



## SPLASH!

Dear friends and neighbors,

This edition is being sent out on the eve of an important election, with several vital issues on the ballot: the renewal of the Grand Rapids Public School **non-homestead** millage, the transit millage proposal and the GRCC millage. Please remember to vote to keep our community strong and moving forward.



GREAT NEWS ON POOLS!

These past six months, I've worked diligently on issues surrounding parks, pools and recreation for our city's youth. From November to February I've chaired the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Parks and Recreation. In March, the final report was submitted to the Mayor and the Commission. The recommendations included short-and-long-term cost cutting and revenue generating strategies. The Mayor then created an implementation team, of which I am a member. Our task is to determine which recommendations can be implemented and to create a plan for the future. To read a copy of the full report [CLICK HERE](#) or visit [www.grcity.us](http://www.grcity.us) and click on the parks and recreation department.



ROSALYNN AT DELTA STRATEGY EVENT

Roosevelt Tillman and I have been collaborating on a sponsorship program to raise money to open all six swimming pools. **On Monday, April 23rd, we announced that we had secured over \$200,000 in sponsorships from community members, local businesses and foundations.** We are now working on securing funding for the next two years and establishing a Grand Rapids City Park's Fund. This effort symbolizes why I ran for office – to find solutions and be a part of making our community a better place for the individuals, families, children, neighborhoods and businesses.



REVENUE SHARING SESSION IN LANSING

I continue to serve on the Committee on Appeals and Districts, the Legislative Team, the City - School Liaison Committee, the Economic Development Corporation, the 201 Market sub-committee and the Special Committee of City and County Commissioners. I continue to be an active member of the community serving on a number of boards and committees including as a member of the Advisory Council of LISC, board member of the Grand Rapids Youth Boxing Foundation, Chair of the Kent County Domestic Violence Community Coordinated Response Team, member of the Advisory Board for Safe Connections, and board member of the Michigan Professional Society on the Abuse of Children.



READING AT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

These next two months, my energy and time will be spent working on the fiscal year 2008 budget. Last week, the city manager unveiled his 2008 preliminary fiscal plan. The city commission will be meeting every Tuesday during May to examine and debate the plan as well as make budget recommendations. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about the budget or budget priorities.



SUPPORTING FURRY FRIENDS AT CSNIP

There continues to be multiple opportunities to participate on city boards and committees. Please contact me if you are interested and I will email you an application.

Sincerely,  
Commissioner Rosalynn Bliss

### INSIDE:

**2nd Ward Event Calendar**  
**City Issues**  
**Elected Official Contacts**

**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**

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## UPCOMING 2ND WARD EVENTS

May 12

**Easthills Garage Fest**

June 16

**Eastown's Bizarre Bazaar**

June 16

**Creston's 2nd Annual  
Riverside Park 5K Run/Walk**

July 14

**Easthill's Bastille  
Picnic in the Park**

August 7

**National Night Out**

August 15

**Creston's Aberdeen  
Celebration in the Park**

August 21

**Midtown's  
Community Celebration**

## City issues:

### PARKING ISSUES

Recently there was a proposal to privatize the city's parking lots. This was a proposal brought to the commission by a developer. As I have stated before, I am open to exploring this idea, however, I have multiple questions and concerns. First and foremost, I am not supportive of entering into private negotiations with one developer. I also think we need to be extremely cautious of selling revenue generating assets. My assessment of this proposal is that it potentially could be a short term fix which could have significant negative long-term consequences. I heard from numerous neighbors, residents and business owners who strongly opposed this proposal. I argued that the idea should be sent to the Parking Commission, where it can be thoroughly examined and vetted. The Parking Commission will be spending time over the next few months discussing the pros and cons of this policy and returning to the Commission with their thoughts and recommendations.

### CITY WEBSITE REVISED: WWW.GRCITY.US

Over a year ago, the City of Grand Rapids Web Team was created and given the task of revising the City's Web site. Some of the changes include dynamic menus that list the most frequently viewed pages first, a site map to make things easier to find, and a consistent, cohesive format throughout all of the various departmental pages. It is my hope that these improvements will make the website more useful and easier to navigate.

### POOL PLAN

Again, as a result of the successful fundraising campaign, championed by Roosevelt Tillman, all six City pools will be open this summer. The pools will open Monday, June 25th through Saturday, August 18th.

Open swim will be offered: Monday – Friday from noon to 4pm and 5:30 to 8pm  
Saturdays from 12:30 to 4pm and 5:30 to 8pm  
Sundays and July 4th from 12:30 to 4pm

Admission fees are \$2 for adults and no charge for children under the age of 17 thanks to the generous donations of Bob Sullivan, former Senator Glenn Steil, former Ambassador Peter Sechia, and Tim Sullivan.

**Bathing Suit Drive:** The City of Grand Rapids wants to make sure that all children are able to swim. A bathing suite drive will be held from May 1 to May 31. The Parks and Recreation Department is asking that any new or slightly used suits be dropped off at 201 Market Avenue. These suits will be given to families in need so that they are able to swim. For further information, call 456-3662.

### ASH BORER INFESTATION

On April 5th, the City Commission was informed that we have had our first outbreak of the emerald ash borer in the Shawnee Neighborhood. The emerald ash borer is a beetle that invades and kills a number of species of the ash tree. Often, once the outbreak is identified, it is too late to save the tree. Therefore, removal and disposal is required.

*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*

## Bliss Schedule for May & June

May 8  
GR Box board

May 9  
Coffee with Bliss at Kava House

May 10  
Riverbank Run Reception

May 11  
Spaghetti Dinner for Roy Schmidt

May 12  
Easthill's Garage Fest

May 16-19  
Leadership Michigan in Lansing

May 30  
Memorial Day Parade

June 5  
Coffee with Bliss at Bagel Beanery

June 12  
Inforum event

June 20-22  
Leadership Michigan

June 23  
6th Street Bridge Festival

June 29  
GR Box Golf Outing

June 30  
Midtown's Music Jamboree

## ASH BORER INFESTATION (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The city will be working hard to remove the trees in the Shawnee neighborhood with the hopes of preventing further infestations. The city has approximately 7,000 ash trees in the public right of ways and another approximate 3,000 in parks and cemeteries. This makes up almost 15% of the city's tree population. Presently there are no known ways to kill the borer. The city's plan is to systematically remove all of the ash trees in the public right of way over the next ten years and replace them with a more diversified tree stock. For more information about this tree epidemic, go to [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info)

## MIDTOWN BRIKYAAT AREA PLAN

On July 10th, the City Commission will consider adopting the Midtown Brikyaat Area Specific Plan Amendment to the Master Plan. The Brikyaat Plan is an urban revitalization project that includes expansion of the farmer's market, enhancement of the business district along Fulton Street and improving infrastructure and connectivity throughout the neighborhood. The Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on the plan on June 14th.

## CRIME STATISTICS

The latest crime statistics for 2006 were shared at the Public Safety Meeting in March. The report indicates that serious assaults were down, reports of burglaries were up, the number of murders increased, and the reports of robberies were similar to 2005. The Grand Rapids Police Department continues to work hard to respond to and prevent crime throughout the city. In June 2006, the GRPD launched Operation ALL-OUT to respond to the spike in crime. Operation ALL-OUT resulted in a dramatic decrease in crime in July and August of 2006.

## CRESTON LIBRARY EXTENSION

The City Commission approved a two month extension for the development of the old Creston Library located at 1431 Plainfield. There has been a significant amount of work done on this building and both the commission and neighbors are eager for it to open.

## REVENUE SHARING

Revenue sharing continues to be a top priority of the City Commission and the Legislative Team that I serve on. In February I spent a day in Lansing meeting with State Representatives and State Senators – discussing the importance of revenue sharing, providing education about the great work that is being done in Grand Rapids, and asking them to support local units of government. This year, revenue sharing will make up almost 28% of the City's General Operating Fund – we simply cannot afford additional cuts to this revenue. To learn more about revenue sharing, go to <http://www.mml.org>

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING

The CDBG funding recommendations for 2008 were approved last month. This was a difficult year as we had to cut over \$100,000 due to a decrease at the federal level. **My top priority with the funding was neighborhood associations and crime prevention. One program proposed to be cut was the Creston Corridor Initiative. I strongly disagreed with this cut and advocated hard to provide funding in the amount of \$10,000, which will be taken out of the City's contingency fund.**

## Grand Rapids City Commission 2007 Meeting Schedule:

On the dates below, the Commission meets at 9:30 am for the Committee of the Whole on the 6th Floor in Room 601. The Appointments Committee meets at 8:10am, Community Development meets at 8:30am, and Fiscal Committee meets at 8:30am.

The Official meeting is either at 7:00pm or 2:00pm (see schedule below) and this is when there is time for public comment and hearings.

May 15, 7:00pm

**May 29, 7:00pm**

June 5, 7:00pm

**June 19, 2:00pm**

July 10, 7:00pm

**July 24, 7:00pm**

August 14, 7:00pm

**August 28, 7:00pm**

September 11, 7:00pm

**September 25, 7:00pm**

October 9, 7:00pm

**October 23, 7:00pm**

November 13, 7:00pm

**November 27, 7:00pm**

December 4, 7:00pm

**December 18, 7:00pm**

**City Commission meetings air  
on Comcast Cable Channel 26**

**at the following times:**

**11am on Saturdays, 3pm on**

**Monday and Thursdays**

**and 7pm on Sunday, Tuesday**

**and Fridays.**

There are a number of legislative issues that continue to be a priority both at the state and federal level. As the state struggles to balance their budget, once again they are contemplating cutting revenue sharing to local units of government. The Senate proposed cutting revenue sharing in their latest budget proposal. If you haven't contacted your state representative or senator, please consider doing so to express the importance of revenue sharing. At the federal level, we continue to fight for CDBG funding as well as funding to replace trees that will die as a result of the emerald ash borer.

State Representative & Senators:

**Mark Jansen - State Senator (District 28)**

Office Phone: 517-373-0797 Fax: 517-373-5236

Email: senmjansen@senate.michigan.gov

**Bill Hardiman - State Senator (District 29)**

Office Phone: 517-373-1801 Fax: 517-373-5801

Email: ofcbhardiman@senate.michigan.gov

**Glenn D. Steil - 72nd District State Representative**

Office Phone: 517-373-0840 Fax: 517-373-7590

Email: glennsteil@house.mi.gov

**Tom Pearce - 73rd District State Representative**

Office Phone: 517-373-0218 Fax: 517-373-5697

Email: tompearce@house.mi.gov

**David Agema - 74th District State Representative**

Office Phone: 517-373-89 Fax: 517-373-8697

Email: daveagema@house.mi.gov

**Robert Dean - 75th District State Representative**

Office Phone: 517-373-5696 Fax: 517-373-2668

Email: jerrykooiman@house.mi.gov

**Michael G. Sak - 76th District State Representative**

Office Phone: 517-373-0822 Fax: 517-373-5276

Email: representativesak@house.mi.gov

**Representative Kevin Green - 77th District State Representative**

Office Phone: 517-373-2277 Fax: 517-373-8731

Email: kevingreen@house.mi.gov

Area Congressional Representatives & Senators:

**Congressman Vern Ehlers**

Website: www.house.gov/ehlers/

Phone: 202-225-3831

Local Office Phone: 616-451-8383

**Congressman Pete Hoekstra**

Website: www.house.gov/hoekstra/

Phone: 202-225-4401

Local Office Phone: 231-722-838

**Senator Carl Levin**

Email: senator@levin.senate.gov

Website: www.senate.gov/~levin/

Phone: 202-224-6221

Local Office Phone: 616-456-2531

**Senator Debbie Stabenow**

Email: senator@stabenow.senate.gov

Website: stabenow.senate.gov/

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Local Office Phone: 616-975-0052