



Creston Pie Bake-Off



at the annual Bliss Fundraiser



Huff Park Clean-up

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope that you have enjoyed this beautiful summer. I have been busy with work at both KidsFirst and the City with a bit of vacation/time off in between. A significant amount of my time these past few months has been spent on issues surrounding the parks and green space. I continue to be an active member of Green Grand Rapids, participating in its first Community Forum. Over 200 people attended, providing their thoughts and perspective about future growth of our City. This process has been an incredible experience of community engagement and will inform and guide decisions. It also has fit perfectly with my work on creating a Friends of Grand Rapids Parks organization: we have obtained 501c3 status (part of the process of creating an independent, not-for-profit organization) and we are working on securing funding and establishing the board of directors. Thank you to the many people who have been involved in this effort.

I am also working on a committee to enhance the Farmers Market as well as working to improve bicycling lanes and safety throughout the city. It is my hope that by next year we will be able to call our community "Bicycle Friendly."

I have also examined our recycling program and ideas for expansion. As a member of the Kent County Solid Waste Commission I am able to work closely with the County to make improvements to recycling and the recycling facility. While visiting South Carolina I toured a Single Stream Recycling Plant (where the same truck picks up waste and recycling) learning how to increase recycling and make it more efficient.

After much public outcry, Commissioner Gutowski and I are working with vendors and downtown merchants to draft a fair Vendor Ordinance, addressing concerns without eliminating vendors. The new ordinance will be completed by October.

I want to thank everyone who completed the survey that I sent out in the spring. Hundreds of surveys were completed and returned to me, which has provided me with valuable feedback – information that is vital to me as I make decisions that impact our city. The electronic version will remain on my website as I welcome all feedback and ideas.

And last, it was a real honor in June to be appointed by the Governor to the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Commission. This issue has been a concern of mine for a long time.

As always, it is a pleasure to serve you as your Second Ward City Commissioner. Please contact me if you have any concerns that I can help you with.

Blissforgr.org updated!
Take the survey!
Watch Bliss TV!

INSIDE:
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Serve on a City Board!

Garbage Collection: 456-3232 Housing concerns: 456-3053
Street Lights: 456-3281 Sidewalks: 456-3243 Streets: 456-3232
Special Events: 456-3615 Recycling: 456-4444
Tax Questions: 456-3081

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This newsletter was not paid for with Taxpayer dollars

Coffees with Bliss:

September 30th at 5:00pm
at UGrind, located on Michigan
between College and Eastern

October 27th at Noon
at the Omelet Shop, located on
Fuller between Knapp
and Leonard

November 19th at 7:30am
at Pilar's Cafe, located on Plainfield
between Knapp and 3 Mile

City Issues and Updates:

Grand Rapids Police Department Citizen Police Academy:

The GRPD will be hosting its 13th Citizen Police Academy (CPA) beginning September 16, 2008. The CPA is a ten week program that meets once a week on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 10:00pm. This program is designed to provide members of the community with additional knowledge about their police department. It allows citizens to become more educated on the GRPD procedures and the challenges associated within law enforcement. Requirements include that you must be 21 years of age, have no felony convictions, and have no misdemeanor convictions within the last 3 years. There is no cost to attend the CPA. Topics presented at the CPA include:

- *Community Policing
- *Patrol Operations
- *Laws of Arrest
- *Canine Unit
- *Vice Unit
- *Special Response Team
- *Search and Seizure
- *Use of Force
- *Internal Affairs
- *Traffic Stops
- *Ride-A-Long
- *Crime Scenes/Investigations

Oxford Street Bridge and Trail

The City of Grand Rapids has received an enhancement grant from MDOT for the construction of a non-motorized trail from Oxford Street to Wealthy Street, most of which is located on abandoned railroad property which the City previously acquired. The trail will extend along a portion of Wealthy Street and the Grand River. Bridges on Market Avenue and Grand River will be reconstructed for use as part of the trail. Construction will take place in the summer of 2009.

New City Website: www.grcity.us

The City recently updated and improved the city website: www.grcity.us. Residents and visitors will now find it much easier to navigate. Website users will be able to more easily find important and helpful city information. I encourage you to visit the site - the improvements are impressive!

5th Annual Grand River Clean Up:

For the last four years, hundreds of volunteers have participated in the Mayor's Annual Grand River Clean Up. These volunteers have removed over 38,000 pounds of trash and debris from the banks of the Grand River. The City is once again partnering with WMEAC to organize this important event, which will take place on **September 27th**.

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Upcoming Community Events:

Grand Valley Metro Cruise:

August 23 and 24

Celebration on the Grand:

September 4-6

Hispanic Festival: September 5-7

Creston Car Show: September 6

Garfield Arts and Craft Fair:

September 6

Patriot Day Parade: September 13

Grand Valley American

Indian Lodge Pow Wow:

September 6-7

Mexican Independence

Day Festival:

September 12-14

Eastown Street Fair: September 20

5th Annual Grand River Clean Up:

September 27

Veteran's Day Parade:

November 11

GR Jaycees Santa Claus Parade:

November 15

Heritage Hill

Holiday Potluck: December 5

City Issues and Updates *continued:*

Revocation Hearing for Margaritaville:

The City has scheduled a hearing for October 7th at 2:00pm (room 901, City Hall) to hear testimony for the possible revocation of a liquor license. The recommendation for revocation is due to significant complaints against Ottawa Ventures LLC. Complaints include overcrowding and sale of alcohol to minors. In addition, GRPD reports a pattern of violence involving intoxicated minors and adults. It is the position of the City Attorney's Office that this establishment has over the past 18 months repeatedly failed to effectively enforce the State's liquor laws and has repeatedly failed to enforce the capacity requirements set out by the City's Fire Code. Please contact me if you have any comment before or on the date of the hearing.

Public Hearing on Past Performance and Future Needs of Housing and Community Development Programs:

A public hearing has been set for September 2nd as the date for citizens to provide comment on the past performance of the Grand Rapid's housing and community development programs. The hearing will offer citizens an opportunity to identify community needs that need to be addressed by future programs. Written comment may be submitted during the comment period from August 27, 2008 through September 10, 2008. A draft copy of the FFY 2007 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report will be available for public review during comment period from 8am to 5pm in the Community Development Department and at www.grcd.info

Housing Rehabilitation Program and Rental Rehabilitation Program:

The City continues to support both the Housing Rehabilitation Program and the Rental Rehabilitation Program. The goal of the Housing Rehabilitation Program is to provide financial and technical assistance to eligible home owners to repair and improve their homes. The goal of the Rental Rehabilitation Program is to provide financial assistance to support rental rehabilitation projects. Please contact the Community Development Department for additional information and applications at 456-3677.

Kent County Dispatch Authority:

The City Commission voted to support the activities of the Kent County Dispatch Authority but initially contributing \$100,000 to the Authority that will be reimbursed to the City upon the collection of revenues by the Authority from telephone fees.

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Rosalynn's Calendar of Events:

- September 1:
Labor Day Bridge Walk
- September 2:
City Commission
- September 6:
Celebration on the Grand
- September 9:
GR Youth Boxing
- September 13:
Patriot Day Parade
- September 17: Economic
Development Corporation
- September 20:
Eastown Street Fair
- September 22:
Green Grand Rapids
- September 25:
Athena Awards
- September 27:
Grand River Clean Up
- September 30:
Coffee with Bliss
- October 1-4:
MML Public Policy Conference

City Issues and Updates *continued*:

Kent County Dispatch Authority (continued):

The City remains an active member of the Authority and will continue to work closely with them to implement technology integration and operational compatibility of various emergency police, fire and medical dispatch services throughout Kent County.

Urban Forestry Committee:

The City supported the recommendation to appoint two additional community members to serve on the Urban Forestry Committee. The two members appointed are Dotti Clune and Vic Forester.

City Boards and Commissions – How to Get Involved:

The City has a number of Boards and Commissions comprised of citizens that discuss critical issues, examine ideas, make decisions and make recommendations to the City and the City Commission. They meet at various times throughout the month and each has a different level of responsibility. Below is a list of current vacancies. If you are interested in applying to one of the positions below, contact the City Clerk's Office at 456-3004.

Current City Board and Commission Vacancy List:

- Automobile Parking Commission
- Cable Television Advisory Forum
- Civil Service Board
- Downtown Improvement District
- Housing Appeal Board
- Housing Rehabilitation Appeals Board
- Income Tax Board of Review
- Tax Increment Finance Authority