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# The Review

## Hamtramck

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## Quick Hits

Happy New Year!

This Sunday, we turn a page on the calendar and kiss 2016 goodbye. And what a year it was. In this issue we offer part two of our year in review, and as you can tell it was chock-full of news and historical moments.

For a small city, Hamtramck is one busy town.

We look forward to the continued economic progress the city has been experiencing. There have been a growing number of businesses locating here, and it looks like the trend will continue.

This is also an important election year for local positions.

We wish all of our readers good health and good luck in the coming year. It's always an honor serving our community, and we look forward to continue our service.

**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.

**“You are trying to take our houses through trickery.”**



# Year in Review: Part two of our look back at 2016

**By Charles Sercombe**

Welcome back to part two of our annual Year in Review.

We pick up from last week with the start of July.

**JULY**

The city had a message for residents: Be a good neighbor and mind your trash.

While city officials were on the lookout for illegal dumpers, there was a different kind of “dumping” that you could see in almost every alley.

It was – and still is – those pesky neighbors who allow their garbage can to overflow and spill over into the alley.

Or it might be the careless business that allows its dumpsters to also overflow.

That problem was a topic in the city's newest newsletter that went out with every water bill.

To drive the message home, the city provided photos of how not to dispose of your house trash, and how to do it.

If it was a case of laziness, ignorance, or just not caring, allowing loose garbage wasn't taken lightly by the city. If residents allowed garbage to accumulate in their alley, they were slapped with a ticket and charged a \$100 fine.

If it happened a second time, you received a \$250 fine, and a third time was considered a misdemeanor with a \$500 penalty.

The summer drought threatened to dampen the use of fireworks during the Fourth of July holiday.

The state fire marshal considered a ban on fireworks in the state because of the ongoing drought.

The Village of Holly in Oakland County and Wash-

ington Township in Macomb didn't wait for a ruling by the state and declared a ban.

The month of June recorded only an inch of rain, down by more than half of the normal amount of rainfall for that period. As it turned out, the legal use of fireworks was allowed – but the drought continued for the rest of the year.

The “no snitch” rule of the street hampered a police investigation into a shooting that left two teens injured.

On a hot Sunday night residents in the Col. Hamtramck Housing project were spilled out into their lawns and street because of the extreme heat.

At around 11 p.m. in the 12000 block of Grand Haven two men suddenly got into a fight, one of whom had a gun.

According to sources,



**City officials promised to crackdown on loose garbage in the alleys this past year.**

the man with the gun pistol-whipped the other man. After that, gunfire erupted, striking a 14-year-old boy in the ankle and a 13-year-old in the buttocks.

Police were seeking the identity and location of the shooter, but witnesses refused to cooperate with investigators.

Conditions in the housing project can be brutal during hot weather. There are no air conditioning units in the apartments because the electric wiring has not been updated to accommodate the energy needs.

In a matter of one month, the city's budget went from a half-million dollar deficit to one with a surplus.

How did that come about?

City Manager Katrina Powell told the Transition Advisory Board, which oversees all financial decisions by the city, that there were several things that fell into place: An across-the-board cut in spending combined with an increase in tax collections from the income tax department and Wayne County delinquent property taxes.

But as it turned out, a federal grant that pays for the salaries of 12 firefighters came late, which technically meant the city's fiscal year ended with a temporary budget deficit.

Hamtramck's sewer system

**Continued on page 2**



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# Year in Review: Part two of our look back at 2016

Cont. from front page

tem was just months away from being greatly improved.

Since April the city had taken the first steps toward updating its entire sewer system with a new line being installed on Jos. Campau from Goodson to Denton.

This new line is 60-some inches in diameter, as opposed to the existing line that was only several inches in size.

The city's older line now flows into a new chamber structure that now spills into the new and much larger line.

That line in turn connects with another that is 90 inches in diameter. This was the first part of a proj-

ect that "will help alleviate" citywide basement flooding, said Project Manager Ryan Kern, who is part of Hennessey Engineers Inc.

The cost of the project was \$3.5 million, which came from a state loan. That price tag also includes placing new liners in some of the city's sewer lines.

For many years a number of households in the city experienced repeated basement flooding whenever there was a heavy rainstorm. The existing system could not handle the sudden inflow of water and subsequently backed up raw sewage into basements.



A new sewer line was installed in the southend which should alleviate basement flooding – at least in some parts of the city.

The sewer construction had an interesting byproduct: the ripped up street exposed an old rail line. At one time streetcars were the major source of transportation not only in Ham-

tramck but the metro area as well.

From all reports from back then, it was a fantastic system.

There are many who lament the passing of

streetcars, but interestingly Detroit officials were working to bring back a rail line on Woodward. You could say what's old became new again.

We asked local historian Greg Kowalski, who is also the chairman of the Hamtramck Historical Commission, to reflect on Hamtramck's era of streetcars. Here's what he had to say:

"We were mainly served by the Baker Streetcar line. Originally, that ran up Jos. Campau from downtown Detroit to about where the viaduct is today. Later, it was extended to run through Hamtramck to about Davison.

"There were connectors

all across the metro area. Some people who lived here worked at Henry Ford's Rouge plant and would take the streetcars from here to there by using connectors.

"The lines that came here were established in the early 20th century – about 1905. They were a primary form of transportation. They weren't very comfortable but they were cheap and reliable. And they were critical for people to get around.

"Most people didn't have cars until after World War II so they needed the streetcars to go any distance. The system was shut down in about 1955 when the

Continued on page 3

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## This week at the library...

**Notice** – In observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays the Hamtramck Public Library will be closed to the public from Friday, December 23 thru Monday, January 2, 2017. The library will reopen Tuesday, January 3 at 11 a.m.

**Cooking Matters for Adults** – Free cooking

and nutrition classes featuring healthy cooking on a budget, smart shopping ideas, culinary secrets, free cookbook and free groceries. Classes meet 2 hours each week and are 6 weeks long. (Commitment to all classes is mandatory.) If interested please call the Hamtramck Public Library at (313)

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# Second Front Page

## Year in Review: Part two of our look back at 2016

Continued from page 2

new bus system was installed. I think just about everyone today agrees that was a mistake. There is still controversy about that. Some people say that the auto makers were responsible because they didn't want that form of public transportation, which competed with motor vehicles.

"I had my doubts about that until I met a former auto exec up in Bloomfield Hills who said he was at a meeting with the city of Detroit back in the 1950s and confirmed that it was true.

"Their loss really didn't hurt commerce locally because we are a very walkable community and the buses did provide a good alternative to bring people in from outside. And cars were becoming far more common in the mid-1950s. But there is a lot of nostalgia associated with the streetcars. My mom, who died in 2013 at the age of 90, told me one of her earliest memories was falling asleep in her mother's arms while hearing the clanking sound of the streetcars in the distance."

For 36 years Janet Akins was a fixture at Hamtramck 31st District Court. She had held a variety of jobs in the court and saw many employees come and go during that time. There was always one constant, though: She always had a welcoming and sympathetic smile for those who worked in the court as well as for the public.

Her career in the court came to an end with a retirement party held in the newly renovated Zussman Park, across from City Hall. Many current and former court and city hall employees came to celebrate her life's work and retirement. Those attending were mostly a who's who of an older generation of Hamtramck City Hall employees.

Asked many times what she planned to do, Akins had a ready, one-word answer: "Chill."

If you noticed the city was looking a little cleaner during the summer, it indeed was thanks to a state grant. The city was awarded a little more than \$42,000 to hire 16 teens and four adults to act as supervisors during an eight-week program. The teens were paid \$8 an hour and the supervisors \$10 an hour. The program focused on clean-up and maintenance projects in city parks, beautification efforts throughout the city and assisting with routine tasks in city hall.

A Hamtramck School Boardmember who was booted out of his seat lost his bid to regain it – twice. Wayne County Circuit



While residents are looking forward to a new sewer line in the southend, several Jos. Campau businesses said the construction cut into their profits.

Court Chief Judge Robert Colombo rejected Mohammad Huda's lawsuit – and an appeal – filed against the school district after the board determined his seat was vacant because Huda was not truly a resident of the city. That revelation came after an investigation by The Review over a year ago detailed evidence that Huda actually lived with his wife in Warren.

The school district acted on that report and hired a private investigator, a former Hamtramck police officer, to dig further into his residency.



About 50 homeowners protested the city's new housing assessments. They said their yearly property tax bill doubled and in some cases tripled.

What that investigator, David Adamczyk, found out was staggering. Judge Colombo agreed with the evidence presented in court and ruled that Huda had committed perjury when he filed to become a candidate for the school board. Huda has not been charged with perjury.

### AUGUST

While a new southend sewer was eagerly anticipated by residents, the project proved to be an economic stinker for some Jos. Campau businesses. The Review caught up with Ali Mohammed who worked at the Yemeni Barbershop. He said he often sat in his shop on Joseph Campau and Council St. for hours, waiting for customers. Sometimes he fell asleep waiting for customers, but they rarely came because the street was torn up and blocked off.

He said the barbershop used to make \$900 - \$1,000 per week, but with the project ongoing it barely broke \$250 a week. Mohamed Isaa of Zaid

Travel Inc. also experienced a huge hit. His business had been earning \$1,000 a week, but was now collecting only \$100. Two city councilmembers' hopes to climb the political ladder were dashed in a Primary Election. Both Councilmember Anam Miah and Mohammed Hassan did poorly in their attempts to knock out their incumbent office holders. They didn't even do well among Hamtramck voters. Like many other communities, the election did not

Miah had the hardest challenge in trying to unseat Wayne County Commissioner Martha Scott. Scott has been in one or another elected office since the 1980s, making her one of the most entrenched politicians in Wayne County.

Scott left all of her challengers in the dust, finishing with over 4,000 votes in her district. Hassan finished fourth out of seventh place in his bid to unseat State Rep. Rose Mary Robinson, who also easily beat her challengers with 3,249 votes. Hassan said he wasn't surprised by the result because he did not campaign. "But people still voted for me," he said. As for his future plans, he said he was staying local.

"My focus is on the Hamtramck city mayor," he said. "The people told me to do it, to focus on Hamtramck." He will have his chance to test out that theory this coming year. Over 40 years ago hundreds of African-American residents accused Hamtramck officials of targeting their neighborhoods for housing demolition in order to kick them out of the city.

The residents filed a class action lawsuit, and they eventually agreed to a settlement with the city. Flash forward to today and a number of descendants of the plaintiffs who purchased a house from the settlement agreement once again accused the city of singling them out. About 30 of the homeowners complained that within the last two years the city increased their house assessments by double or triple. That meant for some of them their property taxes had gone up from \$1,200

Continued on page 4

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<b>Saturday, December 31</b> - New Year's Eve Mass (English)	5:30 pm
<b>Sunday, January 1</b> - New Year's Day, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - Mass (English)	8:00 am
Solemnity of Mary (Polish)	9:30 am
<b>Saturday, January 7</b> - Mass (English)	5:30 pm
<b>Sunday, January 8</b> Feast of the Epiphany (Three Kings) Mass (English)	8:00 am
Mass (Polish)	9:30 am
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Year in Review: Part two of our look back at 2016

Cont. from page 4

ates Krot Funeral Home, one of only two funeral homes that remain in business here in the city.

Prior to her new role, she had been the city prosecutor and a magistrate for the court.

Krot met with The Review to talk about her experience and plans for the court.

Right off the bat she was excited to promote her plan to hold night court on the evenings that the city council meets in city hall, which is the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.

“Not everybody has paid time off from their job,” she said. “People have to miss work so we’re opening up the schedule.”

■

Hamtramck was abuzz with music, art and theater on one Saturday afternoon and night.

It was not only a perfect, sunny day for football, it was also the setting for the annual Hamtramck Neighborhood Arts Festival.

Walking in just about any part of the city you could catch musicians playing on their porches, or artists welcoming you to visit their studios.

Over at “Hamtramck Disneyland” you could even catch an opera.

At night, the city’s bars were bustling with festival-goers celebrating another successful year.

■

It’s no secret that Hamtramck – and cities in general – is a target for lawsuits every year.

For a city that is only 2 square miles, Hamtramck has long attracted more

than its fair share of lawsuits. Or so city officials have complained over the years.

In the past year alone the city was served with three lawsuits involving a police undercover investigation into a local tire shop. In total, the city was currently defending 13 lawsuits.

The issue caught the attention of the city’s Receivership Transition Advisory Board at its monthly meeting.



**Not everyone was pleased with Donald Trump winning the Presidential Election. A number of residents hit the streets to protest against Trump’s anti-immigrant policies.**

The board was set up by Gov. Rick Snyder to oversee all financial decisions in the city until local control is re-established.

City Attorney Travis Mihelick presented a list of lawsuits the city was facing at this time, and conceded the city seems to be a magnet.

“(It’s) one of the most litigious little communities I’ve ever seen in my life,” Mihelick said.

The chairman of the RTAB Deborah Roberts joked that the city “must have a large checkbook.”

Unfortunately, the city doesn’t have that kind of a checkbook. The people

who end up paying these lawsuits are often homeowners in the form of a court-ordered tax.

### NOVEMBER

Leading up to the November Presidential Election, Donald Trump claimed the election was rigged.

He won the election, but Hamtramck City Clerk August Gitschlag took umbrage over the accusation.

“Every community Elec-

no way either scenario could play out.

“While we may have deceased individuals on the voter rolls, it takes time for that information to turn around in the system. Zero evidence exists that any of them have ever attempted to vote,” he said.

As for non-citizens voting, Gitschlag had this to say:

“Two or three times a year the Clerk’s Office is contacted by Immigration Services to inquire about a green card holder showing up as registered to vote,” he said.

“In each and every instance, the individual was registered inadvertently by a local agency without the individual’s knowledge. Not one of them ever attempted to vote. If they had, their green cards would be revoked and they would face immediate deportation. The costs far outweigh any benefit.”

■

Two Commor St. residents were charged with the death of a 16-month-old girl.

According to investigators and media reports, Hamtramck officers responded to a 911 call about a toddler having breathing difficulties.

The mother of the child, Asia Markham, was in front of her house holding her child, Amina Markham, when officers arrived. The girl did not respond to attempts to get her to breathe.

The child was pronounced dead when she arrived at Children’s Hospital in downtown Detroit.

As it turned out, the cause of death was determined to be the result of blunt force trauma.

No other details about how the death occurred were released. The mother and her boyfriend were charged with first degree murder.

■

Two young men died after their car slammed into another car at Caniff and Brombach.

The Hamtramck Police Department declined to give details about the incident because the matter was still under investigation. But according to other sources one man was 19 years old and the other was 20 years old.

Both were part of the local Bangladeshi-American community.

■

Two incumbent school boardmembers lost their bid for re-election to two newcomers in the November General Election.

The results also ushered in a historical moment for the school district and the

city: The new makeup of the school board will now consist of a Muslim majority.

That development mirrored what has happened in the city council as well.

School Boardmembers Hedy Shulgon, a 13-year veteran, and Jackie Starr, who had served for two years, were ousted by Moortadha Obaid and Showkat Chowdhury.

Obaid had not run for office before but Chowdhury had previously run for city council without success.

Hamtramck has long been known as a Polish enclave, but the city’s population makeup has changed dramatically toward those of the Muslim faith in the last several years.

On her Facebook page, Starr thanked residents for their support

“Thank you Hamtramck Residents for entrusting me with making very important decisions for your children. I was honored to serve you and the Hamtramck Public Schools,” Starr said.

“I now turn my baton over to Mr. Obeid and Mr. Chowdhury. I congratulate both gentlemen on a great campaign and ask you to



**Michigan State Police arrested an Edwin resident for leading officers on a high-speed motorcycle chase.**

show them the same respect you have given me, during my last two years on the Hamtramck School Board.”

■

In other election news, Hamtramck voters overwhelmingly remained true to their Democratic Party roots and supported Hillary Clinton for president.

Unfortunately for Clinton, she didn’t receive enough support nationwide to garner the Electoral College votes needed to claim the presidency. But she did win the popular vote nationally by a margin of almost three million votes.

Her Republican challenger Donald Trump received 709 votes in Hamtramck.

Hamtramck’s voter turnout was large, as expected. Some 6,226 voters participated, which was more than 50 percent of the registered voters.

Federal election monitors were sent here as well as to Detroit and Dearborn Heights in case there were attempts at voter intimidation. City Clerk August Gitschlag said there were no incidents during the day.

The Hamtramck presidential results were:

Hillary Clinton (D): 5,307

Donald Trump (R): 709

Trump’s election had a ripple effect throughout the nation.

Like a number of other communities, Hamtramck joined them in protesting the election of Trump as president.

On a Monday evening, a group of about 50 mostly white folks in their 30s gathered at Trowbridge and Jos. Campau and marched to a town hall meeting being held at the public library.

Many carried signs saying such things as: “Love & Equality 4 All”; “Muslims Welcomed” and “We Care For Our Muslim Neighbors.”

Protestors also wrote on the sidewalk using chalk, with one large message saying: “We are one human family.”

Organizer Adriene Avripas said she was moved

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING PLAN COMMISSION CITY OF HAMTRAMCK


The Plan Commission will conduct a public meeting in the 2nd Floor Council Chambers of Hamtramck City Hall, 3401 Evaline Street, Hamtramck, MI 48212, on January 11, 2017, at 6:30 p.m., to consider and afford the opportunity for input to be recorded on the requested preliminary site plan for new construction on the premises described below. The public is invited to attend and comment at the public meeting or to make written comments on or before the date of the meeting. Written comments should be made to the attention of Melanie A. Markowicz, City Planner, ATTN: Plan Commission, 3401 Evaline Street, Hamtramck, MI 48212.

- PUBLIC MEETING – Preliminary Site Plan Review, Islamic Center of Hamtramck, 11347 Joseph Campau, makes a request of the Plan Commission for new construction.

PLEASE NOTE: This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act), MCLA 41.71 a (2) (3) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The City of Hamtramck will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the Meeting to individuals with disabilities at the Meeting or Public Hearing upon 10 day notice to the City Clerk’s Office. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Hamtramck City Clerk by writing or calling the Clerk’s Office at (313) 800-5233 x 343.

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## The Hamtramck Review

Published every Friday

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Year in Review: Part two of our look back at 2016

Cont. from page 5

to repair all of them. Just taking care of the “major” alleys – such as the ones that run parallel with Jos. Campau and Conant – will cost \$3 million.

Unlike road repairs, the source of funding for the project cannot be tapped from a state grant the city receives each year for just road repairs.

Instead, the city will have to dip into its budget surplus, now at about \$3 million. However, Powell said she has applied for a grant tailor made for “distressed” cities.

We’re still waiting to hear back on whether Hamtramck will get a grant.

For the first time in decades, Hamtramck got a new bike shop.

Wheelhouse Detroit/Hamtramck opened up at the corner of Florian and Jos. Campau.

“We just wanted to expand into a neighborhood that needed a bike shop,” Wheelhouse employee Tatiana Pastor said. “We’re proud to be in Hamtramck. We love Hamtramck and we’re just really excited to be there.”

Wheelhouse specializes in American-made retail, urban biking and bike equipment that can’t be easily found, Pastor said.

“Mostly North American products that you can’t buy anywhere else,” Pastor said.

Hamtramck officially announced it’s a city that welcomes immigrants.

The city issued a press release to underscore its position in light of comments made by President-Elect Donald Trump about immigrants and banning Muslims from entering the country.

“The City of Hamtramck is a community that supports locally-driven efforts to create a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly environment for all our residents and visitors,” the press release said.

The press release went on to say:

“As a longtime member of ‘Welcoming Michigan,’ our city supports those values that promote the advancement of the basic principles upon which the United States was founded, establishing the

equality and dignity of all people, including immigrants.

“We recognize that immigrants are working together to maximize opportunities to build mutual respect. We are pleased to be a receiver of that respect.”



An engineering study proved what most residents already know: most of the city’s alleys are in poor shape.

grants are fellow human beings and reject the use of dehumanizing language. We strive to promote the positive contributions that immigrants make in our city and the overall positive effects of immigration on our community.

“We are committed to raising the level of public discourse concerning the attitudes towards immigrants and immigration.

“Our local government and community leaders are working together to maximize opportunities to build mutual respect. We are pleased to be a receiver of that respect.”

The anti-Trump movement in Hamtramck continued.

Hamtramck High School students held a march and rally to push back on Trump’s anti-immigrant positions he promoted during the campaign season.

A handful of students braved the cold and wind to march from the high school to Veterans Memorial Park where several students and guests spoke out against Trump’s plan to deport immigrants – especially student immigrants.

Hamtramck is home to a large population of students from Bangladesh, Yemens and Bosnia.

“Today Hamtramck has proved once again that we all stand together for the present and for the future,” said rally organizer Tahmim Siddiquee.

“Today Hamtramck has displayed what America looks like. A place for immigrants to feel safe, a place for people from all parts of the world to live together in unity and peace, and a place for people to follow any religion of their choice.”

It’s been years since Hamtramck had its own NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) chapter.

But that was about to change, said Darla Swint.

She and others were attempting to reactivate the chapter by getting the word out and signing up 50 people to become members.

“There’s a need for the NAACP to step in,” said Swint, who cited current issues of slum landlords and people dislocated from housing through foreclosures.

**DECEMBER**

The presidential election wasn’t quite over yet.

Hamtramck City Clerk August Gitschlag was gearing up to work extra hours for a county-wide recount of the election.

The recount was prompted by Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein. Although Stein received only 1.2 million votes nationwide and stood no chance of winning the election in the recount, she said the recount was being done for another purpose: to ensure the integrity of the election process.

Republicans called it a

**Continued on page 8**

Coming events

SATURDAY, Jan. 14, 9-3 p.m. – Hamtramck’s Recycle Center is open at Caniff and McDougall. Drop off your recyclables for free.

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Lapeer Twp.

508 W. Sutton Rd. - \$330,000 - PENDING!



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By Charles Sercombe  
This week's Crime Log covers Dec. 20-25.

Tuesday, December 20

- A Zinow resident reported someone broke into his car and stole his wallet. Several hours after making that report, his wallet was returned by a Highland Park police officer. The wallet was found in a Sears store in Highland Park.
- A Detroit resident was arrested for attempting to pass a bad check.

Wednesday, December 21

- There was no incident report available for this date.

Thursday, December 22

- A resident was arrested after a traffic stop for possessing narcotics.
- A resident was arrested after assaulting three women while in the 11700 block of Mitchell.
- A resident in the 3300 block of Doremus reported his ex-girlfriend attempted to run him over. The resident said that he jumped out of the way and his ex-girlfriend then struck a

parked car and fled the scene.

- A man reported he was assaulted by someone he knows.
- A Belmont resident reported his car was damaged.
- Officers confiscated a handgun for safekeeping during a traffic stop.
- A resident reported someone had been taking money out of his bank account without his permission.

Friday, December 23

- A resident in the 12000 block of Selfridge reported she was a victim of domestic violence.
- At about 12:30 a.m. a Detroit resident was arrested after a traffic stop for drunk driving.
- At about 3:30 a.m. three Detroit residents were arrested after attempting to break into a pharmacy in the 9800 block of Conant.
- A business in the 10200 block of Jos. Campau reported a break-in.
- A missing child came with her mother to the police station to report her return.
- A Lehman resident reported someone stole an item from her car.

- A Troy resident reported that while she was in the parking lot at Jos. Campau and Holbrook, a man approached her and grabbed her purse. The suspect then ran away.
- A Detroit resident reported her daughter was struck in the head while other students were fighting inside Caniff Liberty Academy.
- An Evaline resident reported someone broke out two windows in the back of their house.

Saturday, December 24

- At 11:30 p.m. an Ann Arbor resident reported being assaulted in the area of Jos. Campau and Holbrook by a man she knows.
- A resident in the 12000 block of Lumpkin reported a break-in.
- A business owner in the 9300 block of Jos. Campau reported a break-in.
- A resident in the 12000 block of Moran reported the theft of two catalytic converters from his cars.
- A resident in the 2600 block of Caniff reported a break-in.

Sunday, December 25

- A Grand Haven resident reported that someone broke the window on her door.

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## Year in Review: Part two of our look back at 2016

Cont. from page 6

waste of time and money.

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton told media outlets that she backed the recount to "ensure that it is fair to all sides."

Trump's margin of victory was razor thin in Michigan – beating Clinton by a little over 10,000 votes.

As it turned out, the recount was called off, and the election results remained the same.

The removal of four large trees on Prescott prompted concern from residents and some city officials over the city's policy on taking down trees.

Public Works Director Mark Ragsdale was grilled at a city council work session about the matter.

Feeling a bit on the defensive, he stressed over and over that "We don't take down healthy trees."

He said there are mainly two types of trees that are removed: those with roots that lift up sidewalk slabs and those that are diseased or rotting inside.

In the case of tree roots raising a sidewalk, the city will determine if the tree can be saved by just cutting back its roots. Sometimes, that option won't work and the tree has to come down.

Ragsdale said that another reason to remove a tree is something you can't see from the street. He said it's not uncommon for a tree to start rotting from the inside way on top.

The lower part of the tree may be fine, but Ragsdale said the city can't wait for the tree to become vulnerable to a high wind and crash down.

"What if it fell and killed a child?" Ragsdale said.

Hamtramck Public School district was about to get a major financial boost.

A little-noticed tax proposal on the Nov. 8 ballot in Wayne County communities – including Hamtramck – managed to squeak by and will now pump several million dol-

tax on the sale of medical marijuana and allows the city to collect yearly operating fees.

City officials have yet to designate where dispensaries can operate.

The year ended with the sad news that a longtime public servant, Alan Shulgon, died.

During his 70 years here in Hamtramck, Mr. Shulgon had worn many hats.

He was a Hamtramck police officer, a detective, a school boardmember, president of the Housing Commission and a mem-



The city's tree removal policy was a point of contention among some city officials.

lars into Hamtramck's public schools.

Hamtramck is slated to receive an additional \$1.1 million each year for the next six years.

Superintendent Tom Niczay said the millage money can be used by county districts as each "district sees fit."

In Hamtramck, it's going to be used in several areas.

"Hamtramck Public Schools is looking to bolster English Language Learners programming and staffing, expand facilities at the Kosciuszko campus and repair and improve facilities throughout Hamtramck Public Schools with the money generated by the enhancement millage," Niczay told The Review.

Anyone who had been waiting to open a marijuana dispensary in Hamtramck will have to wait at least another year.

The state legislature passed a new law that revamps the 2008 law allowing the use of marijuana for approved medical purposes.

Locally, that required city councilmembers to wipe the slate clean here by repealing a previous ordinance regulating dispensaries. That action allowed them to adopt a new ordinance that is in line with the new state law.

The new law imposes a

ber of city council. He also worked as a Health Care Fraud investigator for the State of Michigan – a job he had for many years and was still employed at.

Mayor Karen Majewski said Mr. Shulgon was "one of the people who first introduced me to Hamtramck politics."



Longtime public servant Alan Shulgon died in December.

"Though we sometimes disagreed strongly on issues, he could always be trusted as a man of honor who followed his convictions and did what he judged best for the city. He was compassionate towards animals – which says a lot about a person. ... I will always remember Al with respect and affection," Majewski said.

Well that wraps up the year 2016. From what we can tell, the new year promises to be jam-packed with news. Happy New Year, everyone.