorso@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 8, 2025 4:19 PM  
**To:** Mayor; Planning Department; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch  
**Subject:** Zoning Amendments to create "neighborhood places of worship" - please vote against this



Dear Mayor, Council Members, and Planning Commission members:

I am writing to you to voice my concern over the proposed amendments to the City's zoning ordinances, specifically those changes that would create/allow "neighborhood" places of worship. I am asking as your constituent that you either withdraw this proposed legislation, or vote against it.

A community member, Julie Hammond Gierke, published a letter that she sent to you explaining her reasons for being against these zoning changes. (The letter is copied in its entirety below.) I agree with each and every point Ms. Gierke makes, most importantly on the negative effects this type of designation could have on our housing market and property values. This would create chaos, animosity, and would undoubtedly lead to numerous lawsuits against neighbors, proposed places of worship, and the City. How long will it take for the first denial of a "conditional" permit, generating a religious discrimination lawsuit against the City? There are over 10,000 religions in the world. Are you (collectively) prepared to be the arbiter of which religions will qualify to have a neighborhood place of worship? This legislation is, quite literally, asking for a lawsuit. This is not how we need to spend our precious City dollars.

I'd like to point out that we currently have a visibly obvious glut of available commercial space for purchase or rent. The city's website shows almost 30 such properties available today. The majority of those would fall within the square footage (less than 8,000 square feet) that these zoning changes would affect. It makes absolutely no sense to keep these properties vacant, yet take residential housing off the market in the middle of a housing crisis. Also, as a homeowner, I purposely bought a house in the middle of a residential street, not on or next to a commercial road. I do not want a business (and yes, a place of worship is a business) with scores of people coming in and out for services several times a week, perhaps even daily, to set up next door or across the street from me. If I wanted to run a cross-fit gym out of my home, and had people coming and going all day long for group workouts and personal training classes, the City would not allow it. And for good reason. Zoning laws exist for a reason. Places of worship are placed in commercial districts for a reason.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Corso  
Washington Blvd. Resident since 1999

Here is Ms. Gierke's letter:

Mayor Seren, City Council members, and planning department staff.  
We are submitting this letter in regards to the proposed *Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments*.

In short, the proposed legislation - in particular the provision that would allow *Neighborhood Places of Worship* in residentially zoned neighborhoods - creates an unacceptable level of uncertainty and risk for existing and prospective residents and homeowners within residentially zoned neighborhoods. The challenges arising from the proposed legislation cannot be suitably mitigated by conditional use permits, regulations or any additional oversight mechanisms.

The negative effects of allowing Neighborhood Places of Worship in residential neighborhoods are plentiful - increased traffic, crowding and parking in a manner inconsistent with residential neighborhoods, noise, regular comings and goings of large groups, visual implications, signage, homes renovated in ways that will prevent them from easily reconverting to single family home use (kitchens removed, walls opened up, sprinkler systems installed), loss of property tax revenue - and perhaps most importantly - the reduction of home values near these properties.

These negative effects will not be borne solely by residents adjacent to approved Neighborhood Places of Worship, but by all residents in Cleveland Heights. This is because the mere potential of Neighborhood Places of Worship popping up in residential neighborhoods throughout the city creates a broad-based new uncertainty and risk for residential property owners and renters alike that will generally serve to hurt property values and reduce the desirability of residence and homeownership in the city.

For example -

- Home values in neighborhoods with single family homes converted to Neighborhood Places of Worship will fall, creating pockets of our city that families may no longer see as desirable.
- The mere possibility that any residential neighborhood could soon house a Neighborhood Place of Worship might be reason enough for prospective residents to choose to buy in other suburbs where there is not this uncertainty.
- This legislation could create 'resident flight' as current residents might choose to sell their home before a neighborhood place of worship becomes a reality on their street and a risk to their home value.
- The price to purchase a single family home is not so high that it would be a barrier to entry for churches/places of worship. A mortgage on a single family home is likely less expensive than rent within a larger church building, thereby increasing the likelihood that more Neighborhood Places of Worship will be created.
- Existing home owners and landlords will be discouraged from further investment in their houses due to the increased uncertainty and risk to property value this would cause.
- Loss of property tax revenue
- Homes must first be purchased before the owners can apply for a conditional use permit to create a Neighborhood Place of Worship. If the conditional use is rejected, the neighborhood now has a church owned home that cannot be occupied and may sit vacant.
- To comply with the conditional use regulations, worship homes cannot have kitchens - just 'warming kitchen equipment' - so this will create single family homes renovated in a way that they cannot easily

revert back to single family occupancy. What if the place of worship folds or the conditional permit is at some later date rejected?

- When a conditional use permit is applied for to convert a residence to a place of worship, only the immediately adjacent properties will be notified by letter, roughly 13 to 14 homes, the same process as if a neighbor was applying to build an addition on their home. As such, the burden of contesting the permit falls to a very small group of individuals, when in fact the wider neighborhood will be affected.

Current legislation says that conditional use shall only be permitted in a residential district when such use conforms to the following standards:

- That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare;
- That the conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and that such use will not essentially change the character of the same area;
- That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;
- That the conditional use shall be in conformance with the parking standards of Chapter 1161, that it shall not create an undue parking shortage, and any impacts neighboring streets, homes, and/or businesses must be minimized to the extent possible;

The proposed legislation around zoning for Neighborhood Places of Worship conflicts with each of these standards; Neighborhood Places of Worship will change the character of residential neighborhoods, they will cause property values to fall, and they will negatively impact quality of life for residents within affected residential neighborhoods.

Cleveland Heights is a great city for many reasons, but as with all places it is not without its challenges (both real and perceived). As such, we face constant competition with other nearby communities and suburbs to both retain and attract residents and to strengthen our tax base in further support of the community. Let's avoid the needless creation of new reasons for people to prefer living elsewhere.

Rather, city staff and Council should consider more suitable ways to meet the need for - and right to - accessible local worship spaces. For example, instead of creating this legislation for the wider city, why not allow residents on a census block level to apply for special zoning status that allows for Neighborhood Places of Worship? If a certain threshold of residents within a census block sign a petition to allow it, then conditional use permits could be issued within that specific residential area.

Or another alternative - the community has no shortage of vacant commercial spaces of various types, sizes and locations throughout the city (including many small vacant storefronts and buildings suited for smaller groups that the legislation aims to support). These may provide a more logically natural fit for such worship gathering needs. And what's more, a focus on supporting use of commercial spaces could reinforce the strength of our business districts in the process by addressing vacancy issues and increasing foot traffic around local businesses - a win-win outcome, rather than the win-lose tradeoff presented now.

Whatever the right alternative, the currently proposed legislation creates unacceptable new uncertainties and as a result reduces the desirability of residence and homeownership in our city's residentially zoned neighborhoods - it should be withdrawn from consideration in its current form.

Thank you for your consideration.

## Planning Department

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**From:** Chris Jacobs <coleridge3150@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 8, 2025 5:49 PM  
**To:** Planning Department; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Mayor; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch  
**Subject:** Worship Zoning



Mayor Seren, City Council members, and Planning Department staff,

I write in opposition to the proposed Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments.

In short, the proposed legislation - in particular the provision that would allow Neighborhood Places of Worship in neighborhoods zoned Residential should be more narrowly tailored to address any issues with any need for a small worship center.

I am not opposed to allowing small groups of people to get together in someone's home for prayer. But when the prayer group becomes a "church" several problems can arise.

While not certain to occur, these problems include increased traffic, an increase in parking in a manner inconsistent with residential neighborhoods, noise, regular comings and goings of large groups, commercial-like signage, loss of property tax revenue (something our city is already overly dependent on), and the potential for such homes to be renovated in ways that are inconsistent with future use as a home.

Additionally, we already have numerous vacant retail spaces in commercial districts that would be more suitable for such use.

Even though all of these problems are not a certainty as a result of this legislation, the legislation increases the likelihood of creating these problems -- without a corresponding urgent need that can't be met in other ways (such as taking on a failed existing church building (we have several) or taking space in an empty retail space).

I also am concerned that the City would be reluctant to strictly police such institutions, fearing charges of discrimination or religious intolerance, to the detriment of the neighbors' concerns.

A conditional use permit does not resolve these concerns. Conditional use permits are not granted to prospective home owners, only to owners, so the owner of the home seeking to establish a church will be motivated to modify the home to meet the conditional use requirements. Like removing the kitchen, for example, since conditional use permits do not allow kitchens, but only "warming kitchen equipment."

Current law says that conditional use permits shall only be granted in a residential zone when such use conforms to the following standards:

- That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare;

- That the conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and that such use will not essentially change the character of the same area;
- That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;
- That the conditional use shall be in conformance with the parking standards of Chapter 1161, that it shall not create an undue parking shortage, and any impacts neighboring streets, homes, and/or businesses must be minimized to the extent possible;

The proposed legislation around zoning for Neighborhood Places of Worship reasonably raises questions about conflicts with each of these standards; Neighborhood Places of Worship can change the character of residential neighborhoods, they can cause property values to fall (particularly for immediately-adjacent homes), and they can negatively impact quality of life for residents within affected residential neighborhoods.

Cleveland Heights is a great city for many reasons, and yet has many challenges. The lack of churches in residential neighborhoods, or the inability to turn a residential home into a church, are not problems that should be at the top of the list.

Recognizing that it is certainly possible that other people are finding this problem to be more significant than I am aware, if you do decide to spend time and energy addressing worshiper's problems with finding suitable worship space, I urge you to more narrowly limit this legislation beyond what is currently proposed to further limit these potential problems.

First, I suggest requiring the approval of an entire neighborhood block and not just the immediate neighbors (as is the case with a conditional use permit). Second, look for ways to encourage commercial property owners, rather than residential neighborhoods, to provide lower rates to small groups of worshipers.

The currently proposed legislation creates unacceptable new uncertainties, however, and therefore it should be withdrawn from consideration in its current form.

Thank you.

Chris Jacobs  
2508 Wellington Rd.

## Planning Department

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**From:** nrd527 <nrd527@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 9:59 AM  
**To:** Planning Department; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Mayor; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch  
**Subject:** Urgent Request to Oppose the "Livable Neighborhoods Initiative" - Places of Worship Zoning Amendment



Dear Public Officials,

As a long-time resident of Cleveland Heights, I urge you to **oppose the proposed amendment for the "Livable Neighborhoods Initiative" Places of Worship Zoning Amendment.**

This amendment, in its current form, **threatens the residential character of our neighborhoods** and could lead to unforeseen consequences such as **increased traffic congestion and strain on public services**. It risks creating inequities and does not align with Cleveland Heights' long-standing commitment to balanced growth benefiting all residents.

I respectfully ask that you consider the broader implications on our community and maintain the careful zoning distinctions that protect our unique neighborhood.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Naila Deskins

1571 Ivydale Rd, Cleveland Heights, Oh 44118

## Planning Department

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**From:** Daphne Shelton <dmshelton42@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 10:25 AM  
**To:** Planning Department; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Mayor; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch  
**Subject:** Urgent Request to Oppose the "Livable Neighborhoods Initiative" - Places of Worship Zoning Amendment



Dear Public Officials,

As a long-time resident of Cleveland Heights, I urge you to **oppose the proposed amendment for the "Livable Neighborhoods Initiative" Places of Worship Zoning Amendment.**

This amendment, in its current form, **threatens the residential character of our neighborhoods** and could lead to unforeseen consequences such as **increased traffic congestion and strain on public services**. It risks creating inequities and does not align with Cleveland Heights' long-standing commitment to balanced growth benefiting all residents.

I respectfully ask that you consider the broader implications on our community and maintain the careful zoning distinctions that protect our unique neighborhood.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Daphne Shelton

1571 Ivydale Road

Cleveland Heights, Oh 44118

## Planning Department

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**From:** Joanne L. Siegel <joanneisatthepool@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 3:15 PM  
**To:** Mayor; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch  
**Cc:** Planning Department; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel  
**Subject:** URGENT: PLEASE SAY NO! "LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE PLACES OF WORSHIP ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS"



To All of City Council & Mayor Seren,

The reason for my email is to express my concern for the proposed legislation that would allow places of worship in residential neighborhoods. I absolutely would not wish any place of worship to go up next door to my house, so I would not wish this for anyone living in Cleveland Heights. We purposely live on a residential street, and we wish for it to stay this way.

I am a Cleveland Heights resident, and I am opposed to the "Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments," specifically the provisions around allowing Neighborhood Places of Worship in residential neighborhoods.

Hopefully, you will all vote to stop this legislation, at least long enough for a LONG and THOROUGH discussion about this, with community input.

Thank you,

**Joanne L. Siegel**  
**M.Ed., Ed.S, NSCA-CPT, NPTI-CPT, TRX**  
**3Sport Training & Conditioning, LLC**

Sent from [Outlook](#)

## Planning Department

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**From:** Simone Kitchens <simkit@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 7:39 PM  
**To:** Planning Department; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Mayor; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Jim Posch; Gail Larson; Jim Petras; Anthony Mattox  
**Subject:** Opposition to Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Zoning Amendments



Dear Mayor Seren, Council Members, and Planning Director Zamft,

As a resident, I do not support the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments—specifically the provisions allowing Neighborhood Places of Worship in residential neighborhoods.

Sincerely,  
Simone Kitchens  
1786 Cadwell Ave  
Cleveland Heights

**Eric Zamft**

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**From:** JOHN G KANE JR <kanes5@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 8:00 PM  
**To:** Eric Zamft  
**Subject:** No Neighborhood Places of Worship in Residential



Bad experience 20 + years ago. Every Saturday church on porch next door all day. Preaching, singing all day long. We had to leave our home to escape. NOT fair!  
Residential is Residential, not church.

Church going 55 year Cleveland Heights resident.

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

## Planning Department

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**From:** Taylor CM <cheek.mundy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 9:05 PM  
**To:** Planning Department; Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Mayor  
**Subject:** Strong Opposition to Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments



Dear Mayor Seren and Members of the Cleveland Heights Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed zoning text amendments under the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative—specifically the provision that would allow Neighborhood Places of Worship to operate in residentially zoned areas.

While I fully support every resident's right to practice their religion, allowing religious institutions to occupy single-family homes introduces a level of institutional activity that is fundamentally incompatible with the intended character and function of residential neighborhoods. The increased traffic, frequency of gatherings, and non-residential use of these properties would create measurable disruptions to quality of life for homeowners.

As someone who is agnostic, I was very intentional in choosing where to live. When purchasing our home, my family and I deliberately chose a neighborhood that reflected our values—quiet, residential, diverse, and free from the institutional presence of religious or commercial properties. This proposed change would undermine the care and intention that went into that decision, and it raises concerns about future changes being made without regard to the lived experiences and preferences of existing residents.

This amendment also raises concerns about the city's long-term development strategy. As a millennial homeowner (age 34, with a 33-year-old husband), I want Cleveland Heights to succeed—not just for today's residents, but for the next generation of homebuyers, families, and entrepreneurs. That success requires policies that encourage reinvestment, economic development, and responsible land use. These amendments send the wrong message to future residents and potential investors about the city's vision and priorities.

Cleveland Heights must take seriously the challenge of attracting and retaining the next generation of residents. This requires preserving the integrity of residential zoning and advancing development strategies that promote growth, stability, and long-term livability. I urge you to reject this amendment and instead commit to a zoning approach that reflects the city's full potential—one that serves the entire community, not just a specific subset of it.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Taylor L. Cheek  
3384 Chelsea Drive, Cleveland Heights

## **Planning Department**

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**From:** karen katzman <kkkiwi44@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 10, 2025 2:36 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Changing zoning for places of worship

[STOP -- THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL -- This Email originated outside of The Cleveland Heights system -- THINK Before You Click the Link]

I do not believe the city should change the zoning to allow residential properties to be used as places of worship. Why make a change that encompasses the whole city when the request for the change comes from only a portion of the residents and for a specific area within the larger community. I believe there are other options, like a variance, which would apply only to that specific request.

Sincerely,  
Karen Katzman

Sent from my iPhone

**Eric Zamft**

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**From:** Bruce Catalano <bacatalano@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 10, 2025 6:08 PM  
**To:** Eric Zamft  
**Subject:** Proposed legislation for religious organizstions



**THIS IS AN EXTERNAL E**

This Email was originated outside the City of Cleve

Take a 3-second pause and ask yourself the following que

1. Who is sending me this email? Do I know who this is?
2. Am I expecting this email? Is this out of the ordinary?
3. Why is there a link or attachment in this email? Do I trust this link

As a resident of Cleveland Heights, I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed legislation that would allow religious organization to purchase and convert single resident homes into places of worship.

I see so many negative consequences impacting the quality of our current neighborhood life such as increase in noise, crowds, change in the structure of existing neighborhoods, loss of revenue to the city, and potential loss of current residents to other communities, to name the most obvious.

Please do not pass this short sighted and negative legislation.

Thank you,  
Bruce Catalano

## **Planning Department**

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**From:** Charles Kikel <cbskikel@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 10, 2025 10:25 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Residential Worship

[STOP -- THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL -- This Email originated outside of The Cleveland Heights system -- THINK Before You Click the Link]

Allowing houses to become worship places is a bad idea all the way around. Nationally there are not enough residences and this results in skyrocketing housing and rental costs.

The building code allows egress, fire safety and plumbing fixtures in residential buildings based on small numbers of people familiar with their surroundings, not large numbers of strangers. The building type is simply not a good fit for the proposed use.

Do the smart thing- don't allow it.

Chas Kikel  
216 317-7420

## **Planning Department**

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**From:** Cindy Zawadzki <cindygzawadzki@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 12, 2025 8:01 PM  
**To:** planning@clevelandhts.gov  
**Subject:** Opposition to Proposed Zoning Amendment: Neighborhood Places of Worship



Dear Mayor Seren, Members of City Council, and Planning Department Staff,

As a concerned resident of Cleveland Heights, I am writing to express my strong and unequivocal opposition to the proposed Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments, specifically the provisions that would allow religious organizations to purchase and convert single-family homes into Neighborhood Places of Worship.

This is a direct attack on the stability of our neighborhoods and a reckless move that will tank property values, increase traffic and noise, and gut our tax base.

Why would you even consider legislation that invites permanent disruption and disinvestment in our residential areas?

This is not thoughtful policy- it is shortsighted and damaging. Do not pass this amendment.

Thank you

Cindy and Maciej Zawadzki

2961 Fairfax Rd  
44118

## Eric Zamft

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**From:** Kristen van Kranenburgh <kvankran@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 12, 2025 9:06 PM  
**To:** Eric Zamft; knittel@clevelandheights.gov; Mayor; Tony Cuda; drussel@clevelandheights.gov; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch  
**Subject:** Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text



Hello. I'm a resident of Cleveland Heights. I do not support the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendment, specifically around allowing neighborhood places of worship in residential neighborhoods. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kristen vanKranenburgh  
2397 Euclid Heights Blvd, #1, Cleveland Heights, OH 44106

## **Eric Zamft**

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**From:** Lynda <lzholland@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2025 11:36 AM  
**To:** Eric Zamft  
**Subject:** Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments.

[STOP -- THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL -- This Email originated outside of The Cleveland Heights system -- THINK Before You Click the Link]

Good afternoon,

I am a resident of Cleveland Heights and I disagree with the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, Places of Worship Zoning Amendments.

Lynda Holland  
Sent from my iPhone

## **Planning Department**

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**From:** Jackie Elfin <jelvin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2025 4:48 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Oppose Zoning Text Amendments



My husband and I are long-time residents of Cleveland Heights, and we do not support the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments, specifically the provisions around allowing Neighborhood Places of Worship in residential neighborhoods.

We remember Beachwood had similar neighborhood homes being connected to places of worship. These became tremendous difficulties for their residents and the city.

We would not like to see Cleveland Heights repeat these problems.

Bruce & Jackie Elfin

## Planning Department

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**From:** e.scribe9 <e.scribe9@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 15, 2025 1:12 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** Livable Neighborhood zoning



Hello, I am writing because I strongly oppose the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning. I live on Berkeley Road which is where I believe these home conversions will be taking place overwhelmingly in my area. I have lived in the Orthodox neighborhood for most of my life. I love living over here but over the past 10 years I've seen a lot of changes. We already have a lot of traffic and many people park incorrectly on the side streets, I've seen a lot of cars parked facing the wrong way, double parked and parked on the wrong side of the street too close to stop signs etc.... I feel like there are plenty of walkable places on S.Taylor and other parts of our city that are proper houses of worship that can also handle the traffic that comes with it. Please do not pass this initiative it takes away from our community as a whole instead of helping. We need more homeowners not homes being turned into places of worship especially when we have places of worship being underutilized in our area.

Thank you for your time,  
Carrie Jaffe

**Eric Zamft**

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**From:** Strongtowns Heights <strongtownsheights@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 14, 2025 11:10 AM  
**To:** Eric Zamft  
**Subject:** Places of Worship Changes



Eric,

Austin here, I was informed from a couple of our members that the ordinance for phase 1 of the Livable Communities Initiative is not being voted on due to potential changes being made.

Would be curious what needs to be changed. It felt that the real (non-NIMBY) concerns were addressed. I hope what feels like mostly retired NIMBY types opposing this doesn't hold this great initiative up. There are a ton of us, even those who do not have any stake in this portion of the initiative, who support this. A lot of us just have competing schedules and cannot make every meeting like those who oppose it.

I got involved in StrongTowns because I want to make long lasting roots in this city. In the 18 months I have been trying to get more involved with local government, there has not been a more crucial initiative than this. I know that if one doesn't work, then it puts a damper on the other parts. If you need any voices to push this along let us know.

Thank you,

Austin Gilchrist

## Karen Knittel

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**From:** Theresa Carnes <theresa\_carnes@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 14, 2025 3:52 PM  
**To:** Karen Knittel  
**Subject:** Zoning TEXT Amendments

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged



I Don't agree with the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places Of Worship Zoning TEXT Amendments because it would cause too much traffic in the neighborhood and on the street limiting the already limited parking. Bring down property values of neighboring homes and raise taxes for the surrounding neighbors since they already don't pay taxes. Plus the noise isn't fair to the neighbors. Please don't allow this

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

## **Planning Department**

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**From:** April Firstencel <afirstencel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 16, 2025 12:01 PM  
**To:** Planning Department; Karen Knittel; Mayor; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch; Eric Zamft  
**Subject:** Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments



We are residents and do not support the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative Places of Worship Zoning Text Amendments, specifically the provisions around allowing Neighborhood Places of Worship in residential neighborhoods.

April Firstencel  
Gary Wildey  
2472 Overlook Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44106

## Karen Knittel

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**From:** Ed Becker, LISW-S <eablisw@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 16, 2025 11:41 AM  
**To:** Eric Zamft; Karen Knittel; Mayor; Tony Cuda; Davida Russell; Craig Cobb; Gail Larson; Anthony Mattox; Jim Petras; Jim Posch  
**Subject:** Opposition to the "Livable neighborhoods initiative places of worship zoning text amendments"



Dear sirs/madames:

We are writing to oppose the Livable neighborhoods initiative places of worship zoning text amendments ("the Initiative"), which we understand is under consideration by the City Council.

We relocated to Cleveland Heights from Boston and Cincinnati respectively in 1981 and have never regretted our decision. We reside at 3035 Euclid Heights Blvd where we have been a homeowners since 1985. Our two children are proud Heights grads and successful professionals. Living in Cleveland Heights has been one of the best quality of life decisions we ever made.

Our opposition to the Initiative is as follows:

1. The potential disruption to neighborhoods is unknown, but deserving of serious consideration. In mentioning this proposal to likeminded residents, responses from skepticism to outright rejection of the idea have been expressed.
2. Ample commercial sites are available in many neighborhoods, which may provide a more suitable alternative. Coventry, Cedar-Taylor and Noble come to mind. In Coventry, for example, we have a church located in the former Heights Arts Cinema.
3. While religion often gets a pass in our society (tax relief, respect/allowance of others' faith beliefs and expressions, etc), the Initiative feels more like a workaround than a well thought out proposal to enhance the quality of our neighborhoods. The Initiative may serve the religious groups, but we remain doubtful the community at large will benefit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ed Becker and Karen Allen  
3035 Euclid Heights Blvd.  
[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

## **Planning Department**

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**From:** monakolesar@att.net  
**Sent:** Monday, June 16, 2025 1:49 PM  
**To:** Planning Department  
**Subject:** home/church proposal



I was not aware that my email had not reached you. Please be aware of our strong feelings against the proposal.

Council Members:

I am writing regarding the proposed zoning change before the council permitting Cleveland Heights residents to use their homes as a church. The people making presentations at the last meeting appear well organized and have statistics on everything but the most important question: What do my neighbors want? Please hear us: **NO** to church in my front yard, or on my street.

Mona Kolesar, Robert Kolesar, Middlehurst Road homeowners for 53 years,