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July 10, 2015

50¢

The Review

Hamtramck

www.hamtramckreview.com • e-mail news@thehamtramckreview.com





Quick Hits

By Mike Murphy
Special to The Review

The race is on this Saturday, July 11, as Popp's Packing, Hamtramck's self-defined laboratory for artists has invited 100 local artists to participate in its third Pinewood Derby race.

The fundraiser is a rare opportunity to both get a unique piece of artwork by your favorite local artist and support Popp's Packing at the same time.

Will the reigning Grand Champ Joe Ferraro hold on to his title or will a newcomer take the prize? There's only one way to find out, according to the fundraiser's organizers.

The benefit calls on artists to design and build pinewood derby cars to help support renovations and programming at Popp's Emporium, which is an experimental arts venue aimed at promot-

Continued on page 4

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.

“(It) looks like a dinosaur walked down it.”

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Evidence laid out on school boardmember's residency status

By Charles Sercombe

Last April the Hamtramck School Board agreed to investigate whether fellow Boardmember Mohammad Huda is really a resident of the city.

The investigation was prompted by a Review investigation on Huda owning a house in Warren where he claimed a 100-percent Homestead tax exemption, which ultimately means that's where he says he lives.

At the same time he claimed a Homestead tax exemption there, he also claimed he was living on Fleming in Hamtramck.

At this past Wednesday's School Board meeting, which Huda attended, the board found out the results of that investigation.

The findings were presented by private investigator Dave Adamczyk,

who performed his investigation for no charge.

Adamczyk, a former Hamtramck police officer who now runs a private investigation company called Michigan Investigators Group, laid out the following pieces of evidence:

- Huda had changed his address from Hamtramck to Warren and back again several times since 2011.
- On his candidate application to run for school board he claimed to live on Fleming while at the same time claiming a 100-percent Homestead tax exemption at a house on Omar in Warren.
- On that same application, called an affidavit, he said he had been a resident of Wayne County for nine years, which contradicted his previous moves to Warren, which is in Ma-

Continued on page 2



Hamtramck School Boardmember Mohammad Huda listens to a private investigator present evidence at Wednesday's School Board meeting that he is not a resident of the city. Below: The house in Warren where neighbors of Huda says he lives with his wife and children.



City, state officials break ground to kick off parks improvements



City Councilmembers Andrea Karpinski and Robert Zwolak join City Manager Katrina Powell in a groundbreaking ceremony at Pope Park for renovations to begin at all three of the city's parks.

By Charles Sercombe

The kickoff for the renovation of city parks became official on Wednesday.

Two groundbreaking events were held in Pope Park and then Zussman Park on Wednesday morning.

Next Tuesday it will be Veterans Memorial Park's turn at 10 a.m.

On hand Wednesday were state and city officials as well as members of the Karol Wojtyla Park Committee, which started

fundraising for Pope Park over two years ago.

The city is spending \$500,000 to make major renovations to all three city parks. Pope Park got an extra financial boost through an online crowdfunding campaign.

This is the first significant improvements to the parks in decades.

Tom Cervenak, a long-time resident and former executive director of People's Community Services, said he was

Continued on page 4

Library spending reined in

By Charles Sercombe

For years the Hamtramck Public Library has served as more than a place to borrow books.

The library has been home to after-school programs, summer reading programs, nature shows, movie nights, public presentations, community events and even concerts.

However, that catch-all role may change.

For the past couple of years the library has been in deficit spending, and if it were to continue it would eat up its meager budget surplus within a year.

The library's finances recently dominated the discussions held by the state-appointed Transition Advisory Board on May 26, which oversees all city financial decisions.

Hamtramck's library is city-owned but it has a separate budget.

While the TAB had nothing but praise about the library's multiple-services, it said spending needed to be reined in.

Last year the library ran a deficit of \$80,000. There is only \$60,000 left in the surplus fund.

City Manager Katrina Powell said she had to call a "time out" with the library over its spending.

"We are now going to take over approving every single expenditure that goes on there ...," Powell told the TAB.

She said that despite warnings from City Controller Bham Cairns, the

Continued on page 5



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Second Front Page

Candidates speak out on issues facing the city and why they should be elected

By Charles Sercombe

Recently The Review asked the nine candidates running for a seat on city council to fill out a survey about who they are and where they stand on issues.

So far, two candidates have responded, Frank Woodman and Robert Zwolak.

Here are their responses, in their own words.



Name: Frank Woodman

Employment: St. John Macomb Hospital, Registered Nurse, Surgery Department

Education: Associate Degree Nursing, Macomb Community College

Community experience: Participant and long-time supporter of the Hamtramck creative arts community. Public Relations Hamtramck Music Festival. Volunteer at Hamtown Farms 2014-15.

What qualities do you bring to city council?

Woodman: Honest and energetic leadership with a professional and civil approach to problem solving and decision making. My job as a Registered Nurse necessitates that I keep a clear, fair and focused mind when approached with challenges of any type. I feel these are qualities that the people of Hamtramck and the City Council would value.

Please identify three

issues you would like to address during your term:

Woodman: Curb speeding for increased pedestrian safety — it's imperative that Hamtramck strengthens itself as a walkable city. Strive for a strong and healthy partnership and cooperation with the Hamtramck School Board.

Strong schools equal a strong community. Continue to nurture and develop the Beautification Committee on keeping Hamtramck the beautiful and clean city we all appreciate.

The city's financial health is always a concern. What would you do to make it more stable?

Woodman: I look forward to developing a healthy action plan, in collaborating with the State of Michigan, to transition financial decisions back in the hands of the representatives of the people of Hamtramck, the City Council.

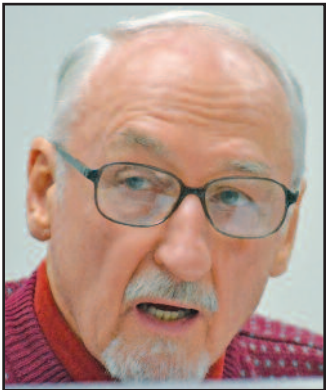
Since the state still has control over financial decisions, and the council's role is greatly limited while the state plays a role here, what is your role as a member of council?

Woodman: To be immersed, prepared, educated and informed as to the city's financial situation. I look forward to working with the State of Michigan, so that we can truly work as representatives of the citizens of Hamtramck to make responsible decisions that benefit all of the citizens of Hamtramck.

Why should voters support you?

Woodman: I am a tireless, fair and passionate advocate of our town. As a member of the City

Council, I would proudly continue in a more formal role to be a tireless, passionate advocate and professional representative of the citizens of this great town I love.



Name: Robert A. Zwolak

Employment: Retired, currently a Hamtramck City councilman

Education: St. Florian Graduate, University of Detroit, University of California Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley Community College, Wayne County Community College, Calif. & Mich. Air National Guard (U.S. Air Force)

Community Experience: Hamtramck Civil Service Commissioner, Hamtramck Income Tax Director, Hamtramck City Councilman (5-plus years), Hamtramck City Clerk (8 years), Hamtramck Charter Revision Commissioner (2 terms), Wayne County Clerk's Assoc., International Municipal Clerk's Assoc., Michigan Municipal Clerk's Association, Hamtramck Rotary (past President), St. Florian Parish Council past President, Cardinal Mercier Knights of Columbus Grand Knight, Hamtramck, Hamtramck Chamber of Commerce (past President), Past Publisher of the Hamtramck & Highland Park Times, Associate Publisher of El Central Hispanico Newspaper, Member PLAV POST 6,

Member AMVETS POST 14, Hamtramck NAACP Chapter past office

What qualities do you bring to city council?

Zwolak: My experience and knowledge as a result of my work as a City Clerk, Councilman and co-author of the current city charter allows me to a greater degree, to contribute to the decision making process of the city council and identify, as well as argue, against making the same mistakes of the past.

Currently the city has experienced a significant loss of experienced personnel and established newly structured departments with new department heads that are unfamiliar with the city of Hamtramck yet still require input from officials that live in Hamtramck. I know how the city got to its current state, where it is currently, and concerned that we don't make the same mistakes of the past or create new problems for the future.

Continued on page 5



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Review: Opinion Page

In Our Opinion

School millage renewal is in the best interest of everyone

A number of absentee ballots have gone out in recent weeks.

There are two things for voters to decide on: narrowing down the field of candidates running for city council and the renewal of a school millage.

We can't stress enough the importance of the school millage. This is a renewal of 18 mills that produces over \$1.8 million a year for the public school district. This money is vital in keeping our district financially solvent and able to offer a top-notch education for our kids.

For those wondering about the cost of the millage, the best part is most of us don't even pay it.

The only folks who pay this millage are those who own commercial properties and rental dwellings. If you own a home and live in it, you don't pay this tax.

If you rent, you do not pay this tax.

Unfortunately, there are those out in the community who have worked against this renewal. They have used lies to defeat it, saying homeowners will save \$500 a year by rejecting it.

That is not true. Homeowners do not pay a single penny for this millage. They will receive no extra money by voting no.

If you are a renter and think you will save rent by defeating this millage you are fooling yourself. Do you seriously believe landlords will reduce rents if they don't have to pay this millage?

If you believe that, we have a bridge to sell you.

This tax has been in place for 20 years, and its renewal will keep on going for another 10 years.

Keeping this tax alive serves another purpose other than education. By having a secure public school district, our home values remain stable. That's because people who are house hunting and have a family want to live in a city with a solid school district.

Even if you are a homeowner and don't have any kids, it's still in your best interest to support this millage.

On Aug. 4, vote YES for the school millage renewal. And spread the word, too.

Library spending reined in

Continued from front page

library continued to spend beyond its budget.

"Bhama talks to them on a regular basis, trying to explain you can't do this, you've got to understand that you don't have any money. For some rea-

at the TAB meeting, could not be reached for comment.

Square said that because the library serves so many purposes, closing it is not an option – although that would be

shouldn't have those fancy dinners that they have at the library."

A month later at the June 23 TAB meeting, City Manager Powell said she is still searching for a consultant for the li-



Hamtramck's Public Library has to reduce its costs in order to avoid eating up its budget surplus.

son it's just not clicking," Powell told the TAB. "So now we're going to – I'm going to put my foot down, and we're going to have a look at the entire operation."

Former Emergency Manager Cathy Square, who now sits on the TAB, said she tried to tackle the library's finances but failed to make needed changes.

"I went around and around with them," she said.

Square recommended hiring a consultant to help analyze the library's finances.

Library Director Tamara Sochacka, who was not something her former boss, and former emergency financial manager for Hamtramck, Lou Schimmel, would not hesitate to do.

"My old boss, Lou Schimmel, would say 'Close the library,' but I don't think you can close it. So it might be better to try to get them some professional help," Square said at the TAB meeting.

Doing that, Square said, would help the library focus on its "core business."

"Maybe they shouldn't have a day care center in the library," Square said. "You know, maybe they

Candidates speak out on issues facing the city and why they should be elected

Continued from page 3

Please identify three issues you would like to address during your term:

Zwolak: Issues that need to be addressed: First of all transparency in city government, not only with elected officials but also with the public and eliminate the paranoia in city hall. Secondly, public safety, especially in policing, needs to be addressed in patrolling, overly aggressive overtime traffic program, daytime assaults, car thefts and a greater program of communication with citizens and businesses in crime prevention.

Among the other issues of importance is the promotion of the Community of Hamtramck in businesses, real estate, schools, entertainment, religious and cultural diversity and of course the people of Hamtramck that make the community so, so unique. The money is there to promote.

Of course potholes are an issue and should not have been so mismanaged since the money was there and needlessly delayed in planning. Emergency and safety issues of road craters should have addressed months ago.

The city's financial health is always a concern. What would you do to make it more stable?

Zwolak: The financial health has always been an issue for decades especially since Dodge Main and surrounding auto suppliers closed. Three years ago the city council finally acquired detailed and comprehensive monthly department reports and realized we had a serious problem, especially with revenues. The city council had asked the State of Michigan to review our financial affairs and since the city had limited powers to correct many areas of city functions, the State of Michigan agreed to provide an Emergency Manager. Since then, staffing and departments changes were made with a 5-year operational plan put in place.

Since the state still has control over financial decisions, and the council's role is greatly limited while the state

plays a role here, what is your role as a member of council?

Zwolak: My role with the rest of the city council is to be vigilante in maintaining that course with recommendations to avoid any sidetracks.

True the city council has a limited role because we have Receiver-ship Transition Advisory Board making final spending decisions, but this is a working relationship and a partnership to achieve the transition and restore Hamtramck to complete Home Rule. Both the RTAB and Council are here for the best interest of the Hamtramck Community and State of Michigan.

Why should voters support you?

Zwolak: I am asking the Hamtramck Voters to rehire me for the next term and will continue to represent and work for all the community. I so thankful for being allowed to serve this community for so many years, I need your help to continue.

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by Matt Feazell

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City Hall Insider ...

What is our City Council up to these days?
We have the highlights of the latest council meeting.

By Charles Sercombe

The city council met on June 23, and all councilmembers were present. Before the regular council meeting a work session was held.

In a review of expenses, Councilmember Andrea Karpinski questioned \$22,000 paid to CPI, a city contractor that performs water and sewer line repairs.

Mark Ragsdale, the Director of Public Works, said there was a major sewer main repair at Trowbridge and Jos. Campau as well as six sinkholes, three of which will be charged to homeowners.

Councilmember Titus Walters noted that Trowbridge, from Jos. Campau

to Gallagher, “looks like a dinosaur walked down it.”

He said there are many deep potholes on that portion of the street. City Manager Katrina Powell said a work crew will soon start repairing potholes.

Councilmember Robert Zwolak questioned the status of a lawsuit filed by city retirees over cuts to their healthcare package.

City Attorney Travis Mihelick said the case is ongoing. He said Hamtramck’s retirees “piggy-backed” onto a lawsuit retirees filed in other cities that were under the control of an emergency manager who made similar cuts.

Councilmember Karpin-

ski questioned the status of Platinum Landscaping, another city contractor. City Manager Powell said the city still has a contract with the company and is using it to mow lots and remove trees.

Karpinski asked if there is an expiration date to Platinum’s contract. Powell said there is none. Karpinski said the contract needs to be reviewed.

Councilmember Zwolak questioned whether Platinum will be used for snowplowing services, which it had been doing for the last several years.

Powell said the city will do that service “in-house.”

“Different year, different ballgame,” Powell

said.

Zwolak noted that budget changes made require the city to dip into its budget surplus. He asked if that will continue.

Powell said it won’t.

Zwolak questioned paying CPI \$500,000. Powell said that while that is indeed a lot of money, in the past the city failed to maintain its infrastructure.

“You have to start somewhere,” she said about the ongoing repairs being done by CPI.

In another matter, Zwolak requested a “sustainability” report on the police overtime traffic patrol program. He wondered whether the program is paying for it-

self.

Powell said she has been asking about the program as well. She said one obstacle in figuring that out is that the district court’s financial report on ticket revenue doesn’t identify which tickets were issued on the overtime program.

During the regular meeting, the council agreed to close Jos. Campau from Caniff to Carpenter for the annual Hamtramck Labor Day Festival.

Mayor Karen Majewski re-appointed Joan Bittner and Tom Jankowski to the Hamtramck Historical Commission. Stacey Trarop was also appointed to the commission.

Councilmember Anam Miah said the council is not getting information about activities happening in the city, such as the recent closure of Jos. Campau.

Powell said news about the closure of Campau (which occurred over a week ago) was on the front page of The Review.

Miah admitted he had not read the paper.

Powell said she would forward information in the future.

Mayor Majewski asked for weekly updates on where DTE Energy work crews will be working each week.

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Coming events

SATURDAY, July 11, 2-4 p.m. – The Hamtramck Farms invites city council candidates and the public for meet and greet at the Farms, on Lumpkin just south of Holbrook. Refreshments will be provided.

SATURDAY, July 11, 2-4 p.m. – Holy Cross Parish will host a Soup Kitchen 2-4 p.m., 2311 Pulaski. All are welcome.

SATURDAY, Jul 11, 9-3 p.m. – Hamtramck’s Recycle Center is open at Caniff and McDougall. Drop off your recyclables for free.

MONDAY, July 13, 7 p.m. – Hamtramck East-side Block Club will meet at in the convent of Our Lady Queen of Apostles, 3851 Prescott. We meet every other month on the 2nd Monday. There is plenty of parking behind the Church. Our goal is to gain a better understanding of our community cultures and needs and to make our city safer and cleaner for residents and visitors.

WEDNESDAY, July 15, 7 p.m. – Join the Hamtramck Midtown Block Club! Attend our next scheduled meeting in St. Florian’s convent, 2626 Florian, across from the church. A guest speaker will participate in our discussion. We meet the third Wednesday of each month. The Midtown Block Club works for promoting community safety, stewardship, service and social events. Add your voice on any neighborhood concern.

SATURDAY, July 25, 6 p.m.-10 p.m. – Celebrate America in Hamtramck at Keyworth Stadium, 3201 Roosevelt. Bring the entire family to this free event to enjoy live music and dancing, petting zoo, inflatables, food, carnival games and fireworks!

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Deadline for classifieds for next week is Thursday at Noon Call to place your ad (313) 874-2100



By Charles Sercombe

This week’s Crime Log covers June 30-July 6.

Tuesday, June 30

- A man was arrested following a traffic stop for being wanted on a Hamtramck warrant.
- Detroit investigators notified Hamtramck police about recovering a 2008 Saturn that was stolen in Hamtramck.
- A man was arrested following a traffic stop for several traffic violations and possessing narcotic paraphernalia.

Wednesday, July 1

- At almost 1 a.m. a business in the 11700 block of Klinger was ticketed for serving customers past business hours as set by city ordinance.
- At 5:30 a.m. police noted that someone was making numerous 911 hang-up calls from a location in the 11600 block of Klinger.
- An agent from Amana Poultry reported a man in dirty clothing stole a box of Tide laundry detergent.
- A woman reported that her former employer created a company in her name without her permission.
- A man reported the theft of his car while it was parked in the 3800

block of Miller. The man said his car may have had keys in it.

- A woman reported an attempted break-in at her residence in the 2700 block of Florian.

Thursday, July 2

- At 11 p.m. a resident in the 2300 block of Carpenter reported someone broke into their living room using concrete blocks.
- A Detroit resident was arrested at 11:30 p.m. after punching out a window at the residence of his ex-girlfriend in the 12000 block of Selfridge.
- At 1 a.m. a hit-and-run crash occurred in the 3000 block of Hanley. Police impounded the car that was involved. Later, the owner of the car went to the station to question why his car was impounded. He was then arrested. The suspect later made a cross-complaint against the other parties involved for intimidation.
- At a little after 2 a.m. a security guard for Hanley International Academy reported seeing a man dressed in all black in the school’s gym. The suspect fled before officers arrived.
- Two men were arrested for obstruction and being disorderly.

Friday, July 3

- At 12:30 a.m. a Detroit resident was arrested following a traffic stop for being wanted on a Hamtramck warrant and driving with an ex-

pired license.

- A resident reported her car window was broken out.
- A man reported recovering his stolen car at Holbrook and Conant.

Saturday, July 4

- A man was ticketed for distributing handbills without a permit.
- At 4 a.m. a Highland Park resident was arrested following a traffic stop for possessing a concealed gun without a license to do so.
- A Holmes resident reported the theft of her license plate.
- A man reported the theft of his license plate while his car was parked in the Hamtramck Town Center. He also said that his cell phone was stolen from his unlocked car.

Sunday, July 5

- At a few minutes past midnight a man was arrested for possessing an open intoxicant and narcotic paraphernalia and being wanted on a Hamtramck warrant.

Monday, July 6

- A resident in the 12000 block of Fleming reported seeing two men try to break into his residence through the back door.
- At almost 2 a.m. a person in the 11400 block of Fleming reported being robbed by two men armed with a rifle or shotgun. The suspects were seen in an older grey mini

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3 Lucky Customers Will Win!

Offer good thru August 15. Restrictions apply.

Sudoku

		4	5	1	2			
8	3					6	5	7
7			5					
					1			
9		2				7		
			7				5	
3			9		8	6		
		6					1	

6		8						1
						2		
		5		4				
3				6			7	
			1					
		1	3		4		9	
					3			6
	2							5
		7	5					2

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