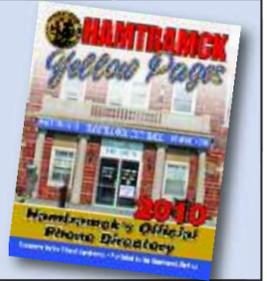


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Volume 3 No. 6
February 11, 2011
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The Review

Hamtramck

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Quick Hits

If it's the second Saturday of the month, it must be time to gather up your recyclable items and head on over to the city's recycling center.

This Saturday (Feb. 12) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Hamtramck Recycling Commission will have a dumpster set up in the city parking lot on Caniff at McDougall. The commission is still seeking donations to keep the program running, and hopefully to expand.

Former City Council President Joe Strzalka, who now works for the U.S State Department and is stationed in the Congo, donated \$100 to the cause. Hey, if someone living all the way over in Africa pitches in, can't you?

Quote of the week ...

Who said this, and what is it about? You can find the quote and the story it belongs to somewhere in the pages of this issue.

"They must know somebody in City Hall."

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Heavy snow doesn't stop these girls from having a ball

By Ian Perrotta

Snowflakes were falling last Saturday night (Feb. 5), but that didn't cause the young girls of Hamtramck to flake out. Despite some terrible weather, the community's fifth annual Daddy-Daughter Dance was the most successful yet.

The dance, which was sponsored by the Hamtramck Recreation Department, was attended by over 70 people. With a "Princess Party" theme, the event offered the girls and their fathers a chance to enjoy a buffet-style meal, crafts, a raffle and lots of dancing. The girls also received a flower and a goody bag.

Recreation Coordinator Theresa Yorke said that she was very pleased with this year's turnout. Saying that the Daddy-Daughter-Dance is always a dress-to-impress event, she noted that this year — with some girls decked-out in princess gowns and their fathers in matching dress clothes — did not disappoint.

"I used to attend the City of Wayne Daddy-Daughter Dance with my father when I was young, and it is one of my favorite childhood memories," says Yorke. "My hope is that these girls will feel the same one day."



Last Saturday the Recreation Department held its fifth annual Daddy-Daughter Dance at the Hamtramck Community Center. The sold-out event brought in about 70 people despite freezing temperatures and treacherous conditions.



Council may take one more vote on loan

By Charles Sercombe

The possibility of applying for an emergency state loan is not totally off the table for Hamtramck.

The City Council held a heated debate over the merits and wisdom of applying for a loan at Tuesday's council meeting (see City Hall Insider on page 2 for more details). That one-hour discussion didn't yield any results, but the debate isn't over 'till it's over, as they say in baseball.

The council will take up the subject again in a special meeting this coming Wednesday (Feb. 18), at 7 p.m. in City Hall. No one is making sure-fire predictions, but there is a chance that a swing vote (Councilmember Cathie Gordon?) could lead to a tie, which will then allow Mayor Karen Majewski to cast the tie-breaking vote.

Majewski has spoken pas-

Continued on page 2

Making our streets safer for pedestrians

By Ashley C. Woods
Special to The Review

A recent resolution passed by the City Council will continue to move the city toward a future that's inclusive of drivers, bikers and pedestrians.

The Complete Streets policy was adopted by MDOT last year. Jason Friedmann, Director of Community & Economic Development for Hamtramck, says the resolution pushes city planners to expand their perspectives.

He says every type of user of the streets should benefit. "People on bikes, pedestrians who are walking, people who are disabled, and not just cars," are targeted in the resolution.

That's important in a city like Hamtramck, a hub for new immigrants, and a place where more than 30 languages are spoken in the

Continued on page 4

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Council may take one more vote on loan

Cont. from front page

sionately in favor of applying for a loan.

The city is facing payless paydays by the end of March, and if it doesn't secure a state loan, it won't be able to pay any bills for the months to come. That situation could force an immediate state-appointment of an emergency financial manager, state Treasury Department officials told The Review in previous interviews.

Just what a state takeover would entail for Hamtramck is the source of much speculation. Gov. Rick Snyder, a Republican who is newly-elected and is an outsider to party politics, has urged cities and public school districts to merge services.

Just what that means, exactly, is not yet certain either.

But the talk in Lansing political circles is that major changes to the law that allows the state to send in an emergency financial manager – Act 72 – are about to be made. Remember, too, the state legislature now consists of a majority of Republicans, a political party that is often on the side of management and privatizing the public workforce.

Hamtramck City Attorney James Allen said he has

seen several different proposals on amendments to the Act 72 law, but he said there is one that sticks out.

"Draconian," is the word he used to describe it.

That proposal calls for the ousting of all elected officials once an emergency financial manager takes over, and also bars those elected officials from holding public office for five years after the manager leaves.

For a town that loves to follow local politics, that would mean no council meetings would be held. Whatever the financial manager does would remain out of public view.

But that's just one proposal, and there is no saying it would receive legislative support. Yet, it does illustrate which way the political winds are blowing in Lansing as the state prepares for an expected slew of cities and municipalities to become financially insolvent.

Heck, even the state might face bankruptcy because of a \$1.8 billion budget deficit.

Gov. Snyder has not been specific on what he proposes to do about the state's financial crisis, other than to say the state needs to "reinvent" itself. Oh yeah, he's also said that public employees need to take

wage and benefit cuts.

So ... how does this bode for Hamtramck?

So far, state Treasury Department officials are puzzled – to say the least – over why Hamtramck City Councilmembers – or at least a majority of them – are rejecting an offer of a state loan to see the city through another year while it irons out its financial problems, said City Manager Bill Cooper.

So, what solutions are there for this growing financial crisis?

City Attorney Allen has a guest opinion column – called an "Op-Ed" in the newspaper business – coming out in the Detroit News within the next two weeks that addresses this issue.

"I know I'm not the most popular guy in town," he told The Review in a recent discussion on the city's finances and the political climate in Lansing.

Allen has often been the target of some councilmembers and public government watchdogs for being a financial drain on the city. And, in the eyes of some city public employees, a foe in the ring of union labor grievances and contract negotiations.

So, will Jim's popularity rise or fall? Stay tuned?

Conservative think tank gets part of city's story right

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck's financial outlook has once again caught the attention of the conservative think tank, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy.

And their take on things?

According to writer Tom Gantert, while the city is crying poverty, at the same time it's handing out raises to employees.

And on top of that, cops working overtime are earning upwards of \$30,000 extra per year.

So how can a city be going broke, yet hand over extra money to employees?

One thing Gantert doesn't take into consideration is that city employee raises are tied into existing contracts – contracts that are binding and cannot be broken. That isn't to say that City Manager Bill Cooper hasn't tried to undo those raises.

Cooper has asked for wage cuts and wage freezes from city employees, but the only ones who agreed to a salary freeze were firefighters. City

Hall employees have also agreed to concessions in recent years, but have drawn a line on taking any more.

As for the overtime earnings, Cooper explained to Gantert that it comes largely from a special overtime traffic patrol program that more than pays for itself. The city earns at least \$60,000 a month from the program.

The program, however, has been too successful. There have been so many tickets issued that the Hamtramck 31st District Court has a four-to-five month backlog. Cooper has since reduced the number of overtime hours officers can work until the court gets up to speed.

The article also failed to mention that court employees and all other non-union workers were forced to take a 5 percent pay cut and 13 unpaid days off per year. And the writer also failed to report that the city cut \$900,000 from its budget a year ago and another \$900,000 this year.

The city's financial picture has changed greatly from a year or so ago. At one point the city had a surplus, but ever since a dispute with Detroit over tax revenue which both cities share from the GM Poletown plant, the city's finances have become increasingly shaky.

Detroit has withheld yearly payments from the plant for the past two years. Those payments totaled about \$2 million a year, which translates into a huge hit to Hamtramck's budget and cash flow.

Cooper said that unless the dispute with Detroit is resolved soon, or the city applies for an emergency state loan, the city will be broke by March – meaning no money for payroll.

The Mackinac Center has written about Hamtramck's financial picture during the past 10 years, ever since the state appointed an emergency financial manager in 2000. Local control was returned to the city in 2007.



What is our City Council up to these days? We have the scoop and the highlights – as well as the lowlights – of the latest council meeting.

By Charles Sercombe

The City Council met on Feb. 7 with only Mayor Karen Majewski absent. (The mayor attended Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano's State of Wayne County Address.) The meeting went past three hours.

Where – oh where – to begin with this meeting? To say that tempers were flying would be an understatement. But it started out sweet. Perhaps we should all go back to a time when things were simpler, and America was still an economic powerhouse.

Yes, let's set our "Way Back" machine to 1959. That's when Hamtramck's Little League champs became World Champs. And in the center of this baseball powerhouse was one Art "Pinky" Deras – now considered the best Little Leaguer in history.

Yes, in history, as in never to be matched again.

The council was treated to a short presentation by Brian Kruger of Stunt3 Multimedia, which produced a documentary on Deras, a pitcher, and his teammates of that 1959 historical season.

He was there to champion the renaming of Dan St. to the honorific title of "Art 'Pinky' Deras Way."

The council voted unanimously in favor of that one. All that was missing was a rousing sing-a-long

of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." Hey, maybe later, after this report?

But before the vote, they were treated to a preview of the documentary. Here are some stats on Deras, who is now a retired Warren police officer:

In 1959 he went 18-0, had 10 no-hitters, struck out 298 batters, had a batting average of .640 and hit 33 home runs.

Gives you goose bumps just thinking about it. And for the record, his teammates were no slouches either. In fact, it could be argued that even without Deras the boys – bless em' all – would have had a very good season.

Kruger said his doc is up for a Michigan Emmy, and may soon see wider distribution. It was aired on the Fox and ABC television networks. He also added that his company is willing to pay for the signage.

And, Kruger said he is also interested in doing a documentary on the city's baseball grandstands in Veterans Memorial Park, which appears to have been part of the legendary Negro League.

Batting next were the city's auditors from Alan C. Young & Associates, PC and Plante Moran.

Carl Johnson, a representative of Plante Moran, noted that going after the Pinky Deras piece was

a "hard one to follow." (Editor's note: It's known as batting ninth.)

The city's financial picture for 2010 was not good, but Johnson pointed out, at least the city knows what it is facing. On the upside, he said, the city's financial bookkeeping was good and followed state law.

Now the bad news. The city spent more than what it collected, forcing it to dip into its rainy day fund.

The reason for the downturn, he noted, which is also widely known by city officials, is the dispute with Detroit over what Hamtramck is owed from tax collections from the GM Poletown plant.

The upshot is, Hamtramck collected \$1 million less than it expected last year. Detroit is claiming Hamtramck has been overpaid \$7 million over the last several years. Detroit has since stopped all payment to Hamtramck, but that stoppage happened in the fiscal year of 2010-2011.

On top of that, Hamtramck's Water Department is spending more than it is taking in, again thanks to Detroit and its increase in rates.

There was a little good news. The city earned \$160,000 by taking over income tax collection

Continued on page 4

This week at the library...

Special Screening of a LINK Documentary Movie "Hiding" - Thursday, February 24 at 7 p.m. LINK (Liberty in North Korea) is an organization that is currently working on a modern day underground railroad, helping refugees who have escaped North Korea to find freedom. Many North Koreans face starvation if they stay (in addition to complete religious oppression and persecution), so they risk their lives to flee to China where they must live in hiding. If caught, they will be sent back to North Korea and executed or put into a concentration camp.

Premiere Showing of the Polish Movie "MGLA" - Friday, February 25 at 7 p.m. This movie, produced by Maria Dlużewska and Joanna Lichocka, presents interviews and known information about the plane crash that took place on final the approach to Smolensk airport and claimed the lives of the President of Poland and high ranking members of the Polish Government.

Black History Month Contest - "When I Think Africa..." contest is open to all school age children. All forms of media are accepted; for example, poems, short stories, paintings, drawings, photos, songs, essays, etc. All entries must be submitted by February 16, 5 p.m. Winners of the contest will be announced and prizes will be awarded on Saturday, February 19, during Black History Month Program.

ESL Class for Beginners - Saturday, February 12 at 10:30 a.m. Christine Templin is the instructor for the ESL class for beginners. Everyone is invited. Free to the public.

Storytime for Children - Saturday, February 12 at noon. All children are invited to the library's Storytime. Celebrate Black History Month by making African Unity Wreaths during the arts and crafts program after the reading of the book "Martin's Big Words" by Doreen Rappaport.

Computer Classes for Advanced Users - Monday, February 14 at 11 a.m. Adults with basic computer skills can enhance their computer literacy each Monday at the library. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Wednesday, February 16 at 11 a.m. Basic instructions on computer use for beginners will be held on Tuesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Reading and Conversation for ESL Students - Tuesday, February 15 at 5:30 p.m. Jide Aje is the instructor for the reading and conversation ESL classes.

Math Club Meeting - Tuesday, February 15 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

Movie Wednesday - Wednesday, February 16 at 3:30 p.m. Every Wednesday is movie day at the library. Come and enjoy our feature presentation, which includes free popcorn and snacks.

Black History Month Movie - Thursday, February 17 at 5:30 p.m. "A Great Day in Harlem" is a movie based on life in an era when New York City was the center of the jazz world, when music history was constantly being made. Everyone is invited.

Winter Teen Club - Thursday, February 17 at 5:00 p.m. Members of the Teen Club will learn how to make peanut butter feeders that you can hang on a tree and watch the birds peck at. George Washington Carver, a black scientist, invented peanut butter. Everyone is invited to join.

Jeopardy at the Library - Thursday, February 17 at 4 p.m. Sign up and participate in Jeopardy games held on Thursdays at the library. Compete against friends, win prizes and have fun developing your knowledge skills.

Meeting of the Library Board - Thursday, March 10 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. Open to the public.

Friends of the Library Meeting - Thursday, February 17 at 6:30 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday, invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting and election meeting of the FHPL.

Gospel Music Concert - Saturday, February 19 at 1 p.m. In celebration of Black History Month, the library will host the Inspirational Choir from Corinthian Baptist Church with their annual Gospel Music Concert. Everyone is invited. Refreshments will be served.

Art Exhibit - February 19, 2011. In celebration of Black History Month, the library presents an art exhibit of a local African American artist, Jacqueline Walker. Her paintings will be displayed in the library until March 5, 2011.

For more information about events at the library call (313) 365-7050, or visit our website at <http://hamtramck.lib.mi.us> where you can also access our online catalog.



City of Hamtramck
Department of Community & Economic Development
3401 Evaline Avenue
Hamtramck, Michigan 48212
Telephone: 313.876.7700 Fax: 313.876.7771

The City of Hamtramck Department of Community & Economic Development is currently looking to fill the two (2) following positions to assist in the administration of approximately

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2. Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP 2) Acquisitions & Marketing Manager

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For complete job descriptions please visit www.hamtramck.us or, contact the Department of Human Resources, Hamtramck City Hall, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI, 313.870.0348

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Second Front Page

Baseball stadium takes another step closer towards historical designation

By Ian Perrotta

The baseball stadium at Veterans Park is seeking approval, and so far it's getting it.

In late December, the committee working to save the stadium received word from the State Historic Preservation Office that the preliminary application for historical designation of the stadium was approved. It's now working to complete the final application and hopes to have it completed by the September review board.

Though it was just the first step toward getting the stadium placed on the National Register of Historic Places, committee member and historical preservationist Rebecca Binno Savage said that the preliminary application was crucial in determining whether or not the process would go further.

Explaining that both the state and federal processes for historical designation are combined, she noted that its approval was important because in Michigan the coordinator has very high standards, and, as a result, few applications that make it past him are later rejected.

"What that means is that the stadium is eligible for national designation," she said. "The word eligible is an important designation on its

own, because it means that if a developer wants to do any work on the stadium, it must first be studied."

The next step is to turn in the full application. Though there isn't a set deadline for this, the board that decides which applications are approved meets only three times a year – in January, May and September. The target is

Stadium – a Negro League stadium in New Jersey – as a National Historic Landmark, it decided to wait in order to look at their application.

The delay was encouraged by Binno Savage, who said that designation as a National Historic Landmark was the highest and most important rating a historical site could achieve. Her belief is

own.

"What's important about this is that it gives us something to go by," she said.

Unfortunately, it wasn't all good news that came out of the Hinchliffe nomination. In their application they claim there are 14 home sites where Negro League ball was played – rather than five, the number used by the Ham-



The preliminary application to have the stadium at Veterans Park be listed on the National Register of Historic Places was recently approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. The committee to save the stadium hopes to have the final application turned in by September.

to be ready by September.

Previously, the goal was to turn in the application by May. However, after the committee received word that another committee was working on a project to designate Hinchliffe

that the Hinchliffe Stadium application could both provide additional information for Hamtramck's application as well as serve as a guideline for a future National Historic Landmark application of its

tramck committee – which is a fact that baseball author and historian Gary Gillette disputes.

Gillette, who is also working on the Hamtramck committee, maintains that there are only five remaining home sites that are historically significant. He says that despite the fact that the last Negro League folded in 1961, by 1955 many of the league's best players had already been integrated into Major League Baseball. By including sites from this era, as well as other places where teams may have played only a few times, Gillette says it's easy to artificially inflate the amount of places that are historically important. But regardless of that fact, he is absolutely positive that the stadium in Veterans Park is of the utmost significance.

"This is a field for a team during an important era in the Negro League. The players were of Major League Caliber and the Detroit Stars were a significant team," he said. "Trust me – this is much more important than Hinchliffe Stadium."



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Street Life

Despite great medical news, there are pressing issues at home

(Editor-at-Large Walter Wasacz writes a weekly column on life in Hamtramck.)

By Walter Wasacz

The remarkable recovery of Hamtramckan Vladimir "Joe" Vujic continues to captivate us. It's a story of individual perseverance and teamwork – by a group called Joe's Army, based in Hamtramck – that turned potentially fatal illness into a story of love and hope.

A brief recap: Vujic was diagnosed with usual interstitial pneumonia, a pulmonary disease characterized by a scarring of both lungs. The disease has no cure and leads to rapid deterioration of the lungs.

Vujic was hospitalized at St. John Oakland then transferred to Henry Ford Hospital, where a medical team evaluated him for a possible transplant. He was placed at the top of the list for a lung transplant – then spent the next two months in the hospital's intensive care unit.

The transplant team decided that Vujic's best chance was to increase the potential pool of donors by moving him to a national transplant center at Duke University in North Carolina in

late 2010.

Vujic received a new lung on Jan. 1, and has been in rigorous rehabilitation ever since.

Here is the latest report from Anita Surma of Joe's Army:

"Last Friday, Joe walked 14 laps without his walker in 20 minutes at physical rehabilitation.

"I was fortunate to meet Dr. Zaas, the head of the Pulmonary Transplant Program in Clinic. With the new left lung, Joe is reaching about 90 percent of normal lung function. Dr. Zaas feels the thought of a right lung transplant can be put in storage for the present. ...No need! All of Joe's pulmonary function tests are good. A few weeks ago, there was concern that cancer might be present in the right lung. Joe has a clean bill of health on this front: no cancer anywhere. This Friday Joe has his first Bronchoscopy.

"With all things considered, I think Joe will be home mid- to late-March, a bit later than we hoped. But Joe is very Zen about it. After all he has been through, he is just very positive about doing what needs to be done to keep on the high road to health and well being.



"As some of you know, Joe's house was and is in need of critical major repairs. Given the strict environmental guidelines all transplant patients must follow, Joe cannot return to his home. And Dr. Zaas confirmed that under no circumstances can Joe work on his house, even with the best mask in the business for filtering out dust/pathogens/viruses/mold/fungus. So Joe will find a temporary apartment; from that place he will consult with family and friends on what is the best decision to make regarding his house.

"He will also be grappling with the even greater challenge of what will be the source of his income – disability or return to work. Duke has not made any determination on whether he can work; they may not be able to until summer or fall. Again, as Joe heals

more and more, he has the energy and spirit to face all these new and stressful realities after such a critical illness.

"So in the midst of all the good medical news, I wanted to pose a thought to the many people who made such generous financial contributions. I think Joe needs some "tools" to rebuild his life. To continue his work on Strength/Balance/Walking he needs Two thick yoga mats and a set of weights (\$70); to keep a pristine apartment he needs a very good HEPA filter vacuum cleaner (\$400) and a steam cleaner (\$150); to easily make nutritious meals he needs a skillet/cutting board/some knives/a salad spinner/a few pots (around \$125).

"Also, Joe will be faced with new monthly medical costs. So if anyone has any time to commit to new ways of raising money – wow, call us!"

Cards and e-mails to Joe would be welcome.

Send to: Forest Apartments, Apartment 1402, 800 White Pine Drive, Durham, NC 27705. Email: joev29@juno.com

A website is set up to take donations as well as report on Vujic's progress. For more details, go here: <http://vujictransplantfund.org/>

Making our streets safer for pedestrians Cont. from front page

schools.

"We have a lot of people coming here from different parts of the world, who don't have cars or can't afford cars when they first come here," Friedmann says. "And then a lot of them end up staying here because they like not having cars, being able to get around on a bike or DDOT transportation. Half of our residents, 50 percent of our residents do not have cars." Hamtramck is part of the Michigan Trails and Greenways of Detroit group, headed up by Todd Scott. They're working on creating a trail network through the city of De-

troit that will eventually connect Highland Park, Hamtramck and the suburbs.

Friedmann says that designs for the trail networks in Hamtramck are in place, and they're working on securing funding for the pathways.

"Several of the trails are planned for on streets, so all those will be under Complete Streets guidelines. A big part of it is installing bike lanes on our main streets, like Jos. Campau and Caniff."

This article first appeared in modedmedia.com and is reprinted with permission.

'Complete Streets' movement seeks kinder ways to get around

Just what is are "complete streets"?

According to the website of the National Complete Streets Coalition, here is a partial definition:

"The streets of our cities and towns are an important part of the livability of our communities. They ought to be for everyone, whether young or old, motorist or bicyclist, walker or wheelchair user, bus rider or shopkeeper. But too many of our streets are designed only for speeding cars, or worse, creeping traffic jams.

"Now, in communities across the country, a move-

ment is growing to complete the streets. States, cities and towns are asking their planners and engineers to build road networks that are safer, more livable, and welcoming to everyone.

"Instituting a complete streets policy ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind - including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities."

City Hall Insider... Continued from page 2

and processing for the City of Highland Park.

The city's library has a \$500,000 surplus, and collected \$400,000 last year from its own special tax on property owners.

Under questioning from council, Johnson said the city will likely be broke by the end of March. City Councilmember Tom Jankowski said he hopes the city's unions take note of this.

There was plenty more talk about the city's financial future later in the meeting while the council revisited the proposal to apply for a state emergency loan.

During public comment, Mike Kapusniak complained that the Kowalski Sausage Co. did not clear its sidewalk of snow. He suggested the city ticket the company.

He also noted that the former Citizen newspaper building on Jos. Campau at Zinow is a public safety threat because its façade is falling apart. He said scaffolding has been erected in front of the building for about year but there have been no repairs.

"They must know somebody in City Hall," he said.

Bill Meyer talked at length about the city's financial situation. He stressed that the city's traffic patrol program is too aggressive.

"I know people who won't even drive through Hamtramck," he said.

(Editor's note: Ball four! It's a walk.)

Robert Zwolak asked what the status is of the lawsuit filed against the city for the massive

number of basement floodings that took place a few years ago. He also questioned why the city continues to have its own water department. He said it appears the department is kept afloat just to maintain a "lucrative" contract for C.P.I., a contractor the city uses for all major road and water line repairs.

(Editor's note: Signing bonus?)

OK, we're going to continue with the baseball metaphor and say the meeting so far has just gotten past the first inning. The innings to follow featured wild pitches, grand slams and plenty of fouls.

In a review of city expenses, Councilmember Jankowski sharply questioned the amount of overtime worked by firefighters. He said 260 hours of overtime were racked up.

(Editor's note: Batting average of .260 isn't too shabby.)

Financial Director Nevrus Nazarko, who sat in for City Manager Bill Cooper, said most of the overtime was the result of meeting minimum staffing requirements.

Jankowski said it seemed to him there was "manipulation" of overtime by employees and some "tricks" used to claim it.

(Editor's note: It's called a pitch out.)

He said he wants to know what the "policy" is for overtime, and wants to make sure OT is distributed evenly among employees – and not limited to those who earn the most money.

A few weeks ago, a majority of the council agreed to slash the budget in an effort to balance it.

Continued on page 5

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Review: Opinion Page

Taking a state loan is the sensible approach to saving the city

Judging by what we heard at Tuesday's City Council meeting, it looks like the council may take another vote on whether to apply for an emergency state loan.

Let's hope cooler heads prevail and vote for the loan. What we witnessed at last Tuesday's council meeting was nothing short of madness. Never have we seen such a display of militant ignorance on the part of Councilmembers Tom Jankowski, Kazi Miah, Mohammed Hassan and Cathie Gordon.

Fortunately, it looked like Financial Director Nevrus Nazarko talked some common sense into at least one of those four, which will allow the mayor to cast a tie-breaking vote if the council deadlocks at 3-3 on this issue.

We still can't believe what we heard, and wonder if the above mentioned councilmembers purposely want to sabotage Hamtramck. Councilmember Hassan went on record saying he would welcome a state takeover, which begs the question: why did you run for office in the first place if you are so willing to abdicate your responsibilities?

Councilmember Jankowski has it in for the city unions,

particularly the police officers' unions, and is demanding they agree to contract concessions before he agrees to a state loan. Mr. Jankowski, you don't want to go down that road toward a state takeover. There is a new administration in Lansing and word is, if the state takes over there could be severe changes to the community – including a possible merger with Detroit.

This isn't a time to gamble with the city's future.

Councilmember Miah, from what we can tell, doesn't want to take loan if things will proceed as usual. On the surface that sounds good, but what does that mean exactly?

Well, according to Miah, that primarily means fixing the city's website.

Yeah, right, like that will turn things around. Miah's comment only underscores his inexperience and lack of qualifications to hold a position on council.

Councilmember Gordon is a bigger puzzle, lashing out all over the place without any coherent theme.

The city needs to take a low-interest state loan to tide us over for the next couple of years. During that time it's hoped that the city will settle its dispute with Detroit over

how much tax revenue Hamtramck should receive from the GM Poletown plant.

During the next year the city needs to convince city employees they have a stake too, and the unions need to agree to contract concessions if employees expect to save their jobs.

Time is what Hamtramck needs to sort out its finances. Many other cities in the state are also struggling and face financial disaster. At least Hamtramck has an offer from the state for assistance, giving us a chance to steer the city back on track.

If a majority of the City Council decides to do essentially nothing, to just sit on their hands and allow the city to hit payless paydays, that will be the height of irresponsibility. It may mean there really is no reason to ever trust local officials to manage this city again.

For the record, bravo to Councilmembers Catrina Stackpoole and Shahab Ahmed for standing up against this insanity and voting to save Hamtramck. And that also goes for Mayor Karen Majewski, who has consistently pleaded for the council to take the right course.

City Hall Insider... Continued from page 4

Those cuts included eliminating the city's code inspectors.

(Editor's note: Known as sacrifice flies.)

But included in those cuts was a proposal to have the city's Community & Economic Development Department take over funding inspectors by tapping into federal funds that had been earmarked for other uses.

The council talked at length about whether to budget almost \$55,000 for inspectors. Councilmember Jankowski questioned why there was a need, within the proposed budget, to purchase three laptops, three cameras and two-way radios.

He was told the laptops and cameras the inspectors had used previously were no longer working. As for the radios, there was a possibility to use surplus police equipment to avoid spending money.

The issue of equipment prompted Jankowski to ask whether there is an inventory of all city equipment.

What followed next was about an hour's discussion, sometimes heated, about whether to apply for an emergency state loan. Mayoral Pro Tem Catrina Stackpoole (bats, throws right), who was standing in for the mayor, asked Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko (bats, throws right), who was standing in for City Manager Bill Cooper (bats, throws right), who was out sick, to speak on the "importance" of taking a state loan.

Nazarko outlined that there are two options for the city to consider: a loan that would have to be paid back in 12 months at an interest rate of about 5 percent, and a state loan with less than 1 percent in interest that could be paid back over 20 years.

He said the loan is needed to avoid payless paydays. In the meantime, Nazarko said he is confident that Hamtramck will prevail in a dispute with Detroit over how much tax revenue Hamtramck should receive from the GM Poletown plant.

The 20-year state loan would be for \$2.6 million, and could be paid back at any time. Nazarko said the yearly interest rate for that loan would be just over

\$5,000 a year, while the 12-month loan would cost \$125,000 in interest.

Nazarko repeated several times that the 20-year loan could be paid back at any time, and that he was confident that Hamtramck will win the Detroit dispute and could likely pay back the loan within two years.

Nazarko also said that the city will not have any money on hand to pay city employees or contractors by the end of March. He said the loan will allow the city to continue operations through 2012.

Councilmember Mohammed Hassan said he wants to see a budget that reflects cuts of \$3 million – the amount that is being projected as the city deficit by the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30.

He said there are only two departments in the city that can help reduce the projected deficit: the police and fire departments. He said since both departments don't trust the city's budget deficit projection, the city should just run out of money.

(Editor's note: "Let it die.")

Councilmember Stackpoole said that without the loan, the city will be taken over by the state. And if that happens, she said, "We won't have a say."

Councilmember Cathie Gordon said the city should first concentrate on collecting revenue.

"We don't even know how much is out there," she said.

Councilmember Kazi Miah said that he is concerned that if the loan is taken, the city will continue "business as usual." He said that if the city's website was up and running, it could make money.

He also said the council should fire the city manager. He accused Cooper of "goofing up" the contract for the firefighters, which he said came during the last council election season.

"Nobody wants to talk about that," Miah said.

(Editor's note: Well, let's talk about that. Miah made the accusation of Cooper "goofing up" the firefighters' contract several times later in the meeting.)

Councilmember Gordon said if the city is going to be short of money, it should borrow from the

Water Department, where she said there is "tons of money."

(Editor's note: That would be the New York Yankees.)

Nazarko said it would be illegal to borrow from the Water Department, and besides that there is no money there.

Councilmember Jankowski questioned what would happen if the city received the state loan. Would department heads then demand back the 5 percent pay cut they took?

Jankowski said talk of going broke and having a state-appointed emergency financial manager take over is a "fear factor" tactic. He suggested the city wait until it goes broke and then see what the state recommends, whether it would be taken over by an emergency financial manager or taking a loan.

Nazarko countered back: "Why wait for the next step?"

Councilmember Shahab Ahmed said the council should listen to Nazarko because Nazarko is presenting a good argument for the loan.

Councilmember Miah sharply questioned Ahmed, asking if he thinks there is nothing else to cut from the budget and whether the city manager "goofed off" handling the firefighters' contract.

Ahmed said the budget had been cut as much as it can and that he did not know what Miah meant about the firefighters' contract.

Miah: "You should, you've been here six years."

The upshot of the discussion was that the council agreed to continue it in a special meeting on Feb. 18 at 7 p.m.

Moving on to the 8th inning, no runners on, first up to bat, Councilmember Gordon swings for the long ball. She accused City Clerk Ed Norris of whiffing it when it comes to bearing down on businesses filing for their annual business permit. She said 20 percent of the businesses in the city have failed to file for a business permit.

Asked by Norris how she arrived at that figure. She replied: "That's what I've been told. By people in this building."

During the discussion, Finan-

Continued on page 8

Odds & Ends

Try, try try ... Our friend and loyal reader Christine Komisarz – recently spotlighted in our "Movers and Shakers" column – dropped us an email about a pretty frustrating experience with Detroit and Highland Park police.

She tried to do the right thing, really, but the dysfunction of Detroit and Highland Park runs too deep for anything to get done – apparently. Here's her tale – and consider it a cautionary one:

"Remember maybe three-four weeks ago when fire hydrants were being stolen from Highland Park? The city claimed they would cost \$6,000 to replace. Well, go take a look at the northwest corner of Holbrook and I-75 Service Drive. Over the fence, next to a tree, is a fire hydrant.

"The first time I saw it, probably about 3 weeks ago now, I called Hamtramck Police and told them about it. The female officer told me she'd transfer me to Detroit Police because it was in Detroit. She transferred me to 9-1-1!!! So, I told the officer: #1, that my call wasn't an emergency and should I call another number (he said no,

what was the problem), and #2 about the fire hydrant.

"He said they'd take care of it. So, later on in the week, when the fire hydrant was still in the exact same spot, I called Highland Park Police who told me they'd have the Highland Park Fire Department come out and take a look to see if it was theirs because he "thought" he heard something about fire hydrants being stolen from the city. (DUH.) Well, guess what's in that exact same spot! Yep, that \$6,000 fire hydrant. Even if it was useless now, you'd think SOMEONE would at least PICK IT UP!"

And now something completely different ... Kathy Chockley from Holy Cross Parish also emailed us recently. We're happy to report that here is a case of no one being dysfunctional. Take it away, Kathy.

"The Mission Committee of Holy Cross Parish held a new toy drive during November and December. Every Sunday parishioners were invited to bring new, unwrapped toys and drop them into the big toy box in the social hall. On Dec. 17, Holy Cross Pastor,

Fr. Jaroslaw Nowak, with mission committee members Katherine Banicki, JoHanna Banicki, Niya Hoffman, Keane Hoffman, Stephanie Marsh, and myself delivered over 200 toys that were collected to the Hamtramck Friendship House on Conant Street. The Friendship House is a non-profit that serves residents of Hamtramck and nearby Detroit. ...

"The Holy Cross Mission Committee also sponsored a deserving Friendship House family. The committee raised money by organizing a Santa Shoppe and selling Christmas decorations, small gifts and homemade chocolate. The money was used to purchase Christmas presents of toys and clothes for this family. We hope to do more to support the great work of Hamtramck Friendship House."

Read all about it ... Hamtramck's very own Matt Feazell, the creator of the widely popular "Cynical Man" cartoon, is featured in the latest issue of Hour magazine. Be sure to check it out because it's a pretty interesting interview.

Coming Events

FEBRUARY 12, Saturday 2 – 4 p.m. – Monthly Soup Kitchen at Holy Cross Parish, Pulaski at Fleming. All are welcome.

FEBRUARY 15, Tuesday, 7 p.m. – Preserve Our Parks meets every third Tuesday of the month, at the Senior Plaza at 2620 Holbrook. For more information, call Dick Kaleski at (313) 874-2651.

FEBRUARY 23, Wednesday, noon – The Daughters of Isabella Mystical Rose Circle 736 is holding a card party social at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Activity Center, featuring lunch, raffles, door and table prizes, share the wealth, with fenced-in parking, entrance on Harold St. Admission is \$7.

APRIL 3, Sunday, 2 p.m. – The Holy Cross Parish Mission Committee will host a bowling fundraiser to support the Hamtramck Friendship House. The event will be at Universal Lanes, 2101 E. 12 Mile Rd. in Warren. For more information and tickets, call (586) 558-7321 or stop by Srodek's Campau Quality Sausage at 9601 Jos. Campau. Ask for Maggie Srodek.

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Letters • Letters

Now is the time to entice new businesses to locate here

While driving down Jos. Campau last Sunday it occurred to me that the time is now for Hamtramck to develop a more bohemian environment by enticing young entrepreneurs to come and see the potential this city has to become a destination for shopping, dining, and enjoyment.

I thought about the amount of traffic that is always on Campau, just driving through, but, drivers have no reason to stop. One of the many empty storefronts could be the future place of business for a fantastic place to get brunch. I would love to see something reminiscent of the Side Street Deli. I really miss hanging there on a Saturday Morning; the guest DJ would be spinning some righteous tunes, seeing many familiar faces while enjoying the wonderful eclectic flavor with the mojo spilling out of the kitchen.

In our favor we have a variety of hip places here in town: Record Graveyard, Detroit Threads, Public Pool, Café 1923, The Polish Art Center, Planet Ant, The Yoga Suite, Barberella's, and now The Hoard House!

We need more shops that offer this kind of diverse shopping experience. This is the time if you ever had an idea for a business in Hamtramck. We have so many talented people in the Detroit area that could potentially turn Hamtramck into a place people want to come to again. I think we can build off of the ideas of those that are here to turn Hamtramck into a place that draws the cool kids of all ages here to experience why everyone loves this town.

The landlords in the business district need to really look at what they charge for rent verses mortgage pay-

ments and maybe rent it out at cost for "X" amount of time. The landlord will win in this situation because his payment is made, his investment is occupied, and would have a new business to shop at.

The city will win with tax dollars collected as would other business owners as the clientele of our city grows. It used to be if someone was going to Hamtramck they would spend hours browsing, shopping and eating. The landlords have to work with potential proprietors in order for our downtown to become a vibrant community of diverse shops which offer unique finds and services.

I imagine a chocolate shop on Jos. Campau that I could walk to, then hit a couple of resale shops, next, browse through a gallery and finishing off my day by grabbing a mouth watering deli sandwich that gives competition to any sandwich shop around.

I believe the opportunity for Hamtramck to become hip again is now. It is just a matter of enticing people to see what is here and give it a shot. Many of the dollar stores are gone, the old Lenzens is vacant, as are others, which has created a change of atmosphere in our downtown.

I have lived in this town for the majority of my life and believe that our downtown will survive. Using what we have to draw more hip shops to our town is what I would like to see. We have the empty buildings, so let's fill them with something to brag about, to say, "You gotta check out that cool store in Hamtramck!"

Just a thought.

**Heather Martin
Hamtramck**

Dead trees removed from Jos. Campau



By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck is a little less green.

Recently, 22 trees were cut down along the Jos. Campau business district because they were diseased or already dead.

The project was funded by the Downtown Development Authority at a cost of \$3,500.

DDA Manager Darren Grow said he is applying for a grant to replace the trees, but he said it could take a year or so

before he knows if a grant is approved.

The metal grates that surrounded each tree will be piled up later when warm weather returns.

This isn't the worst blow to Hamtramck's trees. A tornado, or what is believed to have been a tornado, touched down in Hamtramck in 1997 and wiped out over 500 trees.

A citywide effort helped replant many of those trees.

Framed



From our photo files

Yes, we've all heard that it's a jungle out there, but did you know the king of the jungle resides in Hamtown? Can you identify where this photo was taken? Hint: the owner of the house is quite the "amusionist."

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2 Br. upper on Caniff, \$450/month, includes water and basic cable, no pets, 586-531-9722, 313-418-8791. 2/18

2 Br., appliances, freshly painted, new carpet, 313-220-8961. 2/11

Upper 2 Br. w/appliances, nice area, \$350/month + deposit, 313-882-2188. 2/11

Beautifully remodeled 3 Br. upper, \$550/month + 1 Br., \$395/month, utilities not included, Section 8 OK, credit check, 313-590-1000. 2/11

ROOM FOR RENT

Single room, kitchen privileges, quiet neighborhood, 313-220-8961. 2/18

Hamtramck, 11380 Mitchell, furnished, 313-368-2162. 2/18

HOUSE FOR RENT

3901 Caniff, 4 Br., 2 bathrooms, single-family dwelling, includes new gas stove + oven, microwave, dishwasher, garbage disposal, fridge, washer-dryer, large fenced yard, 2-1/2 car garage with electronic opener, all for only \$700/month, renters insurance required, call Len at 248-421-4332 for additional info. 5/4

HOUSE FOR SALE

Hamtramck, Lumpkin at Commor, spacious 3 Br. bungalow, kitchen, living room, dining, 1-1/2 bath, pantry, full basement, 2-car-garage, newly painted, newer water heater, 90% efficient furnace, A/C, land contract available, 313-977-8100. 2/18

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY FOR RENT

Hamtramck landlord seeks entrepreneurs to rent space in a 45x100, 2-story building with full basement in the heart of town, if you feel up putting the dynamic back into Hamtramck, call Jack for appointment to checkout 9525 Jos. Campau. Elevator to all three levels, 248-931-9731. 2/11

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY FOR SALE/LEASE

Medical office, fully furnished, very spacious, 4 exam rooms, 2 offices, lab, big lobby, big reception area, in busy section of town, call Abby 313-903-0700. 2/11

House for rent

Single family house, 3 bedrooms, full basement + full attic Ask for Palo, 248-659-2278

FOR RENT

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Classifieds

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Cleaning lady wanted, Polish speaking preferred. Call 586 943-4721.

Experienced panel wiring professionals needed, full-time, \$12-\$14/hour, call 734-397-4932, or apply within to: Work Force Network Inc., 5751 S. Sheldon Rd., Canton, MI, 48188. 2/18

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City Hall Insider... Continued from page 5

cial Director Nazarko pointed out that business permit revenue went up from \$22,000 a year ago to \$35,000 this year. (Fastball, straight over the plate.) During the public comment section at the end of the meet-

ing, apparently nerves were frayed, and the game became too close to call. Bill Meyer, standing up at the lectern, wound up, and delivered a curveball. He accused Councilmember Stackpoole of politicking by bringing up the state loan proposal.

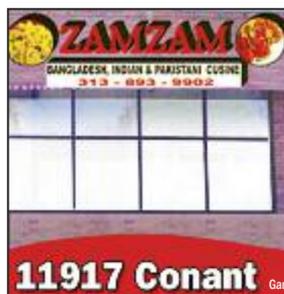
Stackpoole, who was chairing the meeting, swung and ... get ready readers ... wait ... said: "What the F— are you talking about? I've had it with you people." (We're not sure if she spat at the umpire at this point, turned her hat backwards and then

kicked dirt all over home plate.) Stackpoole then left the meeting (ejected?) but came back a few minutes later and apologized. (Watch out for those inside pitches.) All right, let's shake off the dust from this meeting, and in

the spirit of good sportsmanship, let's all stand up, stretch, shake hands ... and sing out a neighborly version of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

"Take me out to the ball game
Take me out with the crowd
Buy me some peanuts and

Crackerjack
I don't care if I never get back
For it's root, root, root for the home team
If they don't win it's a shame
For it's one, two, three strikes
You're out at the old ball game!"



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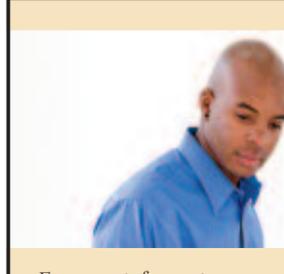
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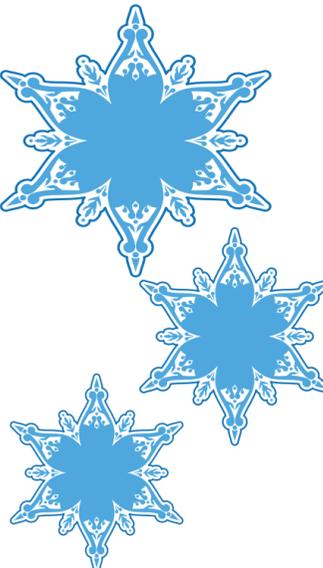
Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) can have a terrible bearing on a person's life. Medications prescribed to help with MDD may be effective in treating symptoms for some people, but not all—which is why we are conducting a research study to evaluate an add-on investigational drug for people with MDD. We are looking for men and women, aged between 18–65 years old, who have been:

- diagnosed with MDD
- taking antidepressant medication for at least eight weeks and are still experiencing symptoms.

Qualified participants will receive an approved antidepressant medication plus study medication or placebo (inactive substance).

For more information please contact:
Rochester Center for Behavioral Medicine
Joel L Young, MD
441 South Livernois, Ste. 205
Rochester Hills, MI 48307
If interested, please contact
Karolina Redziniak, MA, tLLP at (248) 608-8800 Ext. 249

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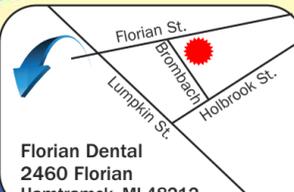
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF HAMTRAMCK

Notice is hereby given that the Community & Economic Development Department of the City of Hamtramck will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, March 8, 2011 at 7:00 P.M. in City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI

Pursuant to Federal guidelines, the City of Hamtramck is announcing its objectives and possible uses for development projects using Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

The City's allocation for 2011 is approximately \$ 394,000.000

POTENTIAL PROJECTS	Amount
Repayment of Jos. Campau Section 108 Loan	\$81,635.00
Repayment of Grand Haven/Dyar Section 108 Loan	\$88,095.00
Countywide Housing Rehabilitation	\$30,000.00
Aerial/Ladder Fire Truck	\$59,100.00
Code Enforcement	\$53,000.00
Administration	\$39,400.00
Hamtramck Bikeway / Veterans Park	\$42,770.00

The public is invited to attend and comment on the proposal during the public hearing or to make written comments on or before 4:00 PM, March 8, 2011.

Written comments should be made to the attention of the Community & Economic Development Director, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI 48212.

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Dear Ambassador Nursing & Rehabilitation Centre staff and Sharon Rucker, LPN, Nurse Manager

The process of a knee replacement is not something comfortable that someone can have done and just get up and return to their regular way of living immediately. An adjustment of using the limb must be done for one to return to their way of life. To bring down swelling and make mobility the best possible so that one may return to their normal life is a necessity.

Ambassador made my residential status enjoyable along with therapy I was willing to accept any and all pain. I was treated in a manner that would make me encourage others to use the facility for rehabilitation. Nursing care is followed up by a chain of command which Ambassador has.

The personnel of Ambassador was very courteous starting with the Administrator, Henry Conerway, who walked the floors each day greeting the residents to make sure they were satisfied; Director of Nursing, Kela Nealis, popped in frequently to make sure I was alright; Support Services, Sharon Rucker, made sure my spirits stayed elevated along with the Activities Department. The Nursing, CENA, Housekeeping and Mechanical Staffs for the area I stayed gave me the feeling of a resort which is where I was ready to go for relaxation between surgery and home.

The Encore Therapy Group did their job. I was taken to a point, even through swelling, of wanting to do. I enjoyed participating in my therapy and even going pass what was required. They are a group that works very well with all the residents from what I have observed.

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Andrea Jean Daniels,
previous Ambassador patient

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