

# Heritage Herald

## As Seen on TV

You might have seen the local news coverage of the recent efforts of Heritage Hill's very own Tom Ryan-Stout who lives on Paris SE. We asked him to share his inspiration here with us in his own words.

*Pride on Paris: By Tom Ryan-Stout*

My time living in Heritage Hill began as a student at Kendall College of Art and Design in 2006, living at the corner of Lyon and Lafayette. From there I've bounced around but have spent the majority of my time on South Paris.

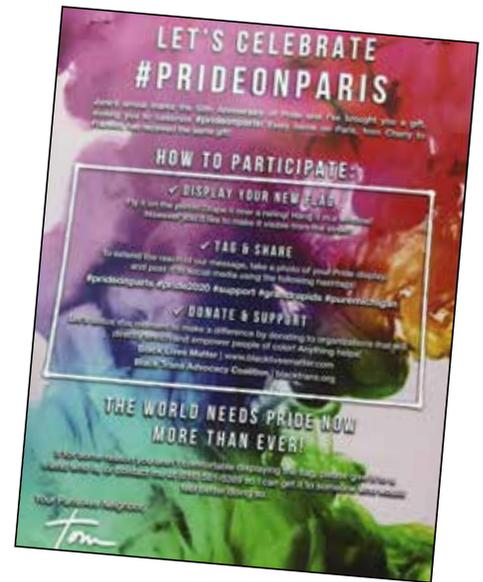
"Pride on Paris" was a quarantine day dream at first. As Pride celebrations across the country were cancelled due to COVID-19, I quickly came to the realization that I'd be celebrating in solitude; an unwelcome, poetically-closeted, reality of the "new normal." To me, Pride is an unapologetic celebration of one's personal authenticity declared through bold displays of visibility. How could I meaningfully celebrate Pride while social distancing? In moving to this neighborhood, I recall how my neighbor's year-round pride flag relieved and comforted my decision to call this home; a seemingly small message of visibility made a world of difference to me. I began to wonder if I could magnify that message. I counted houses, drafted a flyer, and purchased enough pride flags so that by the end of May I was ready to distribute one to every home on Paris Ave from Cherry to Franklin.

However, the social tone immediately changed when George Floyd was tragically murdered by the hands of police which continued the transformation of Pride 2020. Communities wounded by the injustices of police brutality needed undivided support now more than ever. I realized that perhaps Pride could be used as a platform of solidarity to both celebrate LGBTQ+ liberation and organize to help heal social injustices suffered by people of color; that the efforts of two movements could be stronger together than separate.

Over two days and five blocks, I went door to door passing out pride flags and flyers to each home, asking for donations to Black Lives Matter and/or the Black

Trans Advocacy Coalition, a social justice organization led by black trans people to collectively address the inequities faced in the black transgender human experience. The response was emotionally overwhelming! I had high hopes that every home would participate with a realistic goal of 50% participation. The day after my final delivery, Paris was lit up with rainbow banners! It's a delight to see, even though Pride month has come and gone, that Paris Ave is still flying the banners

I received many voicemails and text messages from neighbors voicing support, thanks, and excitement. Even with those that greeted the idea with uncertainty, I was able to glean really authentic and meaningful



conversations and identify some of the shared, overlapping truths of our life experiences.

This is why Heritage Hill is an amazing place to call home. I plan on making this not only an annual event, but to expand the borders beyond Paris Ave and throughout all Heritage Hill neighborhoods! It's never too late to donate! Black Lives Matter | [blacklivesmatter.com](http://blacklivesmatter.com) Black Trans Advocacy Coalition | [blacktrans.org](http://blacktrans.org)

Finally, some thanks is in order: Thanks to the Heritage Hill Association, for highlighting and spreading this message of love and compassion! Thank you to the neighbors that participated! Your choice to fly the banner has affected more people than you will ever know! Thank you for showing Grand Rapids the caliber of people live in Heritage Hill! Thank you to the close friends, family, and housemates that gave me council throughout this whole process. Pride on Paris wouldn't have happened without you! I respect you all so much and value your shared thoughts and opinions! A special thanks to my mom, Peg Ryan, that was a huge proponent behind it all! I love you!



## The Heritage Hill Association

126 College S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-459-8950 Fax: 616-459-2409  
Hours: 9 am - 5 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
Voicemail available for after-hours messages.  
EMAIL: [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org)  
WEBSITE: [www.heritagehillweb.org](http://www.heritagehillweb.org)

### 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:

Amanda Cormier, Executive Director  
Barbara Draughon, Crime Prevention  
Maria Zache Starkey, Office Manager

### The Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors

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\*Wendy Verhage Falb, 350 Cherry SE, (C) 616-818-8873

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\*\*Michele Giordano, 444 Union Ave SE, (C) 616-862-7068

\*Sarah Green, 403 College SE, (C) 616-206-2089

Jeff Martin (appt), 312 Logan St SE, (C) 616-915-2107

\*Wayne Norlin, 558 Morris Ave SE, (C) 616-292-8263

\*Scott Opperman, 50 College SE, (C) 616-685-6897

\*John Walendowski, 546 Prospect SE, (C) 810-305-1709

\* 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:** James Scozzari, (C) 901-3475

**Newsletter:** Amanda Cormier, 459-8950

**Preservation:** Rhonda Baker, (H) 456-3451

**Traffic and Parking:** Amanda Cormier, (W) 459-8950

**Zoning:** Craig Nobbelin, 458-0471

**Home Tour:** Suzanne De Haan, (H) 742-0451

#### Home Tour

**Sponsorship:** Amanda Cormier, 459-8950

**Social Media:** Barbara Draughon, 459-8950

**State Street:** Barbara Draughon, 459-8950

**Block Issues:** Barbara Draughon, 459-8950

*The Heritage Hill Association provides information and encourages neighbor participation to keep Heritage Hill safe and vital. This community organizing engages neighbors to work on issues that arise. As an association of neighbors, we have a strong voice but we have no regulatory authority.*

**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](mailto: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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## Window Workshop

Back by popular demand is the Window Workshop sponsored by the Heritage Hill Association, Midtown Craftsmen, Heritage Window Restoration, and the City of GR's Historic Preservation Office! Postponed due to COVID, we have rescheduled the Window Workshop for September 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Up to 16 participants will spend an intensive, hands-on weekend with the pros learning how to re-invigorate and bring functionality back to our beautiful old windows after decades of wear and weather tire them out. Registration is only \$95. Please contact either the Heritage Hill Association office 616-459-8950 ([heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org)) or Rhonda Baker 616-456-3451 ([rbaker@grcity.us](mailto:rbaker@grcity.us)) at City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Office for registration information.

## City of GR Master Planning

You might know that the City of GR is embarking on a project to update its strategic plan. It's been 18 years since its debut and it is time for an overhaul.

I NEED YOUR HELP. Think of it as a "Book Club." The book? GR's Strategic Plan ~

2002 edition.

Yours truly is part of a cohort of other GR residents selected to lead our neighbors in conversation. We want your voice to be a part of GR's future iteration. I will be hosting 4 one-hour(ish) discussions around the neighborhood (virtually and safely in person, as warranted) between now and October. Each of the sessions will focus on different sections within the City's current (2002) strategic plan to gather feedback pertaining to the successes, failures, strengths, and weaknesses so as to better inform a new plan.

**We need 15-20 Heritage Hill neighbors** to serve as the core group to review, discuss, and provide feedback on the current strategic plan. Please contact me at 616-459-8950 or [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org) if you would like to be a part of shaping GR's vision forward! It is very important that participants represent all facets of the neighborhood: owner-occupiers, owner-landlords, renters, business or nonprofit leaders (of organizations located within our neighborhood boundaries), individuals of all ethnicities and of varied professions

*(Continued on page 4)*

An advertisement for Cornerstone Church Heritage Hill Campus. It features a man in a plaid shirt speaking against a blue background with white dots. Text on the slide reads: "Three Ways to Join Us Online Sundays: 9:30 &amp; 11am". Below this, a list of ways to join online: "live.cornerstonemi.org", "YouTube @ Cornerstone Church GR", and "Facebook @ cornerstonemi". The logo for "cornerstonechurch HERITAGE HILL CAMPUS" is at the bottom right.

# Family Life in the Pandemic

Last March, like many parents, I found myself thrust into a new triple role of homeschool teacher, parent, and worker from home suddenly and seemingly without warning. It seemed like COVID-19 was a nebulous, far off thing one day, and an immediate threat to everyone's safety the next. Our comfortable work and school routines had seemed busy before but they were nothing compared to what followed.

What followed were LONG days: homeschool from 9-12. Work from 12-6. No lunch. More work during bathroom breaks. In the middle of the night. During breakfast and dinner. Many of you know I own a small business and am a dog trainer, which meant I was working almost 24/7, receiving text message and voicemails

at all hours from clients whose dogs' anxiety or aggression either escalated due to being confined or for whom the existing aggression became unbearable once the families were forced to be home 24/7. I have helped rehome a lot of dogs recently, and unfortunately been a part of a couple behavioral euthanasias, oftentimes in snippets of time borrowed from homeschool time or family dinner.

More importantly, however, what followed was and is a new age for me and my family. The pandemic has forced me to be firm



with boundaries and to cut work hours to tend to my child (and I recognize the incredible privilege that allows me to do so). It has created a sense of togetherness and urgency to fill the time we have together with wonder and joy. We are hiking every day, exploring new parks, seeing Lake Michigan more often. (My kiddo got in the water in MAY). We are making healthier choices about food because we get takeout less.

There are still struggles to be sure. As the restrictions seem to lift and the weather warms, we struggle to have safe play dates with kiddos outdoors at a distance (but do ten-year-olds really understand epidemiology?). Our eldest son is stuck in France, and we make daily calls to Homeland Security and the US Embassy to try to bring him home for a visit. Our home is ALWAYS messy. I don't have enough time to train my own dogs, who are frustrated watching others play in the park (cobbler's children, anyone?). My husband's hair is so big and bouffant, it needs its own zip code.

Still, I hope I am able to maintain the good parts of this way of life long-term because we find sustenance and happiness in our family time, delight in each other. I am finding, in fact, that there is no one I would rather be stuck with than my family, and nowhere I'd rather be stuck than our little bungalow in Heritage Hill.

- Jenn Gavin  
Pleasant Street

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## Neighbors Connections *(cont'd from pg 2.)*

and socio-economic backgrounds.

This will be a preliminary opportunity for community engagement. The City will spend time in the summer of 2021 doing a "deeper dive" with community members and expects the process to yield a fully developed strategic plan by 2022.

### **Annual Picnic**

Heritage Hill participates in the annual National Night Out activities by hosting

a picnic in Pleasant Park each August. COVID has pushed that back to the first Tuesday in October and we are left wondering how neighbors can and want to "commune". Some neighborhoods are asking residents to bring the grills and picnic blankets out to their front yards that evening to "commune" COVID-style. Other ideas include BYO pumpkin to Pleasant Park to decorate at safe distances or chalk up the sidewalks

around our homes and/or neighborhood parks with decorative designs. We would like to hear from you how YOU might like to honor the spirit of community this time. Send your ideas to us at [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org)!

### **Yard Sales**

Several residents have inquired about the annual neighborhood Yard Sale. COVID has prompted us to delay and rethink our approach. Hence, our 2020 version is scheduled for **September 12**. We encourage "sellers" to keep things cost-free to avoid any unnecessary contact for COVID safety. After all, isn't the point usually just to clear out the clutter? This will be at the discretion of each yard sale host, but we think this could really make things neighborly: trading our treasures! **Call your Heritage Hill Association staff by 5PM on September 10** at 616-459-8950 or [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org) to register your address. We will post the list of participating addresses on our website and social media the following day.

### **Pan Handling: Follow Up**

A resident responded to our last issue that addressed pan handlers at our doorsteps. In these times of re-evaluating how and when to engage the police department, she suggested that a more thoughtful solution is to call 211 for Heart of West Michigan United Way. Their mission is to connect residents with community resources to reduce poverty. We couldn't agree more and appreciate the thoughtful response to our article.

### **Call for Board Candidates**

Heritage Hill has a bright future and we want YOU to be a part of shaping it! Have you been quietly (or not so quietly!) contributing to the betterment of the neighborhood or City overall? Are you interested in bringing community together? Are you solution-oriented? Consider joining our neighborhood association board! We have openings and would love to consider your application! The Nominating and Election Committee will pull together its slate of nominees in early November for voting at the December meeting. Please contact us at [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org) or 616-459-8950 for more information or to submit your written notice of candidacy.

- Barbara Draughon  
Interim Executive Director

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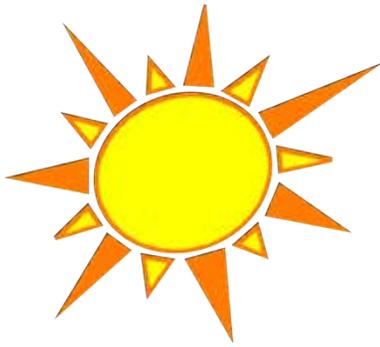
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 Mike Cary and Marge Loughrin  
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 David & Sue DeJonge  
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 Maureen Dreher  
 Fountain Hill Center  
 Eileen Gould  
 Sarah Green  
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 James Honeycutt  
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 Tom Koetsier and Clare Wade  
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 Jim Payne & Char Kruzich  
 Donna Post  
 Tom and Carol Postma  
 Ken Schmidt and Bill Russell  
 Erin and Mic Shupe  
 Don Smalligan and Mary Kenyon  
 Shahin & Jeni Taheri  
 Jim and Pat Talen  
 Tom & Chris Truesdale  
 Mark Van Allsburg  
 Michael Wassenaar

We have invited our non-profit neighbor, Family Promise, to tell us a little about themselves!



From the desk of...



ENDING HOMELESSNESS... ONE FAMILY AT A TIME

516 CHERRY ST SE | GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503 | www.familypromisegr.org

Greetings Heritage Hill Neighbors!

I am thrilled to be writing to all of you today. Family Promise provides emergency shelter and basic needs to families with children who are experiencing homelessness throughout Kent County. We work with families to help them find a place to call home and then we walk along-side families to ensure they don't become homeless again!

It's been 5 years since Family Promise of Grand Rapids moved into the neighborhood! We had no idea that being in Heritage Hill would have such a positive impact on the families and children we serve. When families enter shelter, they are usually afraid and scared of the unknown. As soon as they step foot into our building you can see walls and stress levels lower. They love taking their kids on a walk around the neighborhood. We have found Heritage Hill is part of their healing. Thank you for being great neighbors and partners to our staff and the families whom we serve.

Many people wonder how families end up in emergency shelter. The families we serve do not want to be homeless; they don't choose it. The families we serve are just like you and I, but haven't been able to overcome a life obstacle. It has been well documented that Grand Rapids is in an affordable housing crisis, and it's affecting hard-working parents and their children.

The high cost of housing and basic needs in Grand Rapids, coupled with stagnant wages, has forced many families who never dreamed they would be

*(Continued on page 6)*



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(Cont'd from pg. 5)

homeless into emergency shelter. According to 2018 data from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Michigan has a shortage of rental homes. Minimum wage in Michigan is \$9.45, and the average 2-bedroom apartment costs over \$1,000. A single mom making minimum wage would need to work 73 hours per week to afford that apartment; the math just doesn't add up for families living in Kent County. Our work became even more crucial in light of COVID-19. On average, we serve around 32 families every night with emergency family shelter. As I type this, we are serving over 70 families with emergency shelter and basic needs through hotels. We have had to pause our traditionally emergency shelter models, and move families into hotels per CDC recommendations. We are proud to report that none of our families or children have contracted COVID-19.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out! We want to be a good neighbor to you! My contact info is below. Let's get coffee, or maybe set-up a zoom meeting! :)

From all of us at FPGR, we're sending you warm wishes of health, wellness and peace during this unsettling time.

**Kate O'Keefe**

Director of Development and Community Engagement

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## Barb Lester's Goodbye!



Hello friends. As of July 16 my tenure at the Heritage Hill Association has come to an end. The international Covid-19 crisis has

forced the cut of the position I hold as part-time office staff. I have enjoyed 30 years working as Crime Prevention Organizer and the last four years working in the Association office. The best part of working for the Association has been the relationships with neighbors on every block and that includes tenants as well. I swear that I remember each of you!

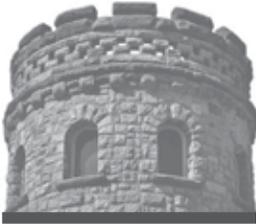
All work accomplished in these years was in concert with neighbors, block clubs, other Neighborhood Associations in Grand Rapids, and the Grand Rapids Police Department, the Housing Code Enforcement, the City Attorney, our Commissioners and anyone else we could convince

to help. I credit past Heritage Hill Association Director, Jan Earl, who was my mentor-in-chief and friend who always encouraged and supported staff. Maria Zache Starkey makes her mark as Office Manager which means she shares and contributes to every success and all work in the office. None of us has ever stayed within our job descriptions because of Jan's leadership style. And that was the secret of any successes we have had.

Thank you to those who have served on the Board of Directors over the years. It is vital that residents participate in working for all in the neighborhood. Thanks also to neighbors I have worked with for the fun we have had together and the good works we have accomplished.

And best wishes to our newer staff Barbara Draughon, currently Acting Director and Amanda Cormier, Director on furlough, and Maria Zache Starkey, who is taking on some crime prevention duties. They are on hand to work with all Heritage Hill Neighbors.

-Barb Lester



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THE ART IS IN THE DETAILS

# See you around the neighborhood Barb Lester!

As a neighborhood of caring residents how do we say “So Long” to someone who devoted her career and her heart to maintaining a safe and secure quality of life for all who live in Heritage Hill. The short answer is we can’t. We couldn’t if we wanted to and we absolutely do not want to.

The Covid 19 pandemic and the resulting loss of home tour revenue has made it necessary to trim staff at the Heritage Hill office. Barb Lester served as the Association’s full time Crime Prevention Organizer for 30 years. After retiring at the end of 2015, Barb stayed on to work part time as receptionist, office assistant and all around sage advisor to any and all that needed advice. It took a pandemic to do it, but Barb will be leaving after 34 years of steadfast and heart felt service.

From organizing parks and alley clean ups to painting over graffiti; promoting safe practices for apartment security to building strong community relations with the police department; assisting reputable landlords and tenants to going after bad tenants and landlords .... the list goes on and on. Barb’s marks in our community are everywhere. It did not matter if you’ve lived in Heritage Hill for 20 years or 20 minutes, if you needed assistance she was “there” for you. If you were a “troublemaker” causing problems and downgrading the quality of life in Heritage Hill .... Barb would be there for you too, **but not in a good way!**

We’ve barely scratched the surface of Barb’s contributions to all of us that

call the “Hill” our home; but you don’t need “words” to get a sense of her imprint. All you need to do is go for a walk in the neighborhood.... She’s

all around us, all about us and always with us. So we’re not saying “so Long Barb”, we’re saying “See you around the neighborhood!”

- Jim Payne  
College Ave NE



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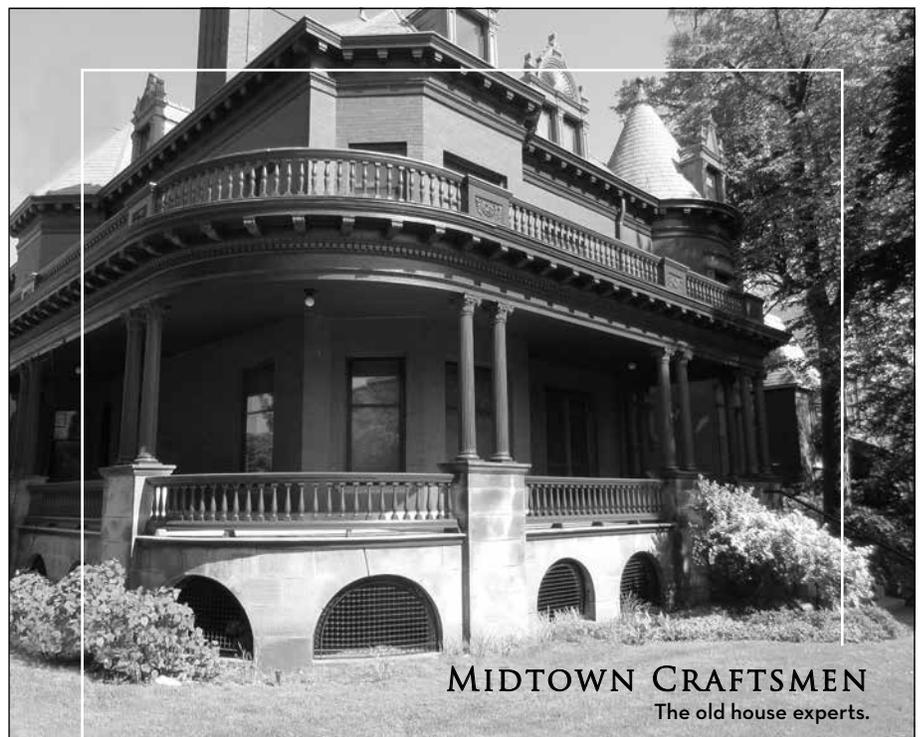
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## **Litter Clean Up, Foster Park, Mooney Park, Pleasant Park**

In June, volunteers from around Heritage Hill helped beautify the neighborhood by picking up litter on our public rights of way and parks and pulling weeds or laying mulch in our parks. Here are a few pictures to

show off their efforts:

1. Sarah Green, Anna Harpster, and Amy DeMott show off their litter pick up gear on the steps of the Heritage Hill Association offices.
2. Jeff and Ruth Martin were accompanied by the Gill family

who worked together to spruce up Mooney Park with some weeding and mulching.

3. The "Pleasant Park Tenders" took the lead on the efforts to prepare that park for summer enjoyment!
4. The City of GR spent the spring months giving Foster Park some long-awaited and sorely needed love with ..... [WENDY FALB



## **COVID NOT ENOUGH FOR YOU?**

Summer is here and so are mosquitoes and all their side effects. In particular, West Nile virus disease comes from an invasive species of mosquito that made its appearance in Michigan in 2002 and has been monitored ever since. Most don't experience symptoms from West Nile disease, but those who do often experience neurological effects (both temporary and permanent). Kent County tells us that the most effective way to avoid West Nile virus disease is to prevent mosquito bites:

- Adults should use insect repellents when you go outdoors. Repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection.

## **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](http://www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us) at the Planning Department section or at the Heritage Hill Association's [www.heritagehillweb.org](http://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.



- Wear long sleeves and pants from dusk through dawn when many mosquitoes are most active. Cover strollers and carriers with netting.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors. If you have it, use your air conditioning.
- Help reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home. Empty standing water from containers such as flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths.

**Fireworks**

Exponentially increased use of illegal fireworks has made national news this year. Heritage Hill residents have born and continue to bear the consequences of these activities, including PTSD symptoms, heart issues, pet anxiety, and much more. We have been receiving numerous calls about the negative impact these illegal activities are having on our health and quality of life.

We want to hear from you about your experiences (favorable and not so favorable) with the use of consumer fireworks as our staff and board leadership look at ways to work with our City Commissioners and state lawmakers to ensure all can enjoy holidays safely and legally. Email us at [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org). Of course, sharing your own stories and insights directly with our representatives is encouraged, as well.

- Milinda Ysasi [[mysasi@grcity.us](mailto:mysasi@grcity.us)] and Joe Jones [[jdjones@grcity.us](mailto:jdjones@grcity.us)], 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Commissioners
- Rachel Hood, State Representative [[RachelHood@house.mi.gov](mailto:RachelHood@house.mi.gov)]
- David LaGrand, State Representative [[DavidLaGrand@house.mi.gov](mailto:DavidLaGrand@house.mi.gov)]

In the meantime, please accept this reminder of what are the parameters for LEGAL use of consumer fireworks

in the City of GR\*:

A person may only ignite, discharge, or use consumer fireworks in the City on the following days after 11:00 a.m.:

- December 31 until 1:00 a.m. on January 1
- The Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Memorial

*(Continued on page 10)*

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## Neighborhood Potpourri

(Continued from page 9)

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- July 5, if that date is a Friday or Saturday, until 11:45 p.m.
- The Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Labor Day until 11:45 p.m. on each of those days.

Lastly and certainly not least, no person shall recklessly endanger the life, health, safety, or well-being of any person by the ignition, discharge, or use of consumer fireworks.

\* (Ord. No. 2012-33, § 1, 6-19-12, eff. 7-1-12; Ord. No. 2013-27, § 1, 6-25-13; Ord. No. 2019-21, § 1, 6-11-19)

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# Board Notes

Discussion at the **May 2020 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting** included:

Discussion and Motion to Approve changes to the **Personnel Policy** – Wendy highlighted the fact the current policy was out-of-date with current practices and thanked Barbara D. for her work researching other policies in similar organizations. Barbara D. highlighted all changes; board members voted unanimously to accept all suggested changes.

Discussion and Motion to Decide the **2020 Garden Tour** –Kate D. reported that Ottawa Hills canceled their Garden Tour recently. Kate outlined the difficulties with rescheduling Garden Tour with the restrictions of Covid safety. Kate also noted that the recurring Garden Tour sponsors are some of the businesses that have been hardest hit by the closures necessary during the stay-at-home orders. Discussion included the possibility of holding the tour in the fall; Kate noted that many gardens are in decline at that time and would not show as well. James S. made a motion to cancel the 2020 tour, Suzanne D. seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** James S. reported that HHA has been awarded a federal, Payroll Protection Plan forgivable loan which provides for eight weeks of payroll plus other allowable expenses. Heritage Hill's Request for Funding Proposal to the city for CDBG funding was also approved. With both of these pieces of very good news, HHA has a temporary financial plan going forward. As of July 1, a new plan will be needed. Wendy F. expressed huge thanks to Maria Z. S. for seeing the PPP loan through to fruition and commented that Barbara D. had worked with Jan E. and Maria to project finances through the end of June and into the summer.

**Staff Reports:** Barbara D. echoed the good news about the CDBG

*(Continued from page 12)*

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# Board Notes (Continued from page 11)

funding for the 2020-2021 contract year and noted that over the next six weeks, the board will take a much more detailed look at the financial picture and will likely have to make some hard decisions about staffing and services between August and the next Home Tour. Short-term, the

staffing levels for May and June will help fulfill both the CDBG and PPP requirements as well as paying down some accumulated vacation hours. Barbara also reiterated the board's intent to have a retreat for Strategic Planning to revisit the mission of the organization and the picture of

long-term sustainability. Barbara asked members about applying for a NPTA (Non-Profit Technical Assistance which is a Grand Rapids Community Foundation entity) grant for monies for strategic planning, remote access for the HHA network and volunteer management. The application is due June 12 and awards are between \$300 and \$10,000. The board approved applying and Wendy F. commented that this was a fantastic idea and reflected acute needs of the association.

### **Committee/Liaison Reports:**

**Land Use:** Wayne N. reported that he and Craig Nobbelin have been monitoring the agendas for the various commission meetings at the city which are currently all being held virtually.

### **Fundraising:**

**Home Tour:** Members engaged in a brief review about the cancelled Home Tour 2020; Suzanne D. confirmed the good news that all home hosts had agreed to be on Tour in 2021.

**Pledge Drive:** Barbara D. reported that the Executive Committee has been discussing a letter to solicit neighbors and friends of HHA likely be included an upcoming Herald.

### **Community Engagement:**

**Litter Clean-Up:** Michele G. reported that there have not been many opportunities of late to engage neighbors due to Covid-19 but that an E-Alert had gone out that day announcing a Litter Clean-Up neighborhood-wide event for Saturday, June 30th.

**Neighborhood Survey:** Barbara D. announced that the results were in for a Neighborhood Survey that had gone out to all Grand Rapids organized neighborhoods. There were 71 completed surveys from Heritage Hill. Strengths identified included walkability, neighborliness, safety, diversity, history, architecture and cleanliness. Weaknesses included lack of diversity, crime, parking and traffic safety issues, lead pipes, the need for

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public trash receptacles, and the lack of a food market.

Discussion at the June 2020 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:

**Treasurer's Report:** James S. gave a brief report commenting that reaching the end of the PPP loan and with fundraising slowing down, it is likely worthwhile to discuss cashing out one or more of the Association's certificates of deposit that have been reserved as a "safety net". Barbara D. commented that the cash flow year-to-date is what it is at the 50% mark of 2020. The PPP loan has bought the association time; in the next couple of weeks, staffing changes will need to be made (including the elimination of at least one position) with further guidance from the Finance Committee. Wendy F. commented that she is eager to see a draft of cash flow and to create a plan that depicts different scenarios. Member discussion continued about a possible pledge drive.

**Staff Reports:** Written reports submitted. Barbara D. noted that she has completed the Master

Planning training course provided by the city and is excited about the process. Up to a \$5,000 stipend will be available to reimburse participants for their time and expenses incurred while engaging the community in the planning process. Barbara highlighted a grant request to NPTA and noted that staff will be looking at other funding sources as well. HHA staff now has remote access to digital files through a Google platform suggested by webmaster Don Bryant. Barbara also provided a brief crime report, noting items stolen from unlocked cars as well as many complaints about the constant use of seemingly commercial-grade fireworks in the neighborhood. Wayne N. expressed thanks for the fireworks flyers (that went out to the neighbors of the Morris, College and Pleasant area) as well as the neighborhood-wide email, agreeing that the issue is certainly affecting quality-of-life. Wayne also

commented that Barbara D. is very responsive, effective and valuable; James S. echoed the sentiment adding that Barbara deserves big kudos for taking her new role very seriously and navigating many transitions.

**Committee/Liaison Reports:**

**Land Use:** Wayne N. reported that fireworks continue to be a significant and widespread problem in the neighborhood. The issue is not a high priority for the police at this point in time but neighbors are encouraged to call the non-emergency number

*(Cont'd on pg. 14)*



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# Board Notes (Cont'd from pg 11)

(456-3400) so that the instances can be tracked.

## **Fundraising:**

**Home Tour:** Suzanne D. commented that while replacements have been found to compensate for Home Tour, that all ideas for how to hold a successful Home Tour in the future are being considered. Discussion included the pros and cons of a virtual home tour as well as ideas of how a virtual tour could be planned and what other organizations are doing. Kate D. commented that if Art Prize does not continue their event, that HHA might consider moving the Home Tour back to the fall. Wendy F. shared a successful, online Facebook event that her organization recently held.

## **Community Engagement:**

**Litter Clean-Up:** Michele G. reported that though community engagement is challenging at this time that there is a planned clean-up at Pleasant Park and a neighborhood-wide litter clean-

up on Saturday, June 20. Both events are planned to be Covid-safe; Barbara D. commented that participation might not be high for the litter clean-up considering that neighbors might be concerned about Covid risks.

**National Night Out:** Barbara D. reported that the national arm of NNO is encouraging neighborhoods to reschedule their events on October 6, 2020. Barbara commented that it is not likely to be safe to gather in large numbers by October and stated that we will need to be creative about how to bring people out but safely; people are craving social connectivity. Members discussed various ideas including a series of block parties, everyone eating / grilling in their front yards, throwing a football between houses, police and fire parades, sidewalk chalk and free yard sales. Kate D. commented that we need to engage the younger neighbors that seem to be moving in.

**Old Business:** Barbara D. noted that she had included the most recent

iteration of a volunteer logo idea and requested that members review the proposal and weigh in with their opinion. Wendy suggested that HHA fold the logo decision in with a larger "branding" discussion as part of a long-term planning initiative for the board. Wendy F. commented that she very much values the effort that Barbara D. is making in meeting with all board members individually (to assess each member's areas of interest and vision for the neighborhood).

*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)***



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## WHERE

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### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

*All Heritage Hill Association Meetings are open to neighbors.*

**July, 2020**  
**HHA Board Meeting**  
*Canceled for Vacations*

**Wednesday, August 19, 2020**  
**HHA Board Meeting – 7:00 pm.**  
*Currently Meeting Telephonically*

**Herald Deadline**  
**September / October issue**  
Friday, September 11, 2020

**Free Yard Sales**  
Saturday, September 12

**Window Workshop**  
Presented by the Historic Preservation Commission  
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September 18 & 19, 2020

**Annual Dates:**

**Garden Tour**  
*Canceled*

**National Night Out**  
**Annual Picnic**  
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