



Bliss is sworn into office



Rosalynn attended MLK, Jr. Day Events



Hosting "Bliss For GR" on Public Access Ch.25



Join Rosalynn for "Coffee with Bliss"



Attending a fundraiser for the Child & Family Resource Council

Dear Neighbors,

These past few months have been both exciting and incredibly busy. **I was sworn into office in December** and began serving as Second Ward City Commissioner in January. I spent much of the first few weeks learning the processes of City Hall, meeting with departments, riding along with the Grand Rapids Police Department and Grand Rapids Fire Department, and asking many questions.

I have settled into my office downtown and have been diligently responding to your calls, emails and letters.

The committees and teams on which I'm serving include: the **Committee on Appointments**, the **Community Development Committee**, the **Committee on Appeals**, the **Legislative Team**, the **City - School Liaison Committee** and the **Special Committee of City and County Commissioners**. I enjoy committee work because it offers an opportunity for greater dialogue around issues.

I have also been working on a number of projects including a public access show called "**Bliss For GR**", produced at the Community Media Center. My first taping was in February; the topic was "**Can - and Should - the City Regulate What Happens Within Sexually Oriented Businesses.**" This forum will educate and inform citizens about important city issues as well as give community members a chance to share their thoughts.

I have also been busy reaching out and listening to your concerns. "**Coffee with Bliss**" is an opportunity for you to meet me, share your thoughts, ask me questions, tell me what you care about, and drink a cup of hot brew. Every month we'll pick a different restaurant in the Second Ward. **Please to join me for the next "Coffee With Bliss" on March 25 at 9:00am at the New Beginnings Restaurant.**

**Most recently, I had the unique responsibility of helping to select the next 3rd Ward Commissioner. I warmly welcome Commissioner Elias Lumpkins to the City Commission and I look forward to working with him".**

As promised during the campaign, I am working hard to learn about issues and am committed to making informed decisions. Below you will find some of the resolutions that I have voted to support these past few months as well as my schedule and the schedule for commission meetings. I encourage you to contact me with any questions you may have.

It is an honor to be your Second Ward City Commissioner.

Respectfully,  
Commissioner Rosalynn Bliss

**"Bliss for GR"** Airs on Public Access Television, Comcast Cable Channel 25  
Wednesday, March 15 at Noon, Sunday, March 18 at 1:00pm  
Monday, March 20 at 7:30pm, Tuesday, March 21 at 7:00pm.  
Special thanks go to the Media Center and Joel Sweirenga for their expertise and support.

Commissioner Rosalynn Bliss City of Grand Rapids 300 Monroe NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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This newsletter was not paid for with Taxpayer dollars

## A Peek at my Schedule for March

March 8 - Michigan Street Business Association meeting

March 8 - Grand Rapids Business Journal luncheon

March 14 - Reading to 6th graders at St. Alphonsus School

March 14 - Presentation for Women's History Month - Davenport

March 15 - YWCA Circle of Women

March 16 - Speak to Second graders at Coit Elementary School  
March 17 - YMCA Service Club Luncheon

March 17 - W. MI Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 2nd Annual Awards Banquet

March 24 - Summit on Racism

March 25 - Coffee with Bliss at New Beginnings Restaurant

March 27 - GVSU Women in Politics

March 28 - East Fulton Neighborhood Assoc. Meeting

March 31st - Caesar Chavez Celebration GRCC Grand Rapids M-TEC

Resolutions and issues that I have voted to support:

**Sustainability Policy for City Buildings:** With strong leadership from the Mayor, the City Commission passed a resolution adopting a new policy establishing a Sustainability Policy for City Buildings. This will result in future city buildings being built to LEED certified standards or in other words "green building". Building green is smart for the environment as well as smart economically – particularly when we examine long-term energy cost savings.

**LUDS Fees:** I supported a resolution establishing a fee structure for Land Use and Development Services. Previously almost 100% of these fees were paid out of the General Operating Fund. With the passing of this resolution, over 50% of these fees will now be paid by developers.

**Plaza Towers Associates and the Singer Sculpture and Riverwalk:** Plaza Towers will pay a discounted purchase price as payment in full by the Purchaser of the Purchase Price by making (i) a cash payment to the DDA and the City of \$2,000,000 and (ii) by providing improvements to the Singer Sculpture (the "Sculpture"), restoration of electrical service to the Sculpture and riverwalk adjacent to the Sculpture, installation and maintenance of landscaping including irrigation along the ramp providing access to the lower riverwalk, a public easement for the extension of the riverwalk to Fulton Street, the construction of the extension of the riverwalk to Fulton Street, a 15 year maintenance agreement for the Sculpture, the related riverwalk and associated landscape areas (the value of which has been determined on a present value basis) which has been determined to have a current value of not less than \$1,100,000 for a total present value of not less than \$3,100,000 (the "Discounted Purchase Price"). With the city's present budget crisis, this is an opportunity for the Singer Sculpture to be restored and improved.

**Our Children, Our Future standards for children:** That the City Commission declared its support for the National League of Cities Platform and stands as a ready partner with the Institute for Youth, Education and Families in promoting quality of life for children and families.

**HB 5633:** The City took a strong stance against HB 5633 that would designate English as the Official Language of the State of Michigan. HB 5633 may restrict or forbid the use of other languages in official government functions, and/or forbid non-English city services in general. HB 5633 runs contrary to the spirit of tolerance and respect for diversity reflected in the ethnicities and languages that comprise our city, state and country. I, along with my fellow Commissioners and the Mayor oppose House Bill 5633 and any legislation which would establish English only or English as an official language in the State of Michigan.

**HR 4437:** H.R. 4437 makes any unlawful presence in the United States for any reason a felony offense, but does not include a path to legal residency. H.R. 4437 would make all undocumented immigrants in the United States, into "aggravated felons," meaning that the undocumented population, including 1.6 million children, will be subject to long prison sentences, overcrowded courts and prisons. H.R. 4437 will permanently bar approximately 11 million people from obtaining residency or legalizing their status in any way. The Grand Rapids City Commission opposes H.R. 4437 and any legislation that would criminalize, permanently bar or otherwise harm the immigrant community.

March and April City Commission meetings are scheduled for  
March 7, March 21,  
April 11 and April 25.

Committee of the Whole meets at 9:30am on the 6th floor of City Hall and Public meetings take place at 7pm on the 9th floor of City Hall.

City Commission meetings air on Comcast Cable Channel 26 at the following times:

11 a.m. on Saturday

3 p.m. on Monday and Thursday

7 p.m. on Sunday,  
Tuesday and Friday

Resolutions and issues that I have voted to support (continued:)

**Garfield Park and my very first proposed resolution:** As many of you know, there was a heated debate and strong feelings about the proposed Kroc Center being build at Garfield Park. Throughout this debate, I spent a great deal of time walking around the Garfield Park neighborhood, talking to neighbors, meeting with groups who supported and opposed the proposal, and working hard to find a compromise. 5 days before we had to vote at City Commission, the Salvation Army withdrew their request – primarily because of the division that they saw occurring in the neighborhood. After their announcement, several communities voiced their desire to have the Kroc Center in their community. In response to the Salvation Army's decision, I wanted to send a clear message that the City of Grand Rapids recognizes the value of the Kroc Center and that we were committed to working with them to make it a reality. Therefore, I proposed the following resolution, which passed unanimously.

WHEREAS, the local unit of The Salvation Army in Grand Rapids has identified significant unmet needs of children, youth and families in the Grand Rapids area; and WHEREAS, in response, the local unit of The Salvation Army in Grand Rapids has applied for and secured preliminary approval from the Territorial Headquarters for the Central Territory of the Salvation Army for development of a \$15 million Kroc Community Center that will fill this unmet need by serving children, youth and families and has expressed its desire to develop this Center in the City of Grand Rapids; and WHEREAS, the Kroc Foundation funding will provide \$15 million for development of a Community Center and \$15 million for an operation and maintenance endowment that must be supplemented by another \$7.5 million raised locally by The Salvation Army for a total value of the investment in the Community Center and the endowment of \$37.5 million; and WHEREAS, this novel funding approach promises to deliver a high quality community resource that will have the long-term backing of a significant \$22.5 million endowment for operation and maintenance of the Community Center in the City of Grand Rapids; and WHEREAS, the local unit of The Salvation Army in Grand Rapids had identified Garfield Park, located within the Garfield Park Neighborhood, as their preferred site for development of the proposed Kroc Community Center, but has now withdrawn that request of the City; and WHEREAS, the local unit of The Salvation Army in Grand Rapids has expressed its intent to request an extension of the deadline for filing the final application for Kroc Foundation funding in order to provide time to select a site for development of the Kroc Community Center it desires to build in the City of Grand Rapids area;

RESOLVED:

1. That the City Commission declares its support for the development of a Kroc Community Center in the City of Grand Rapids;
2. That the City Commission declares its support of the decision of the local unit of The Salvation Army in Grand Rapids of the Western Michigan/Northern Indiana Division of the Salvation Army to request an extension in filing its final application for Kroc funding and strongly urges the Territorial Headquarters for the Central Territory of the Salvation Army to approve this request;
3. That the City Commission renews and declares the City's commitment to continue to partner with The Salvation Army in its site selection process;
4. That City staff is directed to provide all necessary assistance to the Salvation Army should the application, site selection and development processes continue.

Resolutions and issues that I have voted to support (continued:)

**Revenue Sharing:** Through my work on the Legislative Team, which I serve on with the Mayor and Commissioner Scmidt, we have spent a great deal of time advocating for the reinstatement of our share of revenue sharing. The City of Grand Rapids has experienced significant reductions in State Revenue Sharing that have resulted in decreased City services that support our quality of life in Grand Rapids. State Revenue Sharing was created to keep local governments whole when the State eliminated local taxes and replaced them with State taxes. The logic behind State Revenue Sharing was to improve the uniformity and efficiency of tax collection across the State by centralizing tax collection within State government.

State Revenue Sharing comes from sales taxes collected from Grand Rapids that should be returned to Grand Rapids. State Revenue Sharing cuts have had a drastic impact on the City of Grand Rapids, accounting for over 80% of the present budget deficit. In addition to passing a resolution and meeting with legislators, we are asking community members to contact their state representative and request that they fully restore State Revenue Sharing for Grand Rapids. We encourage you to contact your state representatives directly and voice your concern about revenue sharing cuts.

You will find their contact information below.

**Contact information for your elected state officials:**

SIKKEMA, KEN, STATE SENATOR, 28TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT  
Work (800) 774-1174 E-Mail: senksikkema@senate.michigan.gov

HARDIMAN, BILL, STATE SENATOR, 29TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT  
Work (866) 305-2129 E-Mail: senbhardiman@senate.michigan.gov

STEIL JR, GLENN, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 72ND REP. DISTRICT  
Work (877) 727-8345 E-Mail: glennsteil@house.state.mi.us

PEARCE, TOM, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 73RD REP. DISTRICT  
Work (888) 414-3684 E-Mail: tompearce@house.mi.gov

VAN REGENMORTER, WILLIAM, STATE REPRESENTATIVE,  
74TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT  
Work (800) 968-2320 E-Mail: wmvanreg@house.mi.gov

KOOIMAN, JERRY, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 75TH REP. DISTRICT  
Work (800) 875-2154 E-Mail: jerrykooiman@house.mi.gov

SAK, MICHAEL, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 76TH REP. DISTRICT  
Work (888) 797-0076 E-Mail: representativesak@house.mi.gov

GREEN, KEVIN, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 77TH REP. DISTRICT  
Work (866) 538-4677 E-Mail: kevingreen@house.mi.gov

HILDENBRAND, DAVE, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 86TH REP. DISTRICT  
Work (877) 328-3086 E-Mail: rephildenbrand@house.mi.gov