



Bold and Accountable Leadership for Cleveland Heights

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Citizens for an Elected Mayor statement on the approval of Issue 26

Cleveland Heights voters made history today. They transformed a system of government created a century ago into one we believe holds promise for a brighter future. They demonstrated the power of focused civic engagement.

For over 100 years, the hallmark of our city manager form of government has been for seven city council members to say the buck stops with them and/or with the city manager they supervise. On paper, true. But the reality over the last 20 years has been more akin to watching the great Cleveland Orchestra perform a concert without a conductor. All the musicians are world-class, but they need a leader to produce their beautiful sound.

Today, voters said they want that conductor. Today, voters said they want an elected mayor who is directly accountable to them. A mayor who will spend full time leading the city in a new way to address our challenges and maximize our assets. A mayor who will be our voice across the region and state.

One year ago, 10 people created Citizens for an Elected Mayor to launch this charter amendment effort. The grassroots effort attracted people from across the community who put in hard work, diligent effort and, ultimately, votes, that achieved a new reality to benefit us and future generations.

We thank all the volunteers and other citizens who attended community events, gathered signatures, signed petitions, invited neighbors into their homes for conversation, spoke out on social and traditional media, talked to elected officials, put up yard signs, distributed literature, made financial contributions and donated professional services. Their passion for Cleveland Heights was boundless.

We also thank those who made small and large donations to make the campaign possible, and those who donated countless hours of pro bono professional services.

Without volunteers and donors, this transformation of city government would not have happened. Thank you for showing that people - that friends, neighbors and even strangers - can make a difference.

Even as we mark tonight's approval of Issue 26, we ask everyone to renew their commitment and apply their energy to the next challenge, which is just as great. Our community must come together and begin preparing for a mayoral election in November 2021 and the first directly elected mayor to take office in January 2022. We must encourage city council and the city administration to work diligently toward a smooth and successful transition – and to maintain the high level of quality services and amenities our city enjoys today.

To those who disagreed with Issue 26, we know you did so from your sincere convictions and desire to continue to make the Heights the best it can be.

We encourage everyone in the community to remain civically engaged and help ensure a strong future. There is much work to be done. We look forward to working side-by-side with everyone to ensure that Cleveland Heights remains a special place.

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