

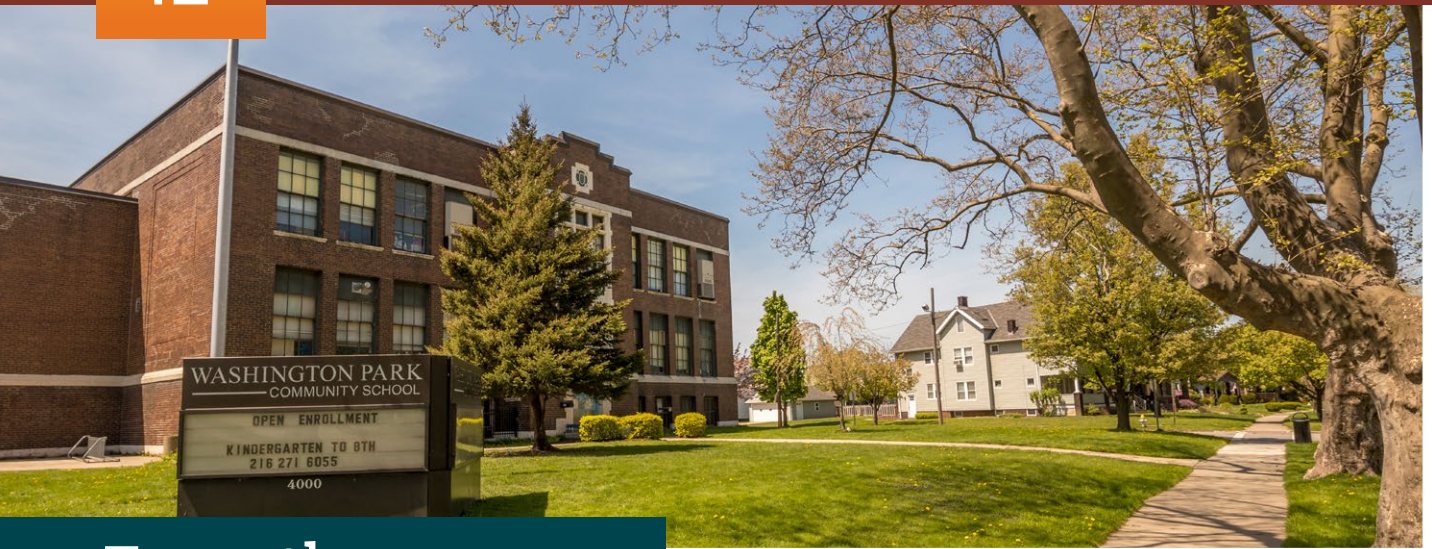
NEWBURGH HEIGHTS

SUMMER 2021

Living

School and *community*

Teaching skills and purpose at
Washington Park Community School



From the mayor ♦

With the count continuing, more than three hundred times the population of Newburgh Heights has died in the United States over the past year and a half from a single cause. Stating this in another way, more Americans have died in 18 months from this enemy than perished in combat during World War II, World War I, the Vietnam War, and the American Revolution combined. Six months ago, we were given the weapon we needed to fight back against an enemy every bit as dangerous as the fascists, imperialists, and King George's tyrannical rule.

I often hear my elders reminisce about an America made up of community that rallied together, stood shoulder to shoulder, and courageously stepped into the breach for each other in days of crisis gone by. Whether that was a neighbor's home that caught fire, a father who passed of a workplace accident, a child that succumbed to polio, or a foreign tyrant threatened our

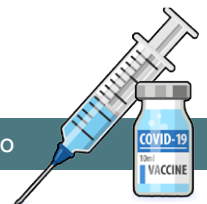
future, we stepped up and stepped out for each other. As a country, we set aside our personal feelings and did the right thing to heal our community. We stood on the shoulders of great people like Dr. Jonas Salk, Shirley Chisholm, Neil Armstrong, and Harvey Milk. We accomplished so many amazing things because we trusted the people that had spent a lifetime experiencing, learning, growing, and developing expertise at a depth most of us will never comprehend.

We are at such a moment in our collective history today. It is time we recognize that today's brilliant, scientific minds have learned from, trusted, and now stand on the shoulders of the heroes of days gone-by. They have given us the weapon we need to heal our community, step into the breach, and reclaim the spirit of American excellence that so many of our neighborhood's elders remember. Seize the moment, do your part for your country, get your



vaccination so not one more of those that survived our wars of liberty perish because of an outlandish war of misinformation. They fought for your nation, fight for their last years of life. Get vaccinated.

Sincerely,
Mayor Elkins



Find free vaccination options at gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-427-5634 for info

Village Council



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Public Works Improvements ♦

New outdoor common space on the way, along with reconstruction of E. 41st St



New outdoor common space is on the way, along with other public works projects scheduled for this summer.

The new space will bring trees, an outdoor pavilion and tables, lighting and even charging stations for phones to 41st Street and Beta Avenue, says Village consultant James Sickels. “It will be similar to a mini-park.”

Sickels, who works for nationally recognized engineering and planning firm OHM Advisors, says the little common space ties into multiple larger community goals.

As part of his work with Newburgh Heights, Sickels says that the Village has sought to introduce more open public spaces here and there, when and where it complements needed other work.

In this case, contractors will be making street-level and below-ground improvements to the area this summer. Construction crews will reconstruct 41st Street, from Alpha to Bridgeview. Beta Avenue will close between 41st and 42nd Streets, for the new common space, while Alpha Avenue will extend through to Washington Park Boulevard.

Crews will also be at work beneath the street’s surface, making repairs, replacing the water main beneath 41st street, and installing a separate stormwater system in place of old combined sewer/stormwater infrastructure.

Like older cities throughout the country, Newburgh Heights is making needed upgrades to infrastructure like this at the same time that more intense storms place added strain on the existing system. The common space’s design supports that effort as well, says Sickels, with water-permeable pavers to help soak up rainfall instead of channeling it all to the storm sewers. “It will be a green infrastructure project.”

Keeping this work affordable is also part of an ongoing mission, guiding much of the timing for specific projects within larger goals like storm sewer upgrades. Sickels says that he’s regularly on the lookout for county, regional, state and federal funds.

“We came across some sewer money and then some road money,” he says, and as funds became available the outlines of this summer’s work around 41st Street fell into place.

Choosing Newburgh Heights with a New House

Newburgh Heights wasn’t the first place John Lewis and Katherine Burkett looked, when they began planning to build a house in 2019. As Cleveland residents, they first looked in neighborhoods like Tremont, and Ohio City. But as the right property proved elusive, their builder suggested looking at Newburgh Heights.

Lewis noted that “Newburgh has a good tax abatement program,” and they visited a list of sites in the village.

The Washington Park Boulevard lot they now own wasn’t on the list of places they first looked in Newburgh Heights either. But they passed it during their properties tour, noticed the unoccupied lot, and ended up speaking directly with Mayor Trevor

Elkins. The mayor worked with Lewis and Burkett, who purchased the property, and work onsite started last January.

The couple’s decision to build in Newburgh Heights extends a minor construction boom, which began in 2019 with the first new house built in Newburgh in 50 years.

When Lewis and Burkett first saw the property, it was a weedy lot, but like others they saw a lot of potential in Newburgh Heights. The location and access to highways is especially attractive, says Burkett. “I work in Mentor and John works in Akron.”

The couple hope that their four-bedroom house will be completed around August, and say they look forward to landscaping. Though rough looking as of May, the property is already ringed by tall, old shade

trees which preview the possibilities.

It’s also across the street from Newburgh Heights’s dog park. Lewis says that their family doesn’t actually own a dog, but “We’re going to get one. It’s something we’ve wanted to do.”





Washington Park Community School

Washington Park is an independently governed charter school, located in the Cleveland school district, and all faculty are certified by the Ohio Department of Education

Cristy Madkins is not the type of administrator who makes the words “the principal’s office” evoke stern, frowning authority.

At Washington Park Community School, Principal Madkins is more like a very approachable teacher at-large, full of enthusiasm for the school and interacting easily with the students.

The K-8 charter school in Newburgh Heights reflects her example: a little difference from old-fashioned ways, and a lot of engagement. Washington Park doesn’t have traditional athletic offerings, for example, but incorporates structured athletic time during recess, “like a little intramural” program, says Madkins.

“Melissa and I actually referee some of the games,” she says of her vice principal, Melissa Cicerchi.

Diverse, well rounded curriculum

Founded in 1999 in a former court building, Washington Park Community School feels like a hidden neighborhood gem. Framed by quiet residential streets and large old trees, its doors open on hallways lined with cheerful decorations and projects.

About 200 students receive instruction in basic subjects like

health, technology, art, music and physical education, as well as social/emotional learning.

Part of Washington Park’s mission is helping children learn to be good community members, with public participation and service projects. Over the past year, for example, students have made valentine’s for senior citizens, and sent letters and cards to veterans in November. Washington Park’s fifth grade conducted Zoom interviews with local people about their jobs and careers.

The school also provides before- and after-school programs, and summer learning starting in June.

Madkins says frankly that the most common misperception about Washington Park is that “they think we’re part of Cleveland Metropolitan School District and we are not.” Washington Park is an independently governed charter school, located in the Cleveland school district, and all faculty are certified by the Ohio Department of Education. Enrollment is open to any student in Ohio.

Learning safely through the pandemic

Enrollment has increased vs. the previous year at Washington Park Community School, despite the disruption of a pandemic,





Photos by Elaine Manusakis

although being “in school” has taken some new forms.

The school started last fall with a hybrid model, to accommodate divergent preferences among parents, even providing meal delivery at times. Classes went 100% remote for part of the winter, then reopened in February, and Madkins says about 80% of students were back in-person as of April.

Staying nimble has paid off, with zero students testing positive for COVID-19 after more than a year of pandemic.

“The hardest part for us with COVID is finding a full staff,” says Madkins, but the school has responded with teamwork and flexibility. Students have been full participants in the process.

“They’ve really become tech gurus,” Vice Principal Cicerchi says, and students and teachers have learned from one another.

Rooted in the community

The ties between Washington Park Community School and the local community have become strong, after more than 20 years, even as the charter system and remote learning options shift traditional assumptions.

The school is currently making capital upgrades to the building, and by the end of June will have mostly new doors and windows.

Washington Park is also, says Madkins, now teaching the children of some of its first students who attended class there more than 20 years ago.

With school consolidation a long-familiar phenomenon, at this point, Newburgh Heights can be justly proud of a multi-generation tradition taking root in the community.

Are you new to Newburgh Heights?



If you are a new homeowner or renter, let us know, and we will send you a Welcome Packet with what you need to know about living in Newburgh Heights. Call 216-641-4654, or sign-up at our website: newburgh-oh.gov/home/welcome-packet

Fall Soccer signup info

The 2021 Newburgh Hts Fall Soccer Signups will be on July 27 and July 29 from 7:00 - 8:00PM at Village Hall at 3801 Harvard Ave. for Boys & Girls age 6 - 14.

Registration Fee for residents is \$15. & non-residents is \$20.

We need volunteer coaches plus enough children in their age group to insure there will be a team. Coaches are subject to a background check.

Call or text Bill Edelburg (Newburgh Hts Athletic Director) 216-906-2302 with any questions.





Village News ♦

Newburgh Wins Tree Canopy Grant Funds

Tree survey and new planting on the way from Service Department, along with modernized dog park

With summer on the way, a safe and healthy outdoors is on the agenda for Newburgh Heights' Service Department. Director Joe Milano says that a \$50,000 grant from Cuyahoga County will enable important long-term investment in the Village's tree canopy, while more immediately, the Service Department is upgrading the local dog park with an additional gate.

Milano says that the extra gate will bring Newburgh Heights' dog park in line with modern designs, which help manage unpredictability with a kind of lobby or foyer for the park. "It's another layer of security for everybody," he says.

Implementing Newburgh's Healthy Urban Tree Canopy Grant funds will be a larger and more complex project.

Cuyahoga County's tree canopy has declined substantially over the years. The competitive grant program, announced in 2019, aims to promote a restored tree canopy with funds for tree planting and maintenance projects. Newburgh Heights applied for funds to pursue both, but preparation before planting is key to long-term maintenance, says Milano.

Before the Village begins planting trees, the grant money will help inventory what's currently in place. "We'll get a complete inventory of our existing tree stock" prepared by The Davey Resource Group, says Milano, "which will allow us to be more intentional with our plantings in the future."

Diversity is critical to building up Newburgh Heights's tree canopy, he says, because one disease or pest can wipe out large

"We'll get a complete inventory of our existing tree stock, which will allow us to be more intentional with our plantings in the future."

– Joe Milano, Service Department Director



numbers of a single tree species, while diverse planting means that more trees survive. Ensuring that new plantings increase diversity requires knowing what's already in place. "It's more than just sticking trees in the ground," says Milano.

The Healthy Tree Canopy Grant Program announced its second round of awards, including \$50,000 for Newburgh, in May. Village Council has approved the partnership, and the Service Department is developing plans for the tree inventory and eventual new plantings.

Milano says that by this fall, the inventory should be complete and new trees arriving.



Shred Your Documents

A free community document shred event is scheduled for June 12 from 9 a.m. to noon. The event will be held at Village Hall.

Safety Tips for Power Outages and Carbon Monoxide

Always assume a downed line is a live line. If you have a downed power line or power outage you can call Fire & Police Dispatch (216) 641-5545 to report this information.

Properly installed carbon monoxide detectors can help protect your household from the single largest cause of accidental poisoning. Newburgh Heights Fire Dept. can help you select the right places to install detectors.

See newburgh-oh.gov/fire-department for details.

Newburgh Heights Resources

Village Council Meetings

March: 1st Tuesday
April: 1st Tuesday
May: 1st Tuesday
June: 1st Tuesday
July: 3rd Tuesday
August: NONE
September: 3rd Tuesday
October: 1st Tuesday
November: 1st Tuesday (if an election day, may be moved to 3rd Tuesday)
December: 1st Tuesday

Village and Department Information Housing and Building Department

216-641-4654
Business Hours:
Mon.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Kristine Pagsuyoin, Housing and Building Commissioner

Fiscal Officer / Clerk of Council

216-641-2717
Cathleen Nagorski
cnagorski@newburgh-oh.gov

Newburgh Heights Fire Department

4105 Harvard Ave.
216-641-2134

Administrative Hours:

Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Newburgh Heights Police Department

Emergency: 9-1-1
Dispatch: 216-641-5545
Office: 216-641-2117

Service Department

216-641-2714
Business Hours:
Mon.-Fri., 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Joe Milano, Service Director
jmilano@newburgh-oh.gov
newburgh-oh.gov/service-department

Clerk of Court

Suzanne Molnar
Officer Written Ticket Processing
3801 Harvard Ave., 44105
Phone: 216-536-4752, Fax: 216-641-2712
court@newburgh-oh.gov

Business Hours:

Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Clerk of Courts works remotely.
Payments are accepted online at ohioticket-payments.com
Or, mail personal check or money order. Or place payments in the drop box outside of Village Hall.

Payments are accepted in-person on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Event space reservations

Pavilion and community room will be available again this summer. Details will be posted on newburgh-oh.gov. For questions contact Kayla Barfield at 216-641-2160

Meet the Staff

Administrative assistant Makayla Barfield

The new administrative assistant for Newburgh Heights, Makayla Barfield, describes her job in terms of assisting the public first and foremost.

As the Village's photo enforcement clerk, she fields a variety of questions and objections and strives to provide everyone with accurate answers. "If they have a problem, I check into it to make sure I'm getting the right information in response."

Barfield began her job in April, and describes it succinctly: "I love it." Working full-time at Village Hall, she fields calls for the clerk of courts in addition to her work with photo enforcement, and pitches in generally as various staff work from home to reduce risk during the pandemic.

Newburgh Heights is like a second home anyway, says Barfield, who lives next door in

Cuyahoga Heights and graduated in 2020.

"Even when not working I'm always in Newburgh Heights. I have family over here."

Salvage Sale

Over the last two years, the Housing & Building Department has been saving historical and architectural items from demolished properties. These items will be for sale as part of the Community Wide Garage sale set to take place August 6th and 7th.

If you are interested in donating an item for the sale, or have something of historical significance, we would love to see the item and discuss how you can be involved. Contact the Housing & Building Department, 216-641-4654.





Community Event Calendar Summer 2021

JUNE

- 12 Shred Day** - Village Hall Parking Lot
9 a.m. to Noon
- 30 Graduates Resolutions** - Village Hall
and mail

JULY

- 17 Seniors Dinner & Movie** - Village Hall –
Council Chambers
- 31 Music in Park** - Kathy Edwards Park
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
All ages welcome, Band: *tbd*

AUGUST

- 6-7 Community Wide Garage Sale**
Permits from Housing & Building
- 20 Movie in the Kathy Edwards Park**
Starts at Dusk (8:48 p.m.)
Movie to be announced

Save the date
Sept. 25 is Fall Fest

CONTACT US:

3801 Harvard Ave., Newburgh Heights, OH 44105 | 216-641-4650 | newburgh-oh.gov