

MAYOR JUSTIN BERNS' STATEMENT – FAIRMOUNT TEMPLE PROPERTY – JUNE 18, 2024

Today marks a pivotal moment in the history of Beachwood—a moment that reflects our unwavering commitment to shaping our own destiny and ensuring a bright future for our community.

This parcel of land right in the heart of our city isn't just a piece of property; it is a canvas upon which we will paint the next chapter of Beachwood's story. For decades, our city has thrived under the visionary leadership and foundation created by mayors like George Zeiger and Harvey Friedman, who understood that property dictates destiny. The pro-growth mentality and strategic developments they helped to create have given us a vibrant community life supported by commerce and industry.

From the establishment of Commerce Park in 1962 to the rise of our first shopping center, LaPlace, in 1969, and the expansion of our major office complexes and corporate parks, our city has masterfully balanced growth while still preserving residential tranquility. Our community has evolved into a more diverse community, as well as a center of Jewish life, with temples, synagogues, shuls and communal institutions that enrich the lives of everyone in the city, regardless of religion, along with enviable public and private schools.

The acquisition of Fairmount Temple and its 17-acre property is a testament to our commitment to maintaining that balance. By purchasing this land, we, the city, hold the reins of its future. Rather than negotiating with a self-interested developer, most likely offering a binary choice, we will, instead, engage in a public process to determine its best use, whether for community recreation, civic purposes, or potential development tailored to our needs.

Imagine a space where families gather, children play, and community bonds are strengthened. Picture a development that enhances our city's amenities while respecting the character of our residential neighborhoods. This is our opportunity to dream, to plan and to build together.

Our city's success lies in its ability to innovate while honoring our roots. With a diverse tax base that supports our exceptional amenities and remarkably low property taxes, we have proven that strategic development benefits us all.

I want to thank Beachwood City Council President Alec Isaacson for his leadership and to offer thanks, too, to the City Council for supporting this effort. I also want to thank Eric Silver, chairperson of Fairmount Temple's Real Estate Committee, Michele Krantz, president of Fairmount Temple, and their entire board for resisting the urge to go out to the open market with this parcel.

Our collective actions will create a legacy that future generations will cherish.

Thank you.

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