Affordable or just more housing? Housing Now! Zoning Proposals Face City-wide opposition

Since early January, 2018 there has been a flurry of meetings and more meetings, emails, and conversations with neighbors, neighborhood associations, non-profit and for-profit developers, City Commissioners, community leaders, and stakeholders from all corners of Grand Rapids in reaction to the proposed zoning text proposals that were recommended from an appointed taskforce labeled Housing Now!

There are many alarming aspects to these recommendations but foremost is that 3 of the 4 proposals remove neighbors’ voices from developments on your street, in your neighborhood. The opposition to the text changes has been BIG and city-wide. The argument for these changes is that through density of housing units, affordability will occur. There is little data to support this argument and much more that shows the consequences of what other cities experienced in implementing like zoning applications. For in-depth data, please go to https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/Housing-Now

The First Lesson of Preservation:
“Once they come down, they can't go back up again!”

... and other reminiscences from Linda Dejong, Barb Roelofs and John Logie.
From an interview in 1998 - by Tom Truesdale
(Reprinted as HHA turns 50!)

Sometimes it’s the inability to see eye to eye that initiates greatest achievements. The Heritage Hill neighborhood is a case in point. In this particular instance, it was Linda Dejong who first picked up the gauntlet. Shortly following the ’67 riots, and not able to secure a simple mortgage on her family’s first home (505 College SE, the Frank Lloyd Wright Amberg house), Linda and close friends Izzy and Wendy Warnock, and Pat and Ed Shea sat down one weekend to discuss how to improve the image of the neighborhood. They could not have known where this meeting would lead.

“Some people who came later called this the ‘Founders Meeting’,” says Linda, a no-nonsense type whose fervor set the pattern for the early hill “activists.” “It was Wendy who first came up with the name Heritage Hill,” she recalls, “to represent in name, not just the age, but the culture and the diversity of the neighborhood.” That, it turns out, was one of the easiest tasks in those early days. Some tough questions were asked and it soon became obvious to these “founding five” that for things in their neighborhood to improve, the wholesale demolition and new construction that followed had to stop. Basically, she sighed, it was down to “promote the Hill or move out.”

The College Park urban renewal project was looming – land use projects that would decimate a large portion of the northern section of the Hill and involved the expansion of the (then) Grand Rapids Junior College. And on the south end, the Washington Square project would, if successful, level several blocks of homes adjacent to St. Mary’s Hospital.

(Continued on page 6)
The Heritage Hill Association

126 College S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-459-8950  Fax: 616-459-2409

Purpose:
The purpose of the Heritage Hill Association is to provide neighbors a way of collectively building a healthy, historically preserved community in which people can live and work in a secure and stable environment.

Office Staff:
Jan Earl, Executive Director
Tanya Harris, Crime Prevention
Maria Zache Starkey, Administrative
Barb Lester; Office

The Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors
Co-President
*Lisa Baars, 139 Prospect NE, (C) 616-540-9356
*Wesley Beek, 225 Fountain NE, (H) 456-5144

Vice President
*Mark Hutchison, 38 Prospect Ave SE, (C) 214-7384

Treasurer
**Erin Shupe, 427 Prospect Ave SE, (C) 633-8946

Secretary
**Suzanne DeHaan, 573 Prospect SE, (H) 742-0451

*Kate Diedrich, 536 Prospect SE, (H) 451-9211
*Wendy Verhage Falh, 350 Cherry SE, (C) 616-818-8873
*Mary McCarthy-Fuller, 203 Morris Ave SE Apt 3, (C) 616-773-9187
*Michele Giordano, 444 Union Ave SE, 616-862-7068
*Susan Green, 403 College SE, (C) 616-206-2089
Christopher Grygiel, 231 Paris Ave SE Apt 2, (C) 616-634-7018
*Nikki Hoort, 500 Cherry SE, (C) 616-813-6026
**Todd Hoort, 135 Lafayette NE, (C) 813-6026
Wayne Norlin, 558 Morris Ave SE, (C) 292-8263
Nathan Slauer, 65 Union NE, (C) 616-304-5113

* 1st Term
** 2nd Term

The Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors meets at 7 pm the third Wednesday of each month at the Hauenstein Center - H1 Community Room at Mercy Health Saint Mary’s. The meeting is open to the public.

Heritage Hill Association Contacts:
Finance:    Erin Shupe, (C) 633-8946
Newsletter: Jan Earl, 459-8950
Preservation: Rhonda Baker, (H) 656-3451
Traffic and Parking: Jane Earl, (W) 459-8950
Zoning: Craig Nobbelin, 458-0471
Home Tour: Suzanne DeHaan, (H) 742-0451

** 2nd Term

The Heritage Hill Association provides information regarding what goes on in the neighborhood and helps neighbors connect and participate in neighborhood activities. The Heritage Hill Association is a non-profit organization and relies on the support of its members to continue its work.

The GR Historic Preservation Commission regulates the City’s Preservation Ordinance. Applications and approvals are needed from this city department before beginning any exterior work or repairs.
Contact 456-3451 or rbaker@grcity.org.

The Heritage Herald - Circulation 4,800
The Heritage Herald is published by the Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors six times a year (bi-monthly). The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors. We reserve the right to edit. Address correspondence to The Heritage Herald, 126 College SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

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Happy Spring Heritage Hill – throw off your shoes, feel the sun, smell the buds, hear the birds and your neighbors -- the neighborhood is again outdoors.

Thanks to all for writing, attending meetings, and using your voices objecting to the zoning text proposals. The City Commission will be making its decision on next steps on April. We’ll keep the conversation going.

The 49th Annual Heritage Hill Weekend Tour of Homes is just weeks away. May 19 and 20 are the dates and 8 private hosts invite you into their homes to share their architecture, design, art, and home’s history. Please, please help spread the word - use all your social media tricks and your face-to-face charm and get people excited to see the inside of Heritage Hill. Send people to our website, heritagehillweb.org for more enticement. It will be a beautiful weekend to walk this great place that we call home.

There is a way to get a FREE ticket to Tour:

We need volunteer guides right up to the days of Tour to cover any cancellations. Please call today, 459-8950, or email heritage@heritagehillweb.org and help Tour run smoothly with a 4 hour shift.

Leaping into summer is the purge (or splurge) at the Association’s annual Heritage Hill Yard Sales Day on June 2. Call or email the HHA office, heritage@heritagehillweb.org; 459-8950 and we’ll get you on the list that we’ll post on our website. And soon to follow, the Heritage Hill Garden Tour is June 16. And not to zoom through the summer but our Night Out Ice Cream Social is August 7. Mark your calendars and more details will follow.

We are singing our welcome back song to Maria Zache (and Jim Starkey too) from their 4-month winter break. Maria returned to work on March 19.

Say Hi to each other - Jan Earl Executive Director

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Housing Now! (Cont’d from page 1)

about the need for more community engagement and urged the Commission to hold off on voting on the recommendations. The Commission took this to heart and decided to postpone indefinitely any decision on the recommendations. It will spend part of its April 10 Committee of the Whole meeting discussing next steps for future conversations and community engagement around the recommendations.

Thank you to the many neighbors who wrote letters and/or attended the public hearing. Our collective voices were heard. However, there is more to come and HHA will keep the information flowing for future steps.

The Heritage Hill Association's position statement to the GR City Commission:

The Heritage Hill Association opposes the proposed zoning ordinance text changes (Recommendations #’s: 3, 6, 8 and 9). We believe these code changes are premature and were not properly vetted. The risk of unintended consequences is too great to codify good intentions without the research and necessary data to support what Housing Now! purports for the zoning ordinance changes. We urge you to have a vigorous community conversation within the development of the City’s Master Plan. This is the City of Grand Rapids’ way of engagement: to harness the collective wisdom of our community so that Grand Rapids is strong and a healthy and vital place to live, work and play.

The goal of our City should be incentivizing the development and stabilization of mixed-income neighborhoods everywhere in Grand Rapids. There is strong support for diverse and healthy neighborhoods. This has been voiced by the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of neighbors that have gathered over the past 2 months. But this goal needs a planned approach that the current proposals do not offer. The zoning amendments do not specifically provide or protect affordable housing and will likely concentrate wealth in high-demand areas. The process and the text of these proposals have disenfranchised neighbors who have worked so hard to improve their neighborhood and this city. Trust in our local government has been severely scarred.

We urge the City Commission to take advantage of the turmoil, chaos and energy that the proposed zoning text changes have created. Engage these mobilized neighbors, neighborhood associations and community stakeholders to create a productive and data driven Master Plan for our city.

On behalf of the HHA Board, we strongly advocate to continue this conversation with all voices.

An encapsulized argument to these zoning proposals was provided by Susie Logie:

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

Most of your constituents live in defined and organized neighborhoods with history and future improvement plans. Typically, they have priorities and tend not to be shy about asking for their city’s help.

Developers differ from this profile in important ways. Seldom are they your constituents. More rarely do they live in the neighborhoods they target for development. Also, they are for-profit entities, or, if non-profit, they can be institutions seeking to expand. They are land hungry, and, in mature built-up cities, often acquire non-vacant land, sometimes a block at a time, scattering residents and businesses in their wake. Affordable housing has been a chief casualty of this process.

Now we can sum up the current situation as a land-war that
developers are winning. For the neighborhoods, there has been, and still is, much to lose. Sometimes it’s the neighborhood school when the new project evicts too many families with school children. Sometimes one outsize project begets others causing rolling displacement and depopulation.

It is time to come down firmly on the side of the neighborhoods, which need your help in protecting their physical “territory” and their voices in matters affecting their neighborhoods. Developers may WANT your help, but they don’t need it, and should not be favored in ordinance language. Your response to developer requests should be, “Come back and talk to me after you’ve sold your idea to the people and the association of the neighborhood that would have to live with it.”

If you were elected, WE did that. Another difference between us and developers. The proposed text changes are a big deal and a bad deal to us. Electing you again is on the line on this issue. Keeping developers happy is not a civic responsibility. There may, in fact, be too many of them for our size city. The good ones will succeed in selling their ideas to neighborhoods because they will work with them and get to yes together with them. A win-win-win, for neighbors, developers, and city.

Susie Logie

Remember Heritage Hill Property Owners:

There is a City Preservation Ordinance that governs all exterior changes, repairs and/or additions to Heritage Hill properties. Call the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission at 456-3451 for information on approvals. You can access the application form at the City’s website, www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us at the Planning Department section or at the Heritage Hill Association’s www.heritagehillweb.org. This ordinance applies to all exterior changes, repairs, and/or additions to your home and property. Items such as doors and windows including storms, yard structures, driveway and sidewalk approaches, and fences do need HPC approvals.
The Heritage Hill Annual Weekend Tour of Homes May 19 and 20, 2018

Tour one of the country’s largest urban historic districts and help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Heritage Hill Association. The Annual Heritage Hill Tour welcomes you inside 7 restored private houses and three historic buildings on Saturday, May 19 from 11 am - 5 pm and Sunday, May 20 from 12 pm - 6 pm. Tour offers an interior view of stunning turn-of-the-century homes each uniquely styled by current owners. An elegant Greek revival, amazingly modern Queen Annes, a Chateaux mansion, a Craftsman beauty, a creatively converted 1900 carriage house, and more await you. It’s a celebration of the grandeur and art of the past fused with present-day livability. We’ve come a long way since 1968 when 75% of the neighborhood was slated for demolition.

Advance tickets are $18.00 and are available at the Heritage Hill Association office or at www.heritagehillweb.org. To obtain tickets by check, send to the Heritage Hill Association, 126 College SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Tickets the weekend of the tour are $25.00. Free shuttle bus transportation for the tour is provided between featured properties.

Heritage Hill dates back to 1843 and was named by This Old House as one of the “Best Old House Neighborhoods” in the country. Its 1,300 homes represent Michigan’s finest collection of 19th and 20th century American architecture.

Proceeds benefit the Heritage Hill Association which supports the historic preservation of this unique neighborhood and assists with land use planning, engaging community, and safety. Please call 616-459-8950 for more information.

Please Volunteer for Tour - We Need You!

The Shifts:
Saturday, May 19th: 10:30 am to 2:30 pm or 2:00 - 5:30 pm
Sunday, May 20th: 11:30 am - 3:30 pm or 3:00 - 6:30 pm

Please email: heritage@heritagehillweb.org or call 616 459-8950 with your preferred day and shift.
Office hours are 9-5, M-TH; voicemail is available after-hours.
You’ll get a free ticket to Tour and huge applause!
The addressed houses are those that need volunteers.
One morning, by chance, Izzy Warnock met Barb Roelofs at the Blodgett Cafe and recruited her on the spot. A sweet talking, but no-holds-barred type of person, Barb’s involvement grew into a mission to get the “Heritage Hill” neighborhood designated a national historic district so the status itself would protect it from further encroachment.

What followed in the coming months were door to door campaigns, letters to congressional reps, envelope stuffing – even bake sales, calendar sales and whatever it took to pass the word along and raise money simultaneously to continue the effort.

The Hill’s first tour took place in 1969 as an offshoot of these fundraisers and public relation efforts. Four or five homes, Linda wasn’t sure, but remembers it was her home, Barb’s and a couple other board members’ homes. ‘We were hoping to attract a little attention,’ says Linda, “maybe bring in a couple of hundred people.’ It was held on a single day -- a Tuesday (Heritage Day of Michigan Week) -- and there was a one dollar admission. They attracted nearly 1500 people. ‘We were astonished,” adds Linda, ‘not to mention tired by the time that day ended.”

And so it was, the annual tour was born in glorious fashion. There was a five year period, in fact, that two tours were held annually.

The Heritage Hill Association was incorporated in November of 1968 and it was pretty much by design that early membership of this fledgling neighborhood association board required five or more attorneys, “whether they lived in the Hill or not,” says Linda, the board’s first president. “The early struggles against developers made it a necessity.” One of those first board members and practicing attorney

(Continued on page 7)
was John Logie, who had just recently returned to Grand Rapids and was living in an apartment on Madison. He agreed to join these early activists and loan his expertise in corporate legal services.

Barb, a native of San Francisco, and John, coming from Annapolis, Maryland, had some model of historic home districts fresh in their minds. This provided new impetus to historical designation of the neighborhood. As things stood, however, Grand Rapids had no arm of the law to create or enforce the ordinances necessary to protect such an area.

While there were plenty of homes tragically lost leading up to this point, Linda, Barb and John agreed it was probably the Ball House near the top of Fulton Street Hill that spurred the direction they ultimately took. The house would be razed for an apartment building, and there were no weapons the group could find to prevent the inevitable from happening. The house came down.

The Heritage Hill board had previously petitioned the city for a moratorium on demolition and exterior change until a study of the Hill’s historical value could be assessed. A now defunct paper of the time, The Grand Rapids Interpreter, likened these early Hill activists to Nazi storm troopers for their efforts when trying to save endangered buildings. The first use of the term actually came about when owners of WGRD Radio, then housed at the corner of John Street and Lafayette, were negotiating the sale of their property to the Masonic Temple for a parking lot. This early victory gave notice that this early Hill group’s tenacity would become their chief notoriety.

In 1969, no state or local legislation existed which would allow the city to designate Heritage Hill as a Grand Rapids historic district. John and Barb lobbied in Lansing for enabling legislation at the state level. The state legislature acted in 1970 and the city followed in 1971. Linda, David Soet and others worked with the city to draft the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation ordinance.

Concurrent with the legislative activity, Linda and Barb sought the expertise of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Following their guidance, the Heritage Hill Association hired two nationally recognized experts in historic preservation. Carl Feiss and Russell Wright came to Grand Rapids and viewed the elements of Heritage Hill and were ‘totally amazed.’ They agreed with the original boundaries proposed by the association and set about initiating an architectural survey. Ethel Hansma, another “activist” whose tireless efforts helped in the Hill’s preservation, headed a group who meticulously researched the history of each and every home within Heritage Hill’s boundaries. Of the approximately 1300 structures, the survey identified over 500 architecturally significant building that warranted a rating of exemplary status.

Heritage Hill was officially designated as a National Historic District in March of 1971: at the time, the largest single urban historic district in the nation. The seemingly endless (mainly to outside developers) extensions of the moratorium on new construction had run the initial request for a 6-month halt in 1969 to its eventual dropping in 1973, when the final ordinances were approved and in the books; ordinances that would become models for other towns throughout Michigan and the country.

Celebrating the National Historic District designation was short-lived, if at all. Though many thought this status would change the future complexion of the neighborhood, much actually remained unchanged except for the tactics of developers. Neighborhood “watchers” were still used by the board and reported any suspicious activity to the group on a weekly basis. Some reported homes severely disfigured for apartment use and some tried (often in vain) to prevent “midnight” bulldozing of properties.

Despite the landmark status, Linda, Barb and John recalled, with some trepidation, that things were pretty much as they were and successes had to be measured one property at a time and sometimes the negotiating involved as much or more ‘give’ than ‘take.’

Compromise was necessary, for instance, in order to achieve preservation goals when Grand Rapids Public Schools and the Heritage Hill Association agreed to the removal of a block of houses (Clifton Place) directly behind Central High School. The Heritage Hill board, due to the wording of the compromise, were, as John says, between a rock and a hard place. They negotiated the moving of 3 of the houses, but 5 others were lost in the decision.

There were even many ecumenical battles -- mostly for parking lot space. ‘We’re not against churches, by any means,” says Linda, “but we go after anyone not practicing good preservation.” And sometimes in the act of preservation, a home cannot continue in its capacity as a “home.” There were just times, says John, that all the avenues of residential use were exhausted and we had to turn to non-residential use, or what they referred to as ‘adaptive re-use’, to maintain the integrity and appearance of the Hill.

In 1971, to further protect the Hill’s past as well as forge its future, the city’s historic preservation commission...
Proudly Serving Heritage Hill for 69 Years
The Genuine. The Original.

Preservation (Continued from 7)

was formed. The first chairman of that commission was Mr. John Cary. He and his wife, Ara, were longtime residents of Prospect.

Because of her earlier experience, Linda spearheaded the effort to gain FHA mortgage approval for homes in the Hill. “This,” says Joyce Makinen a 29-year veteran of Heritage Hill campaigns, “did as much to save the hill as the historical designation did.” Linda also went to numerous realtors and stood up at their meetings to protest and eventually eradicate redlining practices (though denied, there was much evidence indicating otherwise). There were many times when members of the HHA board signed their names to mortgages to save homes from the wrecking ball. John recalls he and others having signed two or three mortgages each while searching for prospective buyers. Those early “pioneers” of the Hill believed in their cause and the roles they played as caretakers of history.

Barb and Linda figured a few more years of hard work and they could put all this behind them and relax. We figured 10 years, tops, and we’d be able to relax and enjoy the fruits of our efforts,” admits Barb. “Boy, were we ever naive.” Nearly 30 years later, (Now 50 years later) there is still work to do, but Barb and Linda did hit the nail on the head with one of their early prophesies: “We worried that one day we’d probably price ourselves out of the area ... we were right,” Barb exclaims.

For Grand Rapids, Michigan and the Midwest, Heritage Hill has in the past, and right up through today, defined what a neighborhood group should be. Though many mistakes have been made, it was and still is the successes that others follow for guidance. The years have given the organization a credibility that many others don’t have or possibly will never have. “But we,” adds John, “had great stock to start with.”

Happy 50th HHA

WHOEVER YOU ARE, WHEREVER YOU GO IN GOD’S WIDE WORLD,
You are WELCOME at the corner of College & Fulton!

Communion every Wednesday 12:15 - 12:45 pm
www.centralreformedchurch.org

A 100 year old house, with a new garage door to match.
The 2018 Heritage Hill Weekend Tour of Homes

Needs You!

Please Volunteer

Experienced Greeters and Shift Managers Needed, Too

The Shifts:

Saturday, May 19th: 10:30 to 2:30 and 2:00 to 5:30
Sunday, May 20th: 11:30 to 3:30 and 3:00 to 6:30

PLEASE Email: heritage@heritagehillweb.org
or CALL the HHA Office 459-8950 with your preferred day and shift.
Office hours are 9-5, M-TH; voicemail is available for after-hours messages.

You’ll get a free ticket to Tour and huge applause!

Continuing thanks to our recent Association contributors:

Rick and Sue Bylsma
Nancy Coulter
Dave and Sue DeJonge
Fountain View Condominium Association
Jay and Amelia Grayson
Judy Jorgenson
John and Patricia LaGrand
Jim Payne and Char Kruzich
Regina Lingaro
Erin and Michael Shupe
Shain and Jeni Taheri

The 2018 Heritage Hill Weekend Tour of Homes

Reason #2

53 Public School Choices

www.GRPS.org/EnrollToday

• Grand Rapids Montessori (PK-12)
• Innovation Central High (9-12)
• Coit Creative Arts Academy (PK-5)
• Congress Elementary (PK-5)
• University Prep Academy (6-12)
• Grand Rapids Public Museum School (6-8)

Schedule your tour today!
GR Home Share

Looking to Share Your Home? A local non-profit organization is seeking Home Sharers who want to share their homes with others for financial support, companionship, personal safety and/or help with household chores. "Home Providers" must be homeowners, over the age of 55, who would enjoy and benefit from sharing their home with another.

Looking for Housings? "Home Seekers" find affordable housing in exchange for submarket-rate rent and/or fulfillment of agreed upon household chores or support functions. Seekers may be graduate students, a young professional, an able-bodied senior, a person working low-wage jobs, or anyone in need of low cost housing who also enjoys living with others.

GR Home Share, a local non-profit organization, is coordinating the Home Share program which offers a creative solution to high house costs and allows senior homeowners to "age in place" with safety and companionship. Trained staff matches home sharers with a compatible provider or seeker.

For more information contact: lily@newdevelopmentcorp.org or call 616-361-7500.

The Heritage Hill Association publishes available apartments.

Please remember us when your apartment needs renters. Your dollars not only find you tenants but also support the programs of the Heritage Hill Association! You can list your apartment right at the website or stop by the HHA office. We welcome you!

Check out available apartments at HERITAGEHILLWEB.ORG

Heritage Hill Apartment Rental and Home Sales Listings All sizes and prices -- Spread the word!!!
It’s that time of year when the crocus and the daffodils break through the drab of winter and usher us to a more colorful and vibrant future – “Springtime” … and while a young man’s thoughts may be turning to love, many of the rest of us become more preoccupied with our gardens … a far safer endeavor with less lasting implications … (I hope you are laughing).

Saturday, June 16th is the date for the 2018 Heritage Hill Garden Tour. Our garden recruiters will be on the streets in the coming weeks looking for prospective gardens for the tour, so if you see some otherwise normal looking folks rubbernecking your neighborhood, don’t be concerned. We’re harmless. If you or someone you know might be interested being on the garden tour or just want to learn more, please call Jim Payne at 454-2367 or the Heritage Hill office at 459-8950.

Being a host gardener for the tour is a very simple experience. You supply the garden, we do the rest. On the day of tour, you or your appointed representative are asked to be in your garden to welcome our guests. You will spend the day being showered with praise for your gardening efforts and learn all kinds of new things from fellow gardeners who have tips to share. Oh... did we mention gifts? There will be lovely gifts for each of the host gardeners which will be presented to you at the Garden Crawl. The Garden Crawl takes place on the eve of the tour, Friday June 15th. That evening, the host gardeners and tour committee gather at one of the tour gardens. Food, refreshments and gifts are shared as we then make our way from tour garden to tour garden, thus giving all the host gardeners the opportunity to experience the tour gardens on the eve of the tour. The Garden Crawl event has evolved into a memorable evening of garden sharing and socializing. Just ask anyone who has participated in one.

So much to look forward to and so much fun to be had …

But for now … WE NEED GARDENS!!

- Jim Payne
The Willette family, an anchor of our neighborhood for 40+ years

Hard to say so long to a family that has lived with us for decades. Jarv, Marilyn, Stephanie and Cally have been ever present on the south end of Heritage Hill. From saving a fire ravaged house to all the ensuing years of raising a wonderful family on Morris Avenue, the Willettes have generously shared their life, their whimsy, their stories, expertise, art and talent with us. We say fond adieu as you live your next chapter in a new community. You are missed but your Morris family will continue to talk about you! All the best!!!

2018 ANNUAL USED BOOK SALE
WOMEN’S CITY CLUB
254 Fulton St. East

HUNDREDS OF BOOKS! GREAT PRICES!

Tues., April 17 - 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Wed., April 18 - 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Thu., April 19 – 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Don’t Miss It!

Free parking at our lot on Lafayette SE.

2018 Heritage Hill Walk, Run Tour Teasers

Choose to either walk or run by the outside of featured properties on the 2018 Heritage Hill Annual Weekend Tour of Homes. Your host, Caroline Cook, of Grand Rapids Running and Walking Tours, will guide and narrate fascinating home histories as you travel the streets of these beautifully restored homes.

Cost is $25 per tour, per person, that includes advance tickets to the 2018 Heritage Hill Home Tour (May 19 & 20, 2018)

OR

$10 per tour, per person, which does not include advance tickets to the 2018 Heritage Hill Home Tour.

Select from the following dates:

May 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, and 10
Walking route at 5:00 p.m. - Running route at 7:00 p.m.

OR

Pre-Tour walk - Saturday - May 19 at 9:30 a.m.

All guided tours will meet on the driveway of the Meyer May House, 450 Madison SE., rain or shine.
Advance registration is necessary at www.grandrapidsrunningtours.com

If you have any questions, or prefer to schedule a Teaser Tour for a large group or at a different time, please contact Caroline, at caroline@grandrapidsrunningtours.com.
**Spring Cleaning**

Spring has sprung! With that comes some clean-up. Yard waste season is between early April and mid-December. The exact dates depend on weather; this year the season is projected to start April 2nd but that could change. There are a few options for curbside collection:

- You can order a Yard Waste Bin for $27.50. These bins are very large and they do need a yard waste tag ($6.00) in order for them to be dumped. They will be collected any normal Trash day that you have. You can order your bin on the city website or in person at City Hall (300 Monroe NW).
- The other option is Yard Waste Paper Bags. You can use a yard waste paper bag for leaves, grass clippings and small twigs. Bags are $2.50 each or come in packs of 5 for $12.50. Items in the yard waste paper bag can’t weigh more than 30 pounds. These can sometimes be found in area grocery stores (BUT MAKE SURE THEY SAY CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS ON THEM). Then place the bags at your curb on your normal trash pickup day.
- Yard Waste Bulk Tags are also available. You can use a purple yard waste bulk tag for bundles of larger twigs or branches. You may also attach this tag to non-city paper yard waste bags. These tags cost $2.50 each. Bundled branches and twigs shouldn’t be more than 4 feet long or 2 inches in diameter.
- We also have a free drop-off site. It is located at 2001 Butterworth St SW. The site is open from 9am-6pm, Monday through Saturday. This is offered to Grand Rapids residents only, so bring your ID for proof of residence. Yard waste must be loose or in a paper bag. Plastic bags are not allowed.

**YARD WASTE INCLUDES:**
- Grass clippings
- Leaves
- Brush
- Twigs (less than two inches in diameter)
- Garden Plants

**YARD WASTE DOES NOT INCLUDE:**
- Sod
- Dirt
- Stones
- Broken concrete
- Trees
- Tree limbs
- Logs
- Railroad ties
- Stumps
- Animal feces and dead animals

Speaking of those animal feces... we are still getting complaints about pet owners not cleaning up after their dogs. This includes areas like alleys, parks and along easements on the street. Please be sure to bring bags with you. If you are in a bind I am going to guess that if you knocked on a door a neighbor would be glad to give you a bag to use. One thing we can all agree on is that we hate stepping in poo.

**Kent County Healthy Start**

Kent County Healthy Start is a FREE program. Healthy Start staff is extensively trained to help provide answers to parents’ questions like: caring for yourself during pregnancy, soothing your crying child, ensuring your child is receiving the right nutrition, promoting healthy child development and bonding and safe home environment. Healthy Start also offers connections with local community resources like childcare, medical care, playgroups and connections with other parents. Call 616.454.4673 for more information.

**Get the Lead Out!**

Many of the homes in Grand Rapids contain lead hazards that put children at risk. The Get the Lead Out! Program provides loans and/or coverage for the repairs needed to ensure safe and lead-free homes. If you meet all of the requirements listed below, you may qualify for the Get the Lead Out! Program. Here’s what homeowners can expect:
- Up to $20,000 in repairs
- No repayment for homeowners who stay in their homes for 5 years.

Get the Lead Out! through the City of Grand Rapids Lead Hazard Control Program, provides up to $20,000 in repairs for households citywide. This includes paint repair, new windows and other lead hazard elimination practices. For homeowners who stay in their homes for five years, no repayment is necessary. The grant is secured by a self-amortizing loan, so those who move out sooner than five years will need to repay a prorated portion of the grant.

Your home may also be eligible for additional free repairs for health and safety items based on a full-home assessment. Call for more information.

**How to Apply**

Call Healthy Homes Coalition at (616) 241-3300 or complete this intake form on their website at: http://gettheleadoutgr.org and email it to candace@healthyhomescoalition.org

**Lead Safe Practices**

With our old homes comes Lead Paint. This issue is magnified for children. Be sure to use lead safe practices while renovating and painting your homes.

(Continued on page 14)
Federal law requires contractors that are hired to perform renovation, repair and painting projects in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 that disturb painted surfaces to be certified and follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination. The work practices the contractor must follow include these three simple procedures, described below:

**Contain the work area.** The area must be contained so that dust and debris do not escape from that area. Warning signs must be put up and plastic or other impermeable material and tape must be used as appropriate to:
- Cover the floors and any furniture that cannot be moved.
- Seal off doors and heating and cooling system vents.
- For exterior renovations, cover the ground and, in some instances, erect vertical containment or equivalent extra precautions in containing the work area. These work practices will help prevent dust or debris from getting outside the work area.

2. Avoid renovation methods that generate large amounts of lead-contaminated dust. Some methods generate so much lead-contaminated dust that their use is prohibited. They are:
- Open flame burning or torching.
- Sanding, grinding, planning, needle gunning, or blasting with power tools and equipment not equipped with a shroud and HEPA vacuum attachment.
- Using a heat gun at temperatures greater than 1100°F.

There is no way to eliminate dust, but some renovation methods make less dust than others. Contractors may choose to use various methods to minimize dust generation, including using water to mist areas before sanding or scraping; scoring paint before separating components; and prying and pulling apart components instead of breaking them.

3. Clean up thoroughly. The work area should be cleaned up daily to keep it as clean as possible. When all the work is done, the area must be cleaned up using special cleaning methods before taking down any plastic that isolates the work area from the rest of the home. The special cleaning methods should include:
- Using a HEPA vacuum to clean up dust and debris on all surfaces, followed by
- Wet wiping and wet mopping with plenty of rinse water. When the final cleaning is done, look around. There should be no dust, paint chips, or debris in the work area. If you see any dust, paint chips, or debris, the area must be re-cleaned.


So what happens if you see a violation? These are handled by Code Enforcement at the City of Grand Rapids 616-456-3053.

**Dogs at Large**
I have had a few calls regarding what to do if there is a dog at large running around. If you are like me, an avid friend to dogs, I try to get them to come to me. However this can be dangerous with dogs you don’t know. It can be stressful time for dogs that are lost or might be wary of strangers. So who do you call if you need help? That is a call for Animal Control most days. They are available M-F at 616-456-3400. But what if a dog is loose on the weekend? The Grand Rapids Police Dept. also responds to at-large dog cases, they prefer Animal Control handle it when they are open. But if that is not an option, give the GRPD a call at: 616-456-3400

**Absolutely Everyone is Welcome.**
We don’t presume you to be Christian, but being Christian to us means that we welcome absolutely everyone.

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[www.westminstergr.org](http://www.westminstergr.org)

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Discussion at the January, 2018 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting Included:

New Business – Craig Nobbelin, HHA Zoning Committee chair introduced the City’s Housing Now! Proposed zoning text amendments that are before the Planning Commission on January 25. He provided an overview of the draft recommendation letter from the HHA Zoning Committee. The amendments are being proposed under the goal of providing more affordable housing in GR. The theory is that increased density will provide more affordable units. The HHA position disputes that conclusion and also opposes the by-right provisions that will remove neighbors’ voices from development proposals. Letter as submitted was approved unanimously. Board members were also encouraged to send personal letters to the Planning Commission.

Community Development Block Grant Funding: Approval to submit Continued Funding Request (RCF) for continued 2018-19 CDBG funding ($43,756) was moved and approved.

Treasurer’s Report – E. Shupe reviewed the year-end report and reported that the Task Forces regarding Home Tour and Individual/Institutional Contributions were still being formed.

Staff Reports – Jan and Tansy’s written reports were reviewed. Jan highlighted her appointment to the stakeholders group that will interview City Manager candidates. She also reported on the status of 402-430 Madison SE. The properties had sold to Kenewa Builders and the owners are concentrating on restoration of the main house. There are currently no solid plans for the vacant parcels.

2018 Organization Structure & Board Information Groups + breakout) – Board members gathered in their respective Information groups. Wayne Norlin is the chair of Land Use group; Kate Diedrich is Fundraising and Todd Hoort and Michele Giordano will co-chair Community Engagement.

Home Tour/Friends & Sponsors: Home Tour still needs three more houses. Suggestions were welcomed. Suzanne also requested House Captain volunteers.

Discussion at the February, 2018 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting Included:

Public Comment: Scott Noto introduced himself as a candidate for an open judge position in the upcoming August primary.

Rhonda Baker of the city’s Historic Preservation Commission overviewed the Heritage Hill Historic District Study Report and proposal to extend Heritage Hill’s dates of historical significance from 1845 – 1923 to 1845 – 1968. The proposal is basically a housekeeping effort and will effect approximately 80 structures that were less than 50 years old when the district was designated. This change will allow owners of these 80 properties to access Federal and State tax credits in the repair and renovation of these structures. The criteria judged these properties’ effect on the character of the neighborhood not just in style or architecture, but also in the people, the events and the eras that brought them into being. Through this examination of “contributing to the character of the hill” vs. “non-contributing,” only a handful of structures were in the “non-contributing” category. This inclusion creates a more complete picture of the development and growth of Heritage Hill. Rhonda stressed this change does not affect current guidelines or boundaries.

Staff Reports: In addition to her printed report, Jan remarked she has been busy, busy, busy due to city’s Housing Now!

(Continued on page 16)
zoning text proposals. She called it the most complicated and misunderstood issue that she has dealt with in her tenure. It has pretty much been non-stop gathering and supplying of information to better understand the meaning of the proposals and their consequences. Much board member discussion ensued. This is not only a Heritage Hill concern... it is a concern of the entire city and most all GR neighborhoods are opposed to the zoning changes.

In addition to Tansy’s report, she reiterated some neighborhood scams related to Craig’s List and snow removal services as well as some recent breaking and entering cases. A meeting with the owners of Stuyvesant Apartments yielded additional steps they are taking to maintain the property. Tansy is also heavily involved with Housing Now! issues and acting as liaison with all other neighborhood organizations.

**Fundraising:** Home Tour 2018 – The line-up is set with eight homes and two institutions. 50th Anniversary Tour plans being discussed. Garden Tour a go, but currently on the back burner. Other fundraising efforts (Texas Hold’em, etc.) in progress as well.

Community Engagement: Still a meeting or two away from finalizing plans. More at March meeting.

**Land Use:** Brief talk on the purchase of the recently vacated Jellema house. Also, Mooney Park (Logan & Prospect SE) expecting a facelift this summer season.

**Discussion at the March, 2018 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:**

**Public Comment:** Robb Metzger presented information regarding ongoing problems with parking at 312 Prospect NE, a multi-unit apartment building.

Curt Benson, a neighbor on Morris SE, presented information on his candidacy for Circuit Court Judge.

**Treasurers Report** – Early in the year for analysis. The hope is that the low turnout of Home Tour 2017 was an outlier year.

**Staff Reports:** In addition to her written report, Jan Earl remarked that while Home Tour is front and center, the proposed zoning changes related to Housing NOW! are requiring intense organizing. Numerous meetings, conversations with neighborhood associations, community leaders, neighbors, non-profit developers and more. HHA has sent out multiple updates to neighbors and is currently hoping that the Tuesday, March 27 public hearing is cancelled due to the Planning Department’s presentation of a 116-page data report released today, March 21 with only a short time before the hearing. HHA urges neighbors to flood City Hall and to write our commissioners. We are seeking a robust community engagement on this proposal.

Work continues with promoting the Association’s 50th birthday; discussion included the draft logo, continued work on a video and fleshing out the 50/50/50 Run/Walk concept of the 50th anniversary, 50 accomplishments and 50% of the run profits going to the Association. There is
also a Teaser Tour run/walk offering the weeks before and Saturday morning of Tour weekend.

Jan also announced that HHA (and other neighborhood associations) were not approved for a tech grant for website improvements, especially in the areas of being mobile friendly and creating a community calendar.

GRCC has plans to reconstruct its Devos Campus parking lot which will impact Home Tour; coordinated efforts are being made to mitigate the inconvenience during the tour.

Historic District Study: The report is posted on the HHA website. Fifteen neighbors attended a community meeting. There was no opposition; HHA sent a letter of support.

523 Lyon NE, Jellema House: Two families purchased the property but there is no firm plan for its use except that first floor will be a residence for one owner. The need for parking is the focus issue for neighbors.

Members asked for additional details from Tansy’s written report about a death in the south part of the neighborhood that is related to a drug house.

Committee/Board information groups:
Fundraising and Finance:
Home Tour: Planning is in full gear. Publicity/News releases are out and printing of postcards is done. Bus route is done, tickets nearing completion, meeting to arrange teaser runs, walks for Tour and meeting with Steering Committee. Kate D. outlined an idea for a drawing and encouraged any willing members to bake mini cupcakes to be given away during the tour. Kate and Suzanne D. have visited 7 of 8 homes, Nikki H. and Nathan S. are making great efforts in marketing and Grand Rapids Running Tours will be holding a run Saturday morning of tour with historic information being provided to the runners about the homes on tour.

Texas Hold’em: Raised a little over $1,000 at the February event. Discussion included the myriad of challenges in orchestrating these events.

Garden Tour: The tour is set for Saturday, June 16th, with two gardens recruited so far and one sponsor. Plans are in progress but currently on the back burner.

Community Engagement: Todd H. announced plans for a Fun Run in the neighborhood, likely to be held in October, a fun-K and to end at Pleasant Park with cider and doughnuts and “play” medals for the kids, etc. The emphasis will be on “fun” and all are welcome to participate.

If you would like an item placed on the Board agenda, please call the HHA office at 459-8950 before 4:00 p.m. of the second WEDNESDAY of the month. If you would like to address the Board regarding an agenda item, public comment is taken at the beginning of each meeting. For non-agenda items, public comment is taken at the end of each meeting. Typically, Board meetings run from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

If you would like to receive monthly Board agendas via email, please email us your request (heritage@heritagehillweb.org)

Welcome to First Church in the heart of the city — a progressive Christian community of faith that embraces all. We are committed to faith development that leads to engagement in acts of justice, mercy, and service.

We look forward to connecting with you!

Sunday Worship: 8:15 and 10:45 am

First United Methodist Church
227 Fulton St E • Grand Rapids
www.GrandRapidsFUMC.org
Pleasant Park Tenders Needed!

Pleasant Park has beautiful flower beds but they need help staying that way! We have stunning flower and tree gardens but the city does not perform maintenance on these. We are seeking 13 (we already have 5) persons/households/friend groups/or teens who need community service hours to commit to taking a section to maintain this summer. We are asking that you or your team commit to joining us for the initial neighborhood-wide clean-up on May 5th, if possible, and to doing at least 4 hours of weeding in each of the months of June, July, August and September. If you are interested in helping out but cannot commit to this much we could still use your help throughout the summer. We would like to have reserve volunteers in the event that someone needs extra help on their section. If you are interested please email Joshlyn Litzenberger at joshlynlitzenberger@gmail.com for more information.
Pleasant Park Garden Cleanup! – May 5 – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

It’s that time of year again! Please join members of Heritage Hill and South Hill to get Pleasant Park flower and tree beds off to a pretty start. Come help weed and clean up the beds on May 5th from 9-12 that morning. Not only will you make the park look beautiful, it is a great way to socialize with your neighbors.

We will not have the tool trailer from Friends of Grand Rapids Parks this year so please make sure to bring any tools that would be helpful and a wheelbarrow if you have one. Donuts will be provided but please bring a water bottle to stay hydrated. If you have any questions please contact Joshlyn Litzenberger at joshlynlitzenberger@gmail.com for more information.
Neighborhood Improvement & Public Safety organizing efforts of the Heritage Hill Association are in part funded by the City of Grand Rapids’ Community Development Block Grant Programs.