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"Meet the Candidates Night" is being sponsored by The Review newspaper and the Hamtramck Block Club Association.

— Refreshments Provided by The Hamtramck Review —

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Volume 3 No. 26
July 8, 2011
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Quick Hits

Two things of special note this week.

First up, this Saturday (July 9) it's the monthly recycling day at the city parking lot on Caniff at McDougall. You know the drill, bring all your recyclable items. However, the city is no longer accepting Styrofoam.

And then on Wednesday (July 13), it's the political event of the season at People's Community Services Center. That's where "Meet the Candidates Night" will take place. You'll be able to hear what our City Council candidates have to say.

The event kicks off at 6 p.m.

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.

"I felt I needed to be closer to the situation."

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

What's worse than a condemned house? Try living next to one

By Charles Sercombe

Tom Witkowski has every right to say this, but he hasn't.

The house next door to his on the 2000 block of Edwin St. is a pile of sh*t.

Or, if you prefer a more polite term, feces.

We mean that in the literal sense because the person who occupied the house had the habit of defecating on his couch, floor and anywhere, apparently, but the toilet.

How do we know this?

When the cops recently came to arrest the guy for income tax evasion, and possible child abuse, he was asked why there was so much excrement on the floor and everywhere.

Why?

The reason is not clear, but

detectives told us that the man who had been living there is obese and has a hard time getting around. According to Witkowski, he noticed that numerous toilets were thrown out over the last few years since the man lived there.

Let's stress the part about "was living there" because the city finally condemned the house and forbade anyone from living there.

The cops initially arrested the guy for child abuse for allowing his kids to live in the filth-infested house, but that charge was dropped because the kids were not actually living there, but nevertheless, were there.

The story gets worse. Two

Continued on page 2



This house on Edwin St. was recently condemned by the city because of the filthy condition inside. Soon after the house was condemned, it mysteriously started on fire. Living next to the house has been a nightmare for neighbors.

Candidate's residency takes a new turn

By Charles Sercombe

City Council candidate Abu Mahfuz claims he lives in Hamtramck.

But it appears the address he originally claimed he lived at is an empty attic.

This week, we received an email from Mohammad Nazrul Islam who lives at 2424 Neibel, which is the address that Mahfuz has told the city is his official residence.

We had recently visited the two-family house and noticed that the lower flat appeared to be empty, and that a woman living in the upper flat said no one was living there. As it turns out, the woman is married to Islam. Islam said his wife does not speak English.

Islam further said that Mahfuz lives in the third upper unit.

The Review did some research on the house. We called the Department of Public Services and asked who owns the house, and whether it was registered as a rental dwelling since it appears renters live there.

We learned that Mohammad Kamruzzaman owns the house, but he had failed to register it as a rental dwelling. As for an upper third unit, it is an attic, and it's against the law to reside in an attic.

On Wednesday, a city inspector and the fire marshal visited the house. Vince Peruchietti, a rental home inspector, said he closed down the third floor unit at the house and demanded that the owner register with the city as a landlord.

The attic unit, Peruchietti said, had been converted into a room, but he saw no signs of anyone living there.

There is a new ripple in the Mahfuz residency question. On July 1, he changed his address with the Secretary of State Office, and he now says he lives at 11450 Moran.

Stay tuned, folks.

American Axle says it will close down last remaining plant

By Charles Sercombe

Any hope that city officials had about American Axle & Manufacturing reopening its plants looks like a thing of the past.

Last week, American Axle officials announced they are closing down the last remaining active plant next February and will lay off 300 workers. Company officials said a shift in the demand for parts is the reason work is stopping here.

But according to local media reports, the closing seems to be more about forcing UAW members to take a pay and benefit cut from \$45 an hour to \$30 an hour.

UAW officials say their union agreed to reduce pay to \$32 an hour, but American Axle officials say that's untrue.

Regardless, it's clear where the parts production has shifted: to American Axle's Mexico plant, which employs about 2,700 workers and is responsible for 28 percent of the company's global income of \$2.3 billion.

The average hourly rate for a Mexican plant worker is \$6.94.

The Detroit-Hamtramck plant complex once employed 2,200 workers, and the City

Continued on page 2



At one time American Axle employed 2,200 workers. It will lay off the last 300 remaining workers in February. The company has shifted production to other plants, including one in Mexico.

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7/15

What's worse than a condemned house? Try living next to one

Continued from front page

weeks after the man was arrested and the house was condemned, on a Sunday morning at 3 a.m., the house mysteriously went up in flames.

Witkowski's house was partially damaged from heat exposure.

But that's not the key thing he's mad about. He confronted the City Council at its most recent meeting, demanding to know when the house will be demolished.

"They write up tickets for what?" he said about city code inspectors who inspected the property over the last several months. "Nothing is ever done. ... You want to live next door to that?"

So, why is a nightmare house like this allowed to fester and fester?

City Manager Bill Cooper said it's a matter of the law protecting the rights of homeowners.

But what about the rights of homeowners next to a house in this condition?

You just have to keep on complaining, and eventually, the tickets add up to hefty fines and then possibly even arrest.

As for when the city will get around to tearing down the house next door to Witkowski, we asked City Manager Cooper what the plan is. He says he is working to take action with the insurance company that has a policy for the house.

"We're trying to get this house torn down," Cooper

said.

But there's an added problem. Witkowski said there are roaches and mice in the house.

Cooper said if that's the case, he will first have to terminate the house before knocking it down.

Perhaps more frustrating is that this house is not an isolated case. The city has dozens and dozens of houses in equally decrepit condition.

Cooper said violation after violation can be issued, and in some cases property owners just pay the fines, but ultimately, it takes time to force compliance — or to get to the point where a property is so bad it requires demolition.

The problem hasn't escaped the attention of Cooper. He said his hands are tied because the city lacks the money needed to demolish the eyesores.

"That's our number one problem," he said, "coming up with the money."

We're changing subjects here, and we're thinking of a house filled with human waste and a guy sitting on his couch and just letting loose, while his kids run about: Somewhere in the back of our head we hear the slow beginning of the dueling banjos from the movie, "Deliverance."

You too?

American Axle says it will close down last remaining plant

Continued from front page

of Hamtramck once collected \$500,000 a year in property tax and income tax. In 2008, UAW members went on strike over a wage concession demand.

The workers eventually agreed to come back at half the salary they were earning. But it didn't matter because shortly after the strike American Axle closed down most of the plants at the Detroit-Hamtramck complex and shifted work to Mexico.

The timing of the closing of the last remaining plant is cu-

rious to say the least. The UAW contract ends in February, leading to speculation that perhaps work could return with non-union employees.

American Axle officials won't say what their plans are, but another scenario could be that the plants will be leased out or sold to another manufacturer.

Or, it could be that the plants will forever remain mothballed, adding yet another nail to the coffin of the Detroit auto industry.

City Council candidates, get your speeches ready

By Charles Sercombe

All right City Council candidates, it's time to meet the public.

Next Wednesday (July 13) is "Meet the Candidates Night" at People's Community Services at Jos. Campau at Danforth.

The event is sponsored by The Review and the Hamtramck Block Club Association.

The structure of the evening follows past years: the public is invited to arrive at 6 p.m. for refreshments (provided by The Hamtramck Review) and to write down questions for candidates, and then at 7 p.m. the candidates get to speak a few min-

utes on any subject they want to.

After a short break, candidates will field questions presented from the public.

There are 13 candidates seeking three seats on the City Council. Only one incumbent, Cathie Gordon, is seeking reelection.

The Primary Election is Aug. 2, and out of the 13 candidates running, the top six vote-getters will go on to the November General Election.

The council race is the only local elected office on the Primary ballot.

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This week at the library...

Computer Classes for Advanced Users - Monday, July 11 at 10 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

Summer Reading for Toddlers - Puppy Day: Monday, July 11, at 11 a.m. Kick-off party for Toddler Time and celebration of the family.

ESL Class for Beginners - Monday, July 11 at noon. Christine Templin is the instructor for the ESL class for beginners. Everyone is invited. Free to the public.

ESL Summer Reading - Tuesday, July 12 at 5 p.m. ESL for reading will be reading book, "The Pearl," by John Steinbeck.

Math Club Meeting - Tuesday, July 12 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Wednesday, July 13 at 10 a.m. Basic instruction on computer use for beginners will be held on Wednesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Summer Reading Travelogue to Italy, Ireland, Germany and Greece - Wednesday, July 13 at 1 p.m. Backpack from Ireland to Italy and from Germany to Greece, discover the beauty and history of Europe.

Movie Wednesday - Wednesday, July 13 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.

ESL Class with Christine Templing - Thursday, July 14 at 5 p.m. Intermediate ESL class con-

ducted by Christine Templing, free to the public.

Meeting of the Library Board - Thursday, July 14 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. The meeting is open to the public.

Summer Reading Program for Teens - Friday July 15 at 1 p.m. Regular session of the Summer Program for teens.

ESL News for You - Friday, July 15 at 3:30 p.m. ESL reading and discussion class with Latisha Edge. Free to the public.

Friends of the Library Meeting - Thursday, July 21 at 6 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday, invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting.

One Sky, Many Stories - Wednesday, July 27 at 1 p.m. Summer Reading Program journey around the globe to show how different cultures view the night skies. Inside our portable planetarium children will explore the night skies and hear myths and folklore stories arising from what is seen in the constellations and stars.

Cooking and Nutrition Class - Thursday, July 28 at 4 p.m. Gleaners Food Bank is sponsoring cooking and nutrition classes taught by a chef and dietitian at the Library. Classes are free to the public. Sessions last for two hours. Participants will receive free cookbooks, free groceries and secret recipes from the pros. Number of participants is limited. You must register ahead of time. All spaces filled on first come first serve basis. To register call the library at (313) 365-7050.

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.



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Second Front Page

City manager makes a surprise appointment for acting police chief

By Charles Sercombe

With the recent retirement of Police Chief Mark Kalinowski, the big question in town was: Who's going to be the next chief?

Well, actually, the question was: Who's going to be appointed the "acting" or "interim" chief until testing for the position is completed?

Drum roll, please ... it's ... it's ... City Manager Bill Cooper, who announced his own appointment last Thursday. As you can imagine, news of his self-appointment didn't go over all well with some in the Police Department.

Usually in a case like this, a lieutenant is named as temporary chief.

The two unions representing the Police Department said the matter is in the hands of their attorneys.

Privately, let's just say there is a whole lot of grumbling and nasty remarks being tossed around within the department about Cooper's perceived snub.

So far, Cooper said, there has been no legal action

taken to undo his appointment.

But now, the bigger question: Why in the heck did he appoint himself?

Let's just say up front, ac-

out of control.

Cooper said that recent issues have come to light, and the reason he appointed himself instead of one out of three current

tunity to "implement" changes.

Asked if his self-appointment was a vote of no confidence to those in line to be appointed chief, Cooper said: "You can say that if you want to, but that's not how I would phrase it."

OK ...

We're going to take that as a negatory, but keep in mind, Cooper didn't say that.

However, Cooper did say that he does not intend to remain as chief.

"Once a chief is selected, I'll step down," Cooper said.

Ah, but that's where things can get complicated. Whichever lieutenant scores the highest to become chief, won't necessarily get the job. Cooper has to first make the appointment, and then the City Council has to approve it. If the council rejects the appointment and then the other lieutenants in line for the job, testing for the chief then goes to the next highest ranking group of officers.

The process is dictated by the officers' union contract. But the unions in the department might want to check on some of the latest legislation that has been passed regarding public employees and their contracts.

As rocker David Bowie once sang: "Ch-changes."



City Manager Bill Cooper appointed himself as acting police chief, which has upset some police officers. Cooper said he wanted to get a closer look at some issues that have cropped up in the department.

According to our sources within the department, there is a lot of division over who should be named chief, and the division has turned to confrontation among some in the department to the point where things are getting a little

lieutenants is that he wanted to get first-hand knowledge of what's going on within the department.

"I felt I needed to be closer to the situation," Cooper said.

And, he added, tersely, that will give him an oppor-

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Please note that there will be a vegetarian as well as a Halal dinner choice.

There will also be a \$20 gift certificate door prize drawing at the end of the dinner, good for future visits to The Clock.

Attendees may purchase tickets to the final party/fundraiser July 29th at New Dodge Lounge

from 6-9pm at a \$20 minimum donation which will include a food buffet and a cash bar. Tickets will also be available between events and at the door.

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Time: 5:30 p.m.

Location: Pulaski Park

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Please dress appropriately, you will get wet!

Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult, first 30 children will receive a water blaster!

Afterwards stick around for our outdoor movie:

"The Karate Kid". (2010)

Movie will begin at dusk. Please bring a blanket or lawn chair to sit on; anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent to stay for the movie.

In case of severe weather the make up date will be Friday, July 22
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JULY 9, Saturday, 2 - 4 p.m. - Monthly Soup Kitchen at Holy Cross Parish, Pulaski at Fleming. All are welcome



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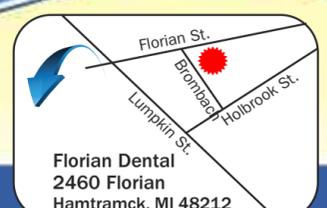
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Candidates for council weigh in on local issues

The Aug. 2 Primary Election is just around the corner, and to help voters find out where City Council candidates stand on several local issues, we invited the candidates to participate in a survey.

This week, we have candidates Cathie Gordon (who is the only incumbent running for re-election), Robert Zwolak and Roger Lamm.



Name: Cathie Ladzinski Gordon

Education: Associate Degree ... Nursing. MCC, 12 – year student & 1965 graduate St. Florian High School

Employment: Local Hospitals within tri-county area, co-owner and operator: New Dodge Lounge ... 26 years

Many cities are facing financial hardship. Hamtramck is also facing a financial shortfall in the coming year or two. What steps would you take to keep the city's budget balanced?

Gordon: This has been a very tough year, financially, for our city. AND there's more to come.

With the cuts in revenue sharing, not to mention the deterioration of the automotive economy & the closing of American Axle, our city is facing further money problems.

As the sponsor of the "cost-recovery ordinance" I firmly believe we MUST find more ways to increase our revenue ... bring in more money!! We must look into an amnesty program....it will bring in \$\$\$ as well as provide relief for our property owners. ... We MUST continue to provide services to other cities, such as the income-tax services we provide Highland Park, AND investigate partnering with other entities within our city.

Budget cuts must continue, AND as elected officials, we must be fiscally responsible ... no more "pet projects" ... no more "incidental expendi-

tures" ... WE MUST TIGHTEN OUR BELTS!!

Some cities are turning to merging public services with other communities. Are you in favor of taking this action? If so, what would you propose to merge and with whom?

Gordon: Before we entertain thoughts of merging, we must look into the re-structuring of certain departments, as well as department head accountability. Then, and only then, can we take the next step of investigating the cost effectiveness of merging.

On the other hand, there ARE other entities within the city that we can partner with, such as Hamtramck Housing & Hamtramck public schools, to mention a few.

I believe it is possible to provide Hamtramck Housing a payroll service which is now being contracted out by them.....we can pick up their garbage, another service contracted out.....we can even combine legal services, as many housing commissions do, another additional contract .

Hamtramck public schools have services they can possibly provide TO the city, hopefully, at a decreased costthey employ plumbers and electricians...services the city contracts out.....we can partner our garbage pick-up.....many services that WE can both benefit \$\$\$\$ from ... i.e. an increase in revenue sharing per Gov. Snyder's new plan.

Also, some cities are turning their police and fire departments into one department, often called a Public Safety Department. Under this plan, firefighters and police officers cross-train to be able to perform both duties. Are you for or against this plan? Please explain your position.

Gordon: Let me begin by saying.....the transition from fire/police to public safety is a long process to implement (Kalamazoo says it took approximately 18 months to 2 years) which says we would not reap those \$\$\$\$ benefits for a long time. ... AND the cost of re-training all our employees. ... WELL, with the financial state of our city I

Continued on page 7



City Hall Insider ...

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

Here's the second part of the June 28 City Council meeting. Mayor Karen Majewski and Councilmember Shahab Ahmed were absent.

When we last left off, a lengthy discussion was held on whether to adopt a proposed zoning law that would restrict where medical marijuana can be grown in the city.

The council has tinkered with the proposal for the past several months, all to no avail. The proposal was once again rejected. However, word has it that the proposal may come back for another vote at the next council meeting.

It appears a certain "dodgey" councilmember has had a change in thinking. We'll see.

Councilmember Tom Jankowski has an issue

with the city's garbage hauler. They stink, he said, well, more or less.

Jankowski said Rizzo Services is failing to clean up garbage spills, and the city's alleys are looking terrible. He also said the company is failing to tag households that improperly store garbage and fail to let city code inspectors know about it.

"They know they have to do this, and they're not," Jankowski said.

Jankowski suggested holding up payments until the company provides the service the city pays for.

City Attorney Jim Allen said the city should first draw up a list of specific complaints, especially if the council is considering canceling its contract with Rizzo.

Councilmember Cathie Gordon questioned

whether the city is issuing code violations to households that do not comply with garbage disposal requirements. City Manager Bill Cooper said city inspectors indeed issue a lot of tickets.

Councilmember Jankowski suggested telling Rizzo to swap its garbage pick-up crew assigned to Grosse Pointe with Hamtramck's.

Moving on, Councilmember Gordon said the city should be broadcasting all meetings of city committees and commissions, as well as recording the meetings and archiving them.

City Manager Cooper said the city's broadcasting equipment isn't built for the job.

That's right, folks, Hamtramck is too poor to invest in new recording equipment.

gardener's corner ...

By Kathleen Wojcinski

Foraging for edibles is a fun, nutritious and educational way to get back to our roots.

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You can't view "Weeds" the same after that. Also, visit your local metro park when they have programs on this subject.



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Holbrook principal looks back on his first year on the job

By Mike Murphy
Special to The Review

Currently entering his 20th year in public Education, Russell Robinson has just recently completed his first year as principal of Hamtramck's Holbrook Elementary School.

Robinson has worked as a teacher and administrator at the elementary, middle and high school levels in rural, suburban and urban school districts with diverse socio-economic conditions. He first became familiar with the Hamtramck community by serving as the school leader at Oakland International Academy.

The Review had an email and telephone exchange with the now vacationing principal of Holbrook Elementary and discussed the work that has been done and the work that needs to be done to make Holbrook Elementary a better school.

Despite challenges presented by cuts in state funding, dire economic times in



Russell Robinson

the community, and the special educational needs of many of the school's students, Robinson believes Holbrook Elementary, now notable for the 115 years it has stood as a structure, stands of good chance of becoming known as a great elementary school and a great place for children to learn to

excel.

What did you see as the major issues facing you upon becoming principal at the elementary school?

Russell Robinson: There are several important issues facing our staff at Holbrook. The most pressing has to be the improvement of student proficiency in all core content areas.

The state and federal government continue to raise the bar for which schools are measured but more importantly we have a duty and responsibility as an educational institution to fully prepare every child in our school for college should they choose that path for themselves.

A second issue which has become a priority not only for Holbrook school but for our entire district is that of addressing the growing financial challenges caused by cuts in state funding.

We must maintain or increase our enrollment in order to help offset these cuts. Residents of Hamtramck now have many choices when it comes to their children's education. We have to develop a businesslike acumen which focuses on providing exemplary customer service and an overall product parents want for their children.

In what ways have you been able to address those issues?

Russell Robinson: Increasing student proficiency remains a primary goal of improvement efforts at Holbrook. We have continued to focus on instructional pedagogy, by taking a look at not only what teachers are teaching but how they are teaching.

During the past year, we have also implemented new assessment programs in reading and math. These programs go much farther than the annual MEAP and ELPA tests by allowing teachers to monitor and track student growth throughout the year and then inform their instructional efforts based on the result of that data.

We have also implemented a district-wide method of compiling and tracking student performance.

This system, using a simple excel spreadsheet has been very effective in my previous leadership positions by providing me with a complete view of student performance on state and building assessments for every child in my school.

When fully implemented,

this method will be a valuable resource for teachers and administrators and will provide additional accountability for the academic growth of each child.

Finally, we must continue to work to show parents how much we care. If we are successful at meeting the needs of our parents and students they will have little reason to seek alternative educational opportunities which in turn increases the stability and vitality of our school.

We can accomplish this by providing a safe, nurturing and supportive environment where teaching and learning is the primary focus.

What will you work on during the upcoming school year?

Russell Robinson: As always, a new school year brings a renewed sense of enthusiasm and optimism and this year is certainly no different. I am excited about the continued growth of our school.

At the request of our families, we will be adding kindergarten and 7th grade classrooms this school year, which will help to further define our role in the community as a true neighborhood school.

Our preliminary projections also indicate strong enrollment in our other grades which speaks volumes about the reputation of our school and the work our staff is doing.

From an instructional standpoint I will continue to focus on improvement in many of the areas we have already begun, including staff training, support and professional development.

For the first time this year, we will also be expanding our efforts to provide a center-based literacy approach and guided reading instruction for every child in the school, grades kindergarten through 7th. This concept allows teachers to offer differentiated, small-group instruction tailored toward the needs of individual learners in each classroom.

Finally, we must continue to strive to meet the needs of our growing population of English Language Learners.

During the 2010-2011 school year, more than 20 new students enrolled at Holbrook with little or no experience in the English language. We must continue to improve our efforts at helping these students acquire the language as quickly as possible

in order to meet the demands of rigorous state testing and start them on the path of academic advancement.

Are there any special needs Holbrook Elementary students have owing to the particular conditions of the district?

Russell Robinson: As you know, the entire community is suffering through very difficult economic times and the school district is certainly no exception. As the oldest school building still in operation in the state of Michigan, Holbrook has its challenges as well.

Our school, which first opened in 1896, is an architectural gem. The school district has done a wonderful job of maintaining the building but I hope to find some time this year to begin researching potential grants or corporate donations to help improve the infrastructure of the school (such as new windows, air conditioning etc.).

Just recently, our librarian, Mr. Neff, coordinated a visit from the Detroit Piston's Community Relations Department to look at ways in which they might support our literacy efforts and possible building improvement projects.

We must continue to look for opportunities like these which would allow us to improve the school without placing additional financial burden on the school district.

Elementary, have you had to adjust your goals for turning the school around? In other words, has implementing change in the school proven more difficult than you initially thought it would be?

Russell Robinson: My goals for leading the school through the improvement process have not changed. I believe strongly in the direction we are moving and know in my heart that ultimately what we are trying to accomplish as a staff and school community is what is best for kids.

Although it has not proven to be more difficult than I imagined, I believe the timelines and benchmarks I set for myself and for our staff were very aggressive.

This was necessitated in large part by the demands for immediate improvement placed on all schools by the state and federal government.

Unfortunately, this expectation is not going to get easier. Therefore, we must continue to push ahead and strive for continuous improvement as quickly as possible.

What would it take to make Holbrook a "model" elementary school? Do you believe there is such a thing?

Russell Robinson: I am not sure there is a clearly defined rubric for anointing a school as a model; however I do believe our society tends to place labels like this on schools which have beaten

After one year at Holbrook

Continued on page 6

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Review: Opinion Page

City needs to go after those suspected of voter fraud

Candidates and voters. Do they all live here? That's a question we have raised in recent weeks, and it was once again echoed by City Council candidate Robert Zwolak, and actually initiated by a comment made to us by council candidate Steve Shaya. We go back a long way with Bob Zwolak, and not always on the best of terms.

But his recent statement at a City Council meeting was dead on, and it needs to be acknowledged: If you do not live here, don't run for office and don't vote.

In recent weeks, and in this issue, we have explored the residency of certain candidates. And a few months ago we reported on the city's plan to cross-reference the voter rolls with income tax filings to make sure that the people who vote here are also paying income taxes.

Well, Bob Zwolak threw out a startling piece of information at the last council meeting. According to Bob, there were 2,000 letters sent out to people who voted in the General Election of 2009 but did not file an income tax form with the city. Out of that number, 200 people told the Income Tax Department ... get ready ... they indeed voted here, but don't live here.

Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko, who is head of the Income Tax Department, among other duties, is on vacation and we were not able to confirm those numbers with him. But City

Manager Bill Cooper, said that Zwolak was in the ballpark.

Wow. But before you scream election fraud, be aware of something. Our right to vote is fiercely protected by the Constitution and federal law.

For example, let's say you can't live in your house or apartment because it's being renovated, or it was burned down, or you were foreclosed on. You may have been forced to live outside of the city, even though you have plans to still reside in Hamtramck.

Well, guess what? You have every right to still vote here.

But, and this is a big one, you can't vote anywhere else.

Or, maybe you winter in Florida but come back in warm weather. You still have a right to vote here – but not anywhere else. The exceptions and rights are endless when it comes to voting. And that's a good thing, because there have been mighty forces in the past to prevent certain people, including people of color, from voting.

Our right to vote must be protected.

But the fact that 200 or so people have admitted they don't live here but vote here is disturbing.

It certainly suggests fraud.

One question we have, and hope to have answered in the coming weeks, is whether these folks ever lived in Ham-

tramck. And if not, did they commit fraud by applying for a voter registration card by listing a false address?

And another question is: If you say you don't live here but vote here, do you still have to pay city income taxes?

There are many thorny questions about this subject.

City Manager Bill Cooper told us that his administration is "sorting" out the legal questions to determine whether there is a legal cause to start prosecuting people for voter fraud.

He said that officials from the state have told him it's up to the city to determine whether there is enough evidence to bring on criminal charges. We're going to look into this in the coming weeks because, quite frankly, election law is too complicated – and possibly too costly – to risk local prosecution.

Certainly state and federal officials have a stake in this matter, and we are going to ask the state's Secretary of State Office, which is in charge of elections statewide, and the Justice Department to weigh in on this matter.

It seems only right that you vote where you live. We know there are many exceptions to this rule, but Hamtramck seems to have become a political playground for outsiders.

Certainly everyone would agree that Hamtramck deserves local control, supported by the locals who actually live here.

Holbrook principal looks back on his first year on the job

Continued from page 5

the odds or those which serve as an example for others to follow.

In my opinion, success originates on many fronts. Community and/or stakeholder perception often defines a school. Published proficiency on state and national assessments as well as student success in later life all help define a school's value to the over-

all community.

At Holbrook I believe we are well on our way to becoming a great school. We have a committed staff that genuinely cares and wants what is best for our students.

My job as the instructional leader is to take all of the pieces of the puzzle and help assemble them to ensure that each child who

enters our door every day receives the very best we have to offer.

If we monitor our efforts closely and work for continuous improvement, the designation of whether or not we are considered to be a "model" school will take care of itself.

Letters • Letters

Candidate Abu Mahfuz lives in his attic

Your election article in the June 24 issue of the Hamtramck Review challenging Abu Mahfuz's residency status has been brought to my attention.

You mentioned in your article that "a woman living in the upstairs flat said she never heard of Mahfuz and said no one is living in the lower flat."

Mr. Abu Mahfuz is a very good friend of mine and of my family. We are from the same town in Bangladesh. Our family members back

home have known each other for years.

My wife, the woman you spoke to, has recently come to the US from Bangladesh and does not understand English well. Also, in our Muslim culture men and women do not usually hang out with each other unless they are immediate family members. Obviously my wife did not understand what you were asking her, and besides she does not pay attention to the details of Mr. Mah-

fuz's life.

Also, I am surprised that in your research you did not notice that there is a third floor in this building. In the last few months I have seen Mr. Mahfuz coming to this third floor quite often. I don't question him about his movements.

Mohammad Nazrul Islam
2424 Neibel St.
Hamtramck

Odds & Ends

Just joking ... Have you heard this joke going around? Here it is: A school teacher, a Tea Partier, and a CEO are sit-

ting at a table. In the middle of the table is a plate with a dozen cookies on it. The CEO reaches across and takes 11 cookies,

then looks at the Tea Partier and says "Watch out for that teacher—she wants a piece of your cookie!"

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Candidates for council weigh in on local issues Continued from page 4

don't feel we can afford it at this time.

However, we must not dismiss the idea ... just "put it on the back burner" for now. At this point in time, I feel that with the strict accountability of those department heads and some re-structuring within those departments, we CAN provide independent safety services to the community without burdening ourselves with the needs of another community.

How would you rate the job of our city manager? Please explain.

Gordon: It's 2011 and our city manager is entering his 4th year. Overall I feel that he has done the "best he can." However, I have disagreed with many of the decisions he has made ... from the suggestion to take a loan from the state (related to the Detroit non-payment) to the request to file bankruptcy with the state of Michigan. He must re-direct the city and be creative with that re-direction.

Briefly, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Hamtramck?

Gordon: In my estimation, Hamtramck is a very gifted city with a lot of potential. Our diversity lends itself to a variety of restaurants, retail shops and entertainment. Our density provides adequate and affordable housing, and encourages our pedestrian-friendly attitude.

Centrally located, Hamtramck is easily accessible by two freeways, and is surrounded by Detroit (on three

sides) and Highland Park, which makes us even more unique than most.

Last but not least, let's not forget the wealth of history that lies within our 2-square miles. ...

On the other hand, we are not a city without flaws. Abandoned homes, empty storefronts, and un-kept alleys tend to discourage growth and progress. Struggling economics together with poor marketing makes for a sad-looking business district, not to mention a financially distraught city.

In order to succeed, we must build on who we are and what we have, rather than who we can be or what we can do.

What do you stand for as a candidate, and what do you hope to accomplish while in office?

Gordon: As the only incumbent seeking re-election my attitude remains ... "a government of the people, by the people and for the people." Government transparency is a must ... accountability is a must ... adherence to the rules is a must.

As an official elected by the people, I believe I have been, and will continue to be a person who is in tune to the people's needs, a person who keeps those needs a priority, and a person who CAN make quick crucial decisions.

Ultimately, accountability starts and ends with our elected officials. As one of those elected officials, I hope to improve the state of our city ... market and develop

our business districts ... improve quality of life issues with increased code enforcement & increased public safety ... improve the financial stability of our city with increased revenue, rather than increased cuts ... improve transparency within our city with open police log books, published crime stats, and mandatory airing of all council and commission meetings... with recordings available on line and in the library ... and lastly improve communication between elected officials and our residents by changing "council rules" in order to prioritize and recognize the feelings/needs of our residents ... by allowing them to speak about ANYTHING at the beginning of council meetings and allowing elected officials to respond.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

(Editor's note: No answer.)

Name: Robert Zwolak

Education: Fourteen years of formal education, six years California and Michigan Air National Guard, various courses in municipal and business training and upgrades.

Employment: Retired, past retailer and publisher in the City of Hamtramck as well as former Hamtramck City Clerk, City Councilmember, Civil Service Commissioner and two terms as City Charter Revision Commissioner.



Robert Zwolak

Many cities are facing financial hardship. Hamtramck is also facing a financial shortfall in the coming year or two. What steps would you take to keep the city's budget balanced?

Zwolak: Hamtramck financial shortfalls and keeping budget balanced: The city of Hamtramck's existence, the past 89 years, has evolved into a very complicated status.

The city has accumulated a very expensive legacy cost in its police, fire pension and health benefits, which amount to \$3.5 million a year out of our city budget and over \$60 million in long term obligations. The city has a diminishing tax base and increasing expenses and must aggressively pursue collections for those monies due the city.

I have emphasized this to the council at many council meetings previously and have reminded them that it is their

responsibility to monitor expenses and income in the budget in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of the city Council to question unnecessary and excessive expenses.

Some cities are turning to merging public services with other communities. Are you in favor of taking this action? If so, what would you propose to merge and with whom?

Zwolak: I have at numerous council meetings urged the city Council to explore sharing and collaborating services with other governmental entities not merging.

Presently our city services are mainly contracted out therefore the city only needs to enter into dialogue and agreement with other communities. We need to do this ourselves before an emergency financial manager does it for us.

Also, some cities are turning their police and fire departments into one department, often called a Public Safety Department. Under this plan, firefighters and police officers cross-train to be able to perform both duties. Are you for or against this plan? Please explain your position.

Zwolak: Presently the city of Hamtramck has contracts with the police and fire departments.

Whatever is established is between the police and fire and the city which is in the best interests of the community as well as members of the police and fire departments.

The young policemen and firemen presently working for the city of Hamtramck should consider the future of their careers and their pensions with the city of Hamtramck.

Any change in the police and fire structure could be possibly implemented with an emergency financial manager.

How would you rate the job of our city manager? Please explain.

Zwolak: I have at council meetings been critical of the city managers performance especially in keeping up with the basic appearance of this community.

I have not been encouraged by the city managers lack of reports and information that has become difficult to obtain, relative to the city affairs.

In recent months there has been an improvement in some of the reporting thankfully to the efforts of Councilman Tom Jankowski and Councilwoman Cathy Gordon.

Previously when I was a City Councilman I sought to have improvements with our previous city manager.

Briefly, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Hamtramck?

Zwolak: Without a doubt the strengths of this community is with the people, the weaknesses are with those select few who continue to take advantage of us in the system by pushing us into bankruptcy.

The fact that this community lost so few people in the

Continued on page 8



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Candidates for council weigh in on local issues Continued from page 7

last census and we have one of the youngest median ages in the State of Michigan shows the city still has great potential and resilience.

We continue to see small investments in this community, not enough to offset the bigger losses. We can do a better job of promoting the city of Hamtramck and encouraging people and businesses to become part of our community.

What do you stand for as a candidate, and what do you hope to accomplish while in office?

Zwolak: Most important thing to stand for is to represent all the people of this community not just the ones that elected you.

Blood may be thicker than water but of the candidates running for city council do not have a clue to the problems of the city or have any solutions, than we are still in trouble.

We have a good new city charter that was adopted a few years ago but has been sabotaged by some of our former elected officials and it is my challenge to make a new city charter work for the betterment of the Hamtramck community.

We have learned the last few years that there needs to be some minor changes in

the city charter, again minor changes.

I will continue to promote the city of Hamtramck and to accomplish turning many vacant homes being restored to occupancy.

Another important task is to communicate to the community their responsibilities and awareness of what is expected of them.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Zwolak: I have over the past 40 years had a great privilege working in and for the community of Hamtramck.

I have received a rich experience and knowledge of this community and have it seen it evolve these many years.

I have made a commitment to ask this community to allow me to serve as their councilman again.

With all due respect to the candidates that are running for city Council in their sincere concerns many do not have a clue to the complexities and problems of this community.

I have the background and experience as well as the commitment to the entire community.

Those that have a strong awareness of the problems of this community are Councilwoman Kathy Gordon, the former city councilman Dr. Abdul

Algazali, Steve Shaya former DPW Superintendent and currently contractor with the City of Hamtramck, Susan Dunn



Rahdar city activist, and Anam Miah a strong leader within his many communities.

Name: Roger Lamm

Education: I recently attained an associate degree from Macomb Community College.

I am currently dual enrolled part time at MCC and Wayne State University. I am working

towards a bachelor in mechanical engineering with a renewable energy stamp.

Employment: I am currently employed with the Michigan Department of Corrections-Oakland County Probation Department and have been for the past four years.

From 2000-2005 I was owner of Arcanus Press, the publisher of a local magazine/newsletter. I have two years experience at RGIS archiving and retrieving customer files.

I also spent roughly 10 years working for the McDonald's Corporation where I held the position of shift manager before leaving for better opportunities.

Many cities are facing financial hardship. Hamtramck is also facing a financial shortfall in the coming year or two. What steps would you take to keep the city's budget balanced?

Lamm: I would like to bring back in force the traffic patrol program. It is the only safety program we have that has a proven record of not only pay-

ing for itself, but also providing additional revenue for the city.

I would suggest and approve an amnesty program similar to that of Detroit's and other cash strapped municipalities for people who have found it difficult to pay back taxes, due to fines and interest.

Some cities are turning to merging public services with other communities. Are you in favor of taking this action? If so, what would you propose to merge and with whom?

Lamm: I am adamantly against merging police and fire services with neighboring municipalities. Although it may save money on administrative costs, these savings do not justify the loss of Hamtramck's well-known speedy response times.

Also, some cities are turning their police and fire departments into one department, often called a Public Safety Department. Under this plan, firefighters and police officers cross-

train to be able to perform both duties. Are you for or against this plan? Please explain your position.

Lamm: I am against cross training our police and fire departments at this point in time, as it would put undue stress on our already limited budget.

The IAFF did a study that showed that the extra training and equipment necessary for cross training costs more in the long run.

Although it may provide a more flexible public safety base, it is not economically viable until we can overcome our current monetary shortfalls, at which time such an idea may be reconsidered.

How would you rate the job of our city manager? Please explain.

Lamm: In my opinion, I believe the city manager is playing a potentially dangerous game between the city, the state and the unions in an attempt to force large concessions from the police and fire departments.

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Hamtramck, beautifully remodeled 2 Br. apartment, central heating and cooling, \$550/month + security deposit, Section 8 OK, will check credit, 313-590-1000. 7/29

Hamtramck, 9479 McDougall, between Evaline + Holbrook, upper and lower, 2 Br., living room, bathroom, kitchen. Also, Hamtramck, 2934 Evaline, 2 Br. upper, living room, bathroom, kitchen, immediate occupancy, reasonable rent, 313-871-0724. 7/15

Hamtramck, 2 Br., 5 rooms, upper, Trowbridge St. near Jos. Campau, no pets, working people preferred, 586-864-4539. 7/15

Upstairs apartment for single person in nice neighborhood, includes appliances, \$350/month + deposit, 313-882-2188. 7/29

2265 Bernard, quiet street, 2 Br. lower, \$550/month + deposit, also 3 Br. upper, \$600 + deposit, no pets, Section 8 OK, nice, 248-379-2146. 7/15

2 Br. lower flat, \$575/month + \$575 security deposit, utilities not included, adults only preferred, non-smokers, no pets, must show proof of income and references, 313-874-1442. 7/29

APARTMENTS & FLATS FOR RENT

Hamtramck, 2 Br. upper, carpeted, clean, appliances, full basement, washer-dryer, nice attic for storage, in clean and nice area, 11366 Gallagher, \$480/month + \$480 security deposit, 586-604-0029. 7/29

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Hamtramck, 9735 Jos. Campau corner of Evaline. If you are looking for a move-in ready 2 Br. beautifully furnished apartment in the heart of town, check out apartment 5. It has all the bells and whistles in a well-maintained, clean, quiet building, \$795/month includes all utilities, no pets, 248-931-9731 for appt. 7/22

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Hamtramck studio apartments, good location, immediate occupancy, 248-229-4295, 248-229-4297. 7/8

Lower flat, 2 Br. Hamtramck, dining room, kitchen, appliances included, security deposit, nice area, call 313-712-8347. 7/8

APARTMENTS & FLATS FOR RENT

Studio, 2 - 3 br. For rent, central air, dryer-washer, dishwasher, Hamtramck + Warren, call Mario, 313-420-7451.

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HOUSE FOR RENT

Hamtramck, 3 Br., stove + dryer only, no pets, non-smokers preferred, Section 8 allowed, \$575/month, first month and full security deposit, 313-365-7283. 7/8

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"As is," 12030 Nagel, Hamtramck, \$9,000 cash buyers only, 3 Br. bungalow with full basement, clean, needs updates, no bugs, move-in condition, immediate occupancy. Must sell! (586) 344-8896. 7/8

Attention Investors/Home Buyers: 12038 Nagel, Hamtramck \$12,000 Cash buyers only. 3 bedroom bungalow w/large dining room, could use some updates, no bugs, immediate occupancy, move-in condition. Must sell! (586) 344-8896. 7/29

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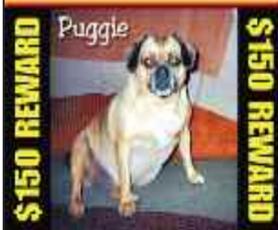
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Candidates for council weigh in on local issues

Continued from page 8

I think the city manager should consider the repercussions of his decisions and actions more thoroughly before making final decisions.

Briefly, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Hamtramck?

Lamm: Strengths: Growing population, lower crime rate compared to surrounding areas, affordable housing, cultural diversity, small town feel with large city amenities. Independent fire and police allowing fast response times

and thorough city patrols.

Weaknesses: Influx of crime from Detroit and Highland Park, failure by city contractors to fulfill sanitary obligations, code enforcement shortfalls, lack of synergy between citizens and government, too many financial obligations from previous and current administrations' mistakes.

What do you stand for as a candidate, and what do you hope to accomplish while in office?

Lamm: Protect public safety programs, promote citizen involvement, continue to research and implement budgeting cuts and reorganize spending.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Lamm: In addition to the aforementioned proposals and solutions, I will continue to aggressively work on bringing additional monies into the city.

This will be accomplished by; tapping into the local workforce, implementing business support programs, decreasing blight through repopulation of neighborhoods and increasing walkability.

To that end, I look forward to implementing the best objectives from the Hamtramck Master Plan in a timely and financially beneficial manner.

Recall drive against Snyder finds plenty of takers

By Charles Sercombe

If Hamtramck voters are any indication of what voters in the state are thinking, Gov. Rick Snyder may be out of a job in the coming months.

On a recent Saturday, a petition drive against Snyder was held in the Hamtramck Town Center strip mall, and there was no shortage of people willing to sign it.

Christina Allen of Detroit stepped up to sign a petition, saying she's upset that Snyder is cutting social programs and financial aid.

"He's not doing anything to help the people," she said. "He's taking away things people need."

One of the local organizers of the recall drive, Chris Cornwell, said he was pleasantly surprised that many of the people signing the petition were well informed about Snyder's budget proposal, especially something as obscure as cuts in state revenue funding to cities.

"One guy called it blackmail, that you can't blackmail a city," Cornwell said.

An elderly woman told Cornwell that she's upset that her pension will be taxed.

Other voters are upset over the new emergency financial manager law that allows EFM's to rip up union contracts, which critics say is a blatant union-busting move.

Over at Glory Market, two off-duty Hamtramck police of-

ficers said that in within an hour they had collected about 100 signatures.

"We're going to do this again," said officer Brian Misiak.

State organizers of the re-

petitions being circulated it's impossible to get an accurate count.

Petitions must be turned in by Aug. 5.

Although about 800,000 valid signatures of voters are



Chris Cornwell is leading a recall petition drive in Hamtramck against Gov. Rick Snyder. So far, there has been no shortage of voters willing to sign the petition.

call drive, Michigan Citizens United, aren't saying how many signatures have been collected so far because of security concerns and the fact that there are so many

needed to force a recall election, political observers say more than 1.1 million signatures will have to be collected to make sure there are enough valid ones.

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