



ROSALYNN ATTENDS IN-FORUM EVENT



WITH CHILD ADVOCATE AWARD RECIPIENT



WITH MARIE WILSON



WITH FOUAD AT MARIE CATRIB'S

INSIDE:

City Issues  
Clean Indoor Air  
Monroe Street to be fixed!

Dear friends and neighbors,

It's hard to believe Thanksgiving is already here! It was a busy year, between work at KidsFirst and City Commission responsibilities. Some of my time this past summer was spent campaigning for the re-election of Mayor Heartwell. It was nice to get back out and knock on doors and talk to neighbors. I was glad to see Mayor Heartwell win in the primary and I congratulate Commissioner-Elect Walt Gutowski for his win in the first ward. I look forward to serving with Walt in January, but will sadly miss working with Commissioner Schmidt. **Roy Schmidt has been serving the City as one of the First Ward Commissioners for sixteen years.** He has a great deal of experience and expertise and has always been willing to help me better understand an issue when needed. The Second Ward was the only ward that resulted in a run-off, between Ruth Kelly and David LaGrand. Both candidates ran strong campaigns, and on November 6th voters chose David LaGrand. I look forward to working with David to best represent our neighbors.

It was also extremely exciting this summer to see all six pools open. This time last year I met with Roosevelt Tillman and discussed the possibility of raising money to open the pools. After a great deal of hard work and Roosevelt spearheading the Making Great Waves Campaign - combined with the tremendous generosity of a number of donors - the city opened all six pools and eleven wading pools. **We had over 70,000 visits to the pools!** Each day the pools were filled with children swimming, playing and finding relief from the hot sun. Now we focus on next year and finding a sustainable solution to funding city pools. Another focus of mine will be on enhancing our city's parks and green spaces. I am eager to be a part of the Green Grand Rapids process, and will continue to work on implementing several of the recommendations that came from the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Parks.

I continue to host a public access show called Bliss For GR. Recently we covered shopping locally and supporting locally owned restaurants and shops...speaking of which, two new restaurants have opened in the Second Ward: the Red Ball Jet Café (located on Plainfield) and the Green Well (located on Cherry Street). I have visited each one and was impressed by the service, the environment, and most of all the food. I encourage you to visit each as well and promise you that you will not be disappointed!

As always, it is a pleasure to serve you as your second ward city commissioner. Please contact me if you have any concerns, questions or issues that I can help you with.

Sincerely,  
Commissioner Rosalynn Bliss

**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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## 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.

**November 27, 7:00pm**

December 4, 7:00pm

**December 18, 7:00pm**

## City issues:

### Clean Indoor Air Ordinance:

Effective October 1, 2007, the Clean Indoor Air Ordinance requires that most enclosed public places and businesses within the City of Grand Rapids be smoke-free. Restaurants, bars and private rooms within hotels/motels are excluded from this ordinance as they are regulated by the state. The ordinance is intended to protect the public's health, safety and welfare by reducing non-smoker exposure to second-hand smoke, which is a known carcinogen.

### Interested in serving on a city board or commission?

Currently the city has a number of vacancies on several city boards and commissions. If you interested in serving, would like to learn more about the board or commission, or have questions about the time commitment, or would like an application sent to you, please contact me at 456-3858 or contact the City Clerk at 456-3015. There are currently vacancies on the following boards/commissions:

- Civil Service Board
- Grand Rapids Historical Commission
- Income Tax Board of Review
- Local Officers Compensation Commission
- Tax Increment Finance Authority
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Rehabilitation Appeals Board

### Updated Zoning Ordinance:

Over the past year, a committed group of community members and city staff have been working to update the city's zoning ordinance. Recently the draft of the proposed new zoning ordinance was presented to the City Commission to review. There was a public hearing scheduled for October 9th at 7pm to hear community feedback. A number of goals were identified when reviewing the city's ordinances, some of which include the goal to protect neighborhood character and promote quality urban design, make Grand Rapids a competitive housing location, coordinate the location of higher density residential development and job centers with transit routes. The Zoning Ordinance is a lengthy document with 15 sections that addresses issues such as lot and yard requirements, tree protection, parking lot landscape requirements, transitional features and landscape buffers, and signs. The zoning ordinance was adopted on October 23rd and took effect November 5th, 2007. If you have questions about the changes, please contact me by phone or email.

### Three Month Moratorium on Video and Electronic Billboards:

The Commission recently passed a moratorium on the issuance of building permits for video billboards until the new Zoning Ordinance is adopted as there are currently no regulations of this technology at this time. This is a proactive measure to prevent the installation of these signs until the formal zoning requirements are adopted.

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**Coffee with Bliss:**  
**I continue to hold a monthly Coffee with Bliss, which is a time for neighbors to come and have a cup of coffee with me, chat about city issues, concerns, ask questions and discuss ideas. Here is a schedule for the coffees scheduled for the rest of this year:**

December 4th at 5pm at the Red Ball Jet Café located at 1431 Plainfield Ave NE

### **City Parking Lots:**

As many of you may recall, there was a proposal to sell the city's parking lots to a developer this summer. This proposal was brought forward as a solution to the city's budget shortfall. I did not support this proposal as the parking lots are a revenue generating asset for the city and provide much need and affordable parking downtown. In addition, they are a critical economic tool for our city. Recognizing the need to increase revenue to the city's general operating fund, the Parking Commission recommended that a portion of the parking violation fines be appropriated to the General Fund.

### **Updating the City's Master Plan & Parks and Recreation Master Plan:**

The City's Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission in November of 2002 and endorsed by the City Commission in December of that year. The Master Plan and the accompanying Parks and Recreation Master Plan are community based documents that were developed through a community led process that involved thousands of residents. Under Michigan Law, each community's master plan must be reviewed and updated every five years. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is on the same review and update cycle as the City's Master Plan. A community wide, citizen led process will begin once again to update the City of Grand Rapids Master Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and will be called "Green Grand Rapids". This process will take approximately one year and will begin in January 2008. I am extremely excited about this process and believe it will create a blueprint for our vision of green space in the city.

### **Midtown Brikyaat Area Specific Plan:**

Congratulations to Midtown for all of their hard work in creating the Midtown Brikyaat Area Specific Plan, which the City Commission voted unanimously to adopt as an amendment to the 2002 Master Plan.

### **Camelot Park:**

A big thank you to Alticor and KaBOOM, who provided resources and volunteers to build a new playground in Camelot Park.

### **Flouride Commemorative Monument:**

On January 25, 1945, Grand Rapids was the first community in the world to reduce tooth decay by adding fluoride to its water supply. To commemorate this historic event, the JW Marriott and the West Michigan Dental Society and Foundation commissioned Cyril Lixenberg, a prominent sculpture artist, to create a monument. This 33 foot monument can be seen from the Grand River in front of the new JW Marriott Hotel.

### **The Mathias J. Alten House:**

this summer the City Commission supported a resolution that designated the Mathias J. Alten House as a Local Historic District. The Mathias J. Alten House is located at 1593 East Fulton Street. Mathias Alten was a nationally recognized artist who maintained a residence and studio at this location from 1914 until his death in 1938. The only property designated historic was 1593 E. Fulton Street.

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### **General Local Revenue Funding:**

The city once again allocated over \$300,000 to support local organizations including Arbor Circle, Camp Fire USA, Catherine's Care Center, Dispute Resolution Center, Family Outreach Center, Healthy Homes Coalition, the Hispanic Center, Jubilee Jobs, Project Rehab, Senior Meals Program, Senior Neighbors, Steepletown Neighborhood Services and the YWCA.

### **Economic Development Director:**

This past year Susan Shannon left the city to take a job in Seattle. This past month, the city filled that position by hiring Kara Wood as the new Economic Development Director.

### **Chief of Police:**

In September, the city said good-bye to Chief Dolan, who accepted a position in North Carolina. Since his leaving, the city has begun a national search to find a replacement. The City Manager has held a number of community forums to gather feedback from citizens about the qualities that they think should be looked for in the hiring of a new Chief. The City Manager is also accepting written feedback as well and you can obtain a written survey by calling 456-3883.

### **The State of Michigan:**

The city continues to advocate for the state to maintain and increase funding to support local units of government. Revenue sharing allocations remain unstable as the State struggles to balance their budget. At this date, the state has yet to adopt a budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins October 1st and is threatening a government shutdown if a compromise cannot be found. A government shutdown could potentially effect several city services as well as devastate the city budget even more. I encourage you to join me in contacting our state representatives and urge them to support funding for local governments.

### **Shop Downtown:**

-In an effort to encourage people to shop locally this holiday season, the city is providing Holiday Promotional Parking downtown. You can obtain a coupon for one hour of free parking at the Downtown Alliance website, which is [www.downtowngr.org](http://www.downtowngr.org). The coupon can be used to park at the Loius Campau, Monroe Center, Ottawa Fulton, and Pearl Ionia parking ramps.

### **Heritage Square Neighborhood Enterprise Zone**

Public Hearing on the designation of the Heritage Square area as a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ): On Tuesday the City Commission passed a resolution setting December 18, 2007 at 7pm at City Hall in the Commission Chambers on the 9th Floor as the date and place for a public hearing on the designation of the Heritage Square area as a NEZ. The NEZ designation could provide a critical tool to help revitalize this area and improve the Heritage Hill neighborhood.

### **Adoption of the Corridor Improvement Authority Policy**

On Tuesday the City Commission approved the adoption of this policy that allows for the establishment of one or more Corridor Improvement Authorities and designation of one or more Corridor Improvement Districts with the City of Grand Rapids. This is a new, exciting tool that will be available to neighborhood business districts that has the potential to revitalize existing commercial corridors. Many community members and city staff worked together in partnership to draft this policy - thank you for all of your hard work.

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### **DDA Plan Amendment:**

The City Commission set the date of December 4th, 2007 at 7pm at City Hall in the City Commission Chambers as the date and time for a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the DDA, which includes an expansion of the DDA boundaries.

### **1100 Wealthy Demolition**

On Tuesday, the City Commission approved the demolition of the building at 1100 Wealthy Street, which has been a blighted, burned out building for far too long. Demolition will occur yet this year.

### **Monroe Repair - FINALLY!**

Since I was elected, and even when I was campaigning, one of the most common questions asked in the Creston Neighborhood area was "when is Monroe going to be fixed?" - I am quite happy to report that the road construction is scheduled to begin in April/May 2008 and will likely take most of the summer.