

The Heritage Hill Association's 2021 Report to Neighbors

"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."

WHO WE ARE:

The **Heritage Hill Association (HHA)** is the neighborhood organization of the Heritage Hill Historic District. Our boundaries are the northern rear property lines of Crescent Street to the southern rear property lines of Pleasant Street (including the 600 block of Union SE); the eastern property lines of Union Avenue to the western property lines of Lafayette Avenue; also included is a jog down State Street to Jefferson Avenue to Fulton Street. **Everyone who lives within these boundaries is a member of the Heritage Hill Association.** Non-residents can also be members by contributing annual membership dues. **Resident neighbors and businesses are encouraged to support the work of HHA through its annual pledge drive.**

THE ASSOCIATION AND NEIGHBORS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2021:

Land Use issues:

Neighborhood Improvement and FUN!

- To encourage getting out and about during COVID, HHA hosted several walking tours of the neighborhood and nearby sites of interest with the help of local tour guide, Caroline Cook of GR Running Tours. These turned out to be good fundraisers for HHA, too!
- In the absence of the beloved Annual Weekend Tour of Homes due to COVID, we really amped up our annual Garden Tour by pairing it with an artisan marketplace and entertainment at Pleasant Park. We saw a record number of ticket purchasers and surpassed our fundraising goal by nearly 200%!
- Received our 2nd PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loan as part of the Federal COVID program to provide a safety net during COVID. We were thrilled to be approved for loan forgiveness, as well, which was a huge relief to our budget which suffered heavily (like so many others) with the onset of the pandemic.
- With a grant from the city's Office of Special Events, we were able to support a small (remember it's COVID still) Halloween trunk treat event at Pleasant Park.
- Beyond HHA's events, neighbors gathered for backyard movie nights, participated in the HH Gardening Club, attended yoga in Pleasant Park, and continued to encourage essential workers during the pandemic with window signs, lights, and decorations to be enjoyed on their commutes to work.
- The board initiated a long range planning session to evaluate where HHA wants to head as we look to our future. Building on the strengths that got us where we are, the board strives to answer questions such as, "what does our neighborhood need from us?" and "how do we get there?"
- The Land Use committee of the board engaged with leadership at GRCC to review a new signage program for their Heritage Hill campus to ensure it was compatible with the neighborhood's master plan and preserved the aesthetics of the historic neighborhood.
- Staff and board worked with GR Parks & Rec to wrap up the upgrades to the playground at Pleasant Park, as well as some damage to the swing set immediately following the renovation. Some neighbors have generously provided replacement paddles/balls for the ping pong table at the park, as well.
- Volunteers arranged for a welcome reception at the new Madison Lofts apartments during the holidays.
- Several discussions with the city yielded plans for e-scooters to be stationed at Pleasant Park over the summer/fall months as part of a MobileGR pilot program that never came to fruition during 2021.
- Housing Next presented to our board some of the housing challenges our city is facing and some of the solutions underway.
- Commissioners Lenear and Jones attended a Q&A with our board & neighbors and discussed GRPD budgets/staffing, GRPD use of drones, park maintenance issues, short term rentals legislation, etc.
- Members of the staff and board participated in an intensive workshop, "Undoing Racism" hosted by the People's Institute in order to make ourselves aware of the roots of racism, how to recognize it, and identify ways we as an organization and individuals can prevent and "undo" it.

- Our social media presence via Instagram and Facebook is taking off where we promote events and feature neighborhood stories.
- Compiled and produced 6 issues of the **Heritage Herald** that were distributed to 4,500 neighbors and friends.
- Produced and updated the apartment listings on a weekly basis to advertise local rentals available.

Public Safety Issues in 2021:

Every individual who lives or works in Heritage Hill helps our community stay safe and healthy. Without each of you, we simply would not be the thriving community that we are.

- The Heritage Hill Neighborhood watched a public art project unfold in 2021 after months of planning. Stemming from vandalism complaint calls we received in 2020, a group of local artists were hired by the HHA to paint murals on five city-owned traffic control boxes with vibrant art. This took lots of organizing and the results have been widely enjoyed while deterring future vandals.
- Breaking & Entering: A recurring theme continues to be breaking & entering into cars and garages. A kitchen window was entered in 2021. We advise keeping doors & windows locked when you're not home. Door & window pins are a relatively inexpensive way to keep your doors & windows open, but not able to be opened up far enough for an intruder to enter. The HHA office has a box of free sliding door pins available to residents, just call us to pick one up. Window pins can be found online and are offered for a wide variety of window styles.
- HHA hosted a virtual event with Mobile GR staff for residents in early 2021 to discuss issues related to traffic safety and parking. We discussed speeding, mopeds, scooters, and more.
- Shootings: In the spring of 2021, two people were victims of gun violence in Heritage Hill. , the second and third ones in less than six months. This prompted HHA staff to reach out to the city for information on the new Cure Violence program. We will continue to check in to with the city to see when this resource will become available to residents.
- With some of the violence occurring at the intersection of Madison and Cherry, HHA staff placed calls to Eagle Point, the property management company of Stuyvesant Apartments, to follow up on security measures at the building. Eagle Point Management is working on security staffing and a security assessment given by GRPD has been recommended to Eagle Point by HHA staff.
- During 2020 and early 2021, vehicle theft rates increased dramatically. The Data Informed Community Engagement (D.I.C.E.) program launched in the summer of 2021 and HHA staff worked with nearby businesses and residents to help reduce vehicle thefts. We added posters at local businesses that were at higher risk for vehicle thefts (such as gas stations and laundromats) reminding customers not to leave their cars running. One month later, GRPD reported a significant decrease in risk for vehicle theft at the areas where the educational materials were delivered.
- Speed limit signs were finally installed along Lafayette and College Avenues after requests to MobileGR and a long wait!
- HHA hosted the annual National Night Out picnic in August at Pleasant Park and invited the Grand Rapids Fire and Police. We had a great turnout with city staff and commissioners along with several neighbors. Neighbor Anthony showed up to cook hot dogs for the community and board member Jeff Martin shared ice cream treats with residents.
- HHA staff helped GPRD with a "Lock it or Lose it" campaign and Day of Service with Calvin University students. We flyer'd 200 homes in Heritage Hill to remind neighbors to take valuables out of their cars and lock it to prevent theft. Packets also included free COVID masks and information about the city's free VIN etching program.
- Informational fireworks yard signs containing the city's fireworks ordinance verbiage were ordered by HHA staff and made available for residents. We saw a decrease in the amount of fireworks calls for service this year compared to 2020.
- Speeding issues leading to a violent crash on Union Ave SE this summer and prompted HHA staff to write a letter to MobileGR asking them to find some long-term speeding prevention solutions. Due to staffing issues at GRPD, requests for increased speeding enforcement went unmet.

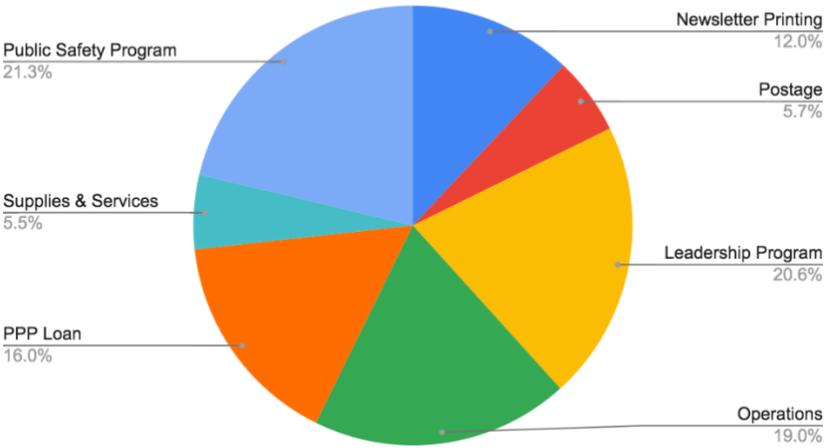
- HHA staff and volunteers gathered joined with AmeriCorps to help get a resident's home into compliance by doing some exterior lead paint abatement.
- A free Dumpster Day was organized for HHA residents in September at the Central Reformed Church.
- We conducted security surveys for commercial buildings and residences in the Heritage Hill neighborhood which provided some recommended safety measures to property owners.
- A free CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) survey was conducted by HHA staff and GRPD at a business on the 400 block of Cherry SE.
- The HHA staff assisted neighbors with a variety of issues including but not limited to: trash/recycling bin complaints, barking dogs, littering, speeding, shots fired, fire pit ordinance questions and we informed neighbors about catalytic converter thefts.
- Looking ahead to 2022: HHA will participate with other neighborhood associations on educating residents on responsible gun ownership through the SAFE Taskforce grant. We will be adding murals to 2 more traffic boxes, as well.

This is just the start of good things to come in 2022! There will be much more work to do to keep the Heritage Hill community a great place to call home. Thank you for your support!

The Year in Numbers

The year 2021 was quite a learning curve for us all. We were able to come out of 2021 with income to direct toward 2022 thanks to our generous donors, our partnership with the city and its renewed grant for public safety and neighborhood leadership programs, our incredible volunteers who were able to launch the wildly successful Garden Tour in the shadow of losing the annual tour of homes, and (last but not least), our Office Manager and finance committee for steering us through the murky waters of the federal Payroll Protection Program which spared us from spending our shrinking dollars on salaries and re-direct them to programming. Our "miscellaneous" piece of the pie on the income chart was unusually large and was made up of non-resident member dues, sponsorships, product sales, and apartment listing fees. We are excited by things to come in 2022 and so appreciate your support!

2021 HHA Expenses \$116,691



2021 HHA Income \$152,448

