

RESOLUTION NO. 203-2025(COTW), *First
Reading*

By Council President Larson

A Resolution recognizing the life and contributions of William “Bill” Hanavan; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

WHEREAS, Bill Hanavan passed away on September 4, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of love, generosity, and deep-rooted commitment to family, friends, and community; and

WHEREAS, Bill’s passion for trees began decades ago in western Michigan, at his former home where two majestic oak trees inspired him with their strength and beauty; and

WHEREAS, Bill cultivated this passion by studying native species, purchasing saplings, and planting them not only on his own property but anywhere neighbors and friends welcomed them, transforming unused spaces — even a vacant horse pasture beside his home — into thriving forests with the help of his county’s Conservation District; and

WHEREAS, Bill’s efforts extended beyond his own land, as he helped friends reforest former farmland, kept potted trees on hand for whenever planting opportunities arose, and carried this love of trees with him into retirement in Cleveland Heights, where he continued to plant trees around his neighborhood and for any resident who requested one; and

WHEREAS, Bill’s generosity was matched by his humility, as he often planted trees free of charge, offering not just the saplings but the labor and care required to ensure their survival; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, Bill’s tree-planting hobby grew into a larger movement when, at a fundraiser for the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, he met like-minded neighbors Margy Weinberg, Sue Wolpert, and Laura Marks, with whom he co-founded *Heights Tree People*; and

WHEREAS, through Heights Tree People, Bill and his fellow volunteers assessed neighborhoods with sparse canopy, knocked on doors, offered trees at no cost, planted them in schoolyards, and most recently partnered with the Heights Libraries and Cuyahoga County’s Healthy Urban Tree Canopy program to create an “urban mini forest,” an effort that earned the group the University Heights *Good Neighbor Award* in 2024; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, Heights Tree People has planted more than 1,000 trees across Cleveland Heights and surrounding communities, strengthening the

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environment, improving storm water absorption, reducing the urban heat island effect, and bringing cleaner air and greater beauty to our neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Bill's presence at Arbor Day celebrations, neighborhood tree plantings, and community events will be deeply missed, but his legacy lives on in every canopy that shades a sidewalk, every child who plays beneath a newly planted tree, and every volunteer who continues his mission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, that:

SECTION 1. This Council hereby honors and remembers William "Bill" Hanavan for his extraordinary contributions to the City of Cleveland Heights, for his steadfast belief that planting trees is an act of love, and for inspiring others to follow his example of service and stewardship.

SECTION 2. It is found and determined that all formal actions of the Council relating to the adoption of this Resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and any of its committees that resulted in such formal action, were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements.

SECTION 3. Notice of the passage of this Resolution shall be given by publishing the title and abstract of its contents, prepared by the Director of Law, once in one newspaper of general circulation in the City of Cleveland Heights, or by posting the full text of this Resolution on the City of Cleveland Heights website.

SECTION 5. It is necessary that this Resolution become immediately effective as an emergency measure necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety of the inhabitants of the City of Cleveland Heights, such emergency being the need to recognize the life and contributions of William "Bill" Hanavan in a timely manner. Wherefore, provided it receives the affirmative vote of five or more of the members elected or appointed to this Council, this Resolution shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest time allowed by law.



GAIL L. LARSON
President of Council

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ADDIE BALESTER
Clerk of Council

PASSED: October 6, 2025

Presented to Mayor: 10/06/2025 Approved: 10/06/2025



TONY CUDA
Mayor