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December 25, 2020 **50¢**

The Review

Hamtramck

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CAN IS ONLY TO BE IN ALLEY ON PICK UP DAY

সব সন্ধ্যা মেহলাত বি রফাক বি মোবাইল মেহলাত লকোব শরীফ মেহলাত

পার্বতী কোমল আর শিক-অপের শিব গদিত্তে জামুন



DO NOT LEAVE CAN IN ALLEY

لا تترك سلة المهلات في الرافق بعد إخراجها من محتوياتها

পার্বতী কোমল আর শিক-অপের শিব গদিত্তে জামুন

Quick Hits

Cracking down on litter

The city means business when it comes to litter and garbage control.

Households will be receiving a sticker that explains and illustrates how to handle your city-issued garbage cans and what not to do.

One of the more common issues is that households pile on loose trash on top of their cans or next to them.

Don't do that.

That is how we get rats.

Also, your garbage can is not meant to stay out in the alley permanently. You can place it in the alley the night before your pickup date, but then after your garbage is collected, you are required to take the can back into your yard.

It's as simple as that.

The stickers come with garbage do's and don'ts in three languages: English, Arabic and Bengali.

If these instructions are not followed, the city will begin to issue tickets to households.

Let's ring in the New Year right with a cleaner city.

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Take a look back at the year 2020 and the news we experienced

By Charles Sercombe

Most of us can't wait to kick the year 2020 in the rear, and welcome in a new year.

But while 2020 presented a number of challenges for all Americans, it was another busy news year for Hamtramck.

Once again, we present our Year in Review. This week, we look back on the first six months of 2020. Next week, come back for Part Two.

JANUARY

The year started out as it usually does: with The Review's Newsmaker of the Year.

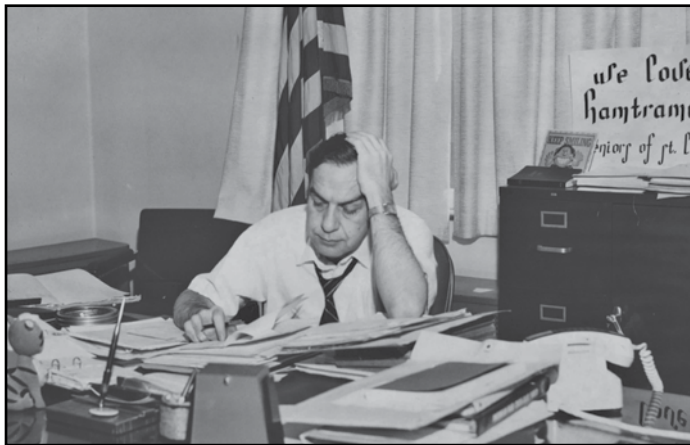
It was a familiar one, and one that continues this year: the city's finances were tanking. What specifically delivered a knockout punch was the closing, or we should say, the retooling, of the GM Poletown plant.

That shutdown was going to cost about \$700,000 in lost revenue for the city.

The good news is that plant has since been retooled – and even renamed, as Factory Zero – where all-electric vehicles will be built. The models made there will be the Bolt EV, GMC Hummer EV, and one other yet to be named.

Even better news, there will soon be three shifts at the plant, which will translate to that much more revenue for Hamtramck.

Now the bad news: the



Former Hamtramck Mayor, and longtime Wayne County Treasurer, Raymond Wojtowicz died earlier in the year.

city is still in massive deficit spending. That will likely be an ongoing story in 2021.

City Manager Kathy Angerer remained optimistic. She outlined her goals for the year for The Review.

They included:

- Bringing jobs back to the Detroit-Hamtramck GM Assembly Plant
- Adopting a balanced budget for 2020-21
- Solving the MERS pension obligation increase
- Infrastructure improvements: Road, water and sewer lines on Holbrook, from Jos. Campau to Lumpkin, and on Caniff from I-75 to Jos. Campau
- Settlement of a contract with Firefighters – IAFF 750
- Finalization of the Hamtramck Recreation Plan, and Rehabilitation efforts for the historic Hamtramck Stadium
- Continuously improved services for residents, including the launch of an app for the reporting of city issues and concerns to city ad-

ministration

- Updating of the city website
- Appointment of a Community and Economic Development/DDA Manager

At the start of the year, Hamtramck lost a former mayor and longtime Wayne County Treasurer,



Residents protested against allowing a nearby waste recycling company, US Ecology, to handle highly toxic material.

Raymond Wojtowicz. He was 90 years old, and served as county treasurer for 39 years.

Police agencies were on the lookout for a Hamtramck woman, Camay

Lowe, who went missing. After several weeks, the woman was found – being treated in a hospital in Canada.

Hamtramck had a busy but productive January. Officers and detectives busted a second armed gang that had robbed several victims. Another crew, which had no relation to the second, had been busted at the end of December.

Federal investigators forced Hamtramck's Homestyle Foods to shut down, after inspectors found listeria bacteria in a food preparation area. The plant, located on Edwin St., is owned by the Kowalski Sausage Co.

Some 60 people work at the plant. Homestyle spe-

Gromek, a graduate of St. Ladislaus High School, was one of the greatest baseball players to ever come out of Hamtramck. He even played a role in the integration of Major League Baseball.

Gromek, who started out as an infielder in the Cleveland Indians organization, eventually became a pitcher in 1941. The dependable right-hander pitched in the majors for 17 years, winning 123 games, tossing 17 shutouts, and completing 92 games.

In 1945, Gromek won 19 games for Cleveland, despite missing two weeks after injuring his knee while scoring the winning run in a game against Detroit. Gromek was named to the American League All-Star team that year, but the game was canceled due to travel restrictions during World War II.

Gromek would later be traded to his hometown Detroit Tigers, where he would win 18 games in 1954.

Gromek died in 2002, at the age of 82.

FEBRUARY

State officials came under fire for a decision on allowing a nearby recycling plant to process more toxic materials.

The recycling plant, ironically named US Ecology, is located off of Mound Rd., about a mile east of Hamtramck.

For four years, resi-

Continued on page 2

Happy New Year



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Take a look back at the year 2020 and the news we experienced

Continued from front page

dents opposed allowing the plant to accept toxic materials, for fear that it could endanger the health and well-being of the community.

But in February, the equally ironically named state Department of Environmental Quality gave the company the OK to handle 4,500 tons of toxic material each day.

Former State Rep. Isaac Robinson (D-Detroit, whose district includes Hamtramck), had been in the lead against allowing the material to be stored at the site.

(Robinson died later in the year of COVID.)

He, as well as other local activists and environmentalists, warned that some of the material is



Big plans about improving Veterans Park were introduced to the community.

fracking waste, which contains radioactive material.

In an email to The Review, Robinson said he found the decision:

“Shocking, alarming and disturbing. In light of the Flint Water Tragedy and the discovery of thousands of contaminated sites across Michigan, it is disheartening to watch corporate special interests muscle state and city government in Detroit to get their way, to make Wayne County a one-stop shop for all the dangerous waste this side of the Mississippi.”

City and school officials had big plans for Veterans Park where, if the stars align right, the park could undergo a major renovation.

Make that millions of dollars’ worth of a renovation.

Plans for the park were

introduced to both the city council and the community last Friday, during a dinner presentation sponsored by the Michigan Municipal League.

The plan was created by

Hamtramck Stadium was built in the 1930s.

The renovation plan also includes the stadium, and further on over to Keyworth Stadium, which is owned by the public school district.

In all, the renovation plan covers a total of 26 acres.

The plan includes:

Creating a “green alley” near Keyworth Stadium. Creating trail loops that “stitch” neighborhoods together.

Planting “living rooms” in the park. These are social gathering areas that are secluded by plantings.

Creating a “wet prairie

fate of US postal mailboxes – which later in the year became a big issue during the Presidential Election.

During the election, a Trump appointee to the postal service started removing mailboxes throughout the country. Critics said it was a deliberate attempt to thwart mail-in voting.

But back in February, we noted that mailboxes had long been disappearing in the city.

According to an online blog by the postal service, some 12,000 boxes across the country had been removed because fewer people were actually mailing things out.

In other words, email has become the go-to way of communicating.

The general idea was to eliminate any collection boxes that weren’t averaging 25 pieces of mail per day.

Foreclosure loomed for about 100 Hamtramck property owners.

The Wayne County Treasurer’s Office said those property owners failed to pay their 2017 property taxes, and would soon enter into the final phase before the county holds its annual tax auction.

The Hamtramck Public School District had nothing to do with this.

Continued on page 3



Former State Rep. Isaac Robinson (right) was one of the first high-profile Hamtramck people to die of COVID-19.

a Minnesota-based urban planning company, and coordinated by Global Detroit. It was funded by a \$800,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation, which has been funding programs to encourage younger people to get more physically active.

City and school officials were – and still are – also hoping to receive a multi-million-dollar grant from the foundation, to renovate Hamtramck Stadium, one of only five remaining baseball stadiums built for the Negro baseball leagues that existed back in the early 1900s.

meadow.”

Creating a botanical garden.

You could say The Review was prescient – at least when it came to the

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Smoked Spare Ribs/Zeberka	Smoked Kielbasa (5 Types)	
Blood Sausage/Kiszka	Crepes/Nalesniki	
Smoked Bacon/Boczek		



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উচ্চমানের কেন্দ্র
উচ্চমানের নিয়ন্ত্রিত
উচ্চমানের পাঠাগার



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২৬২০ হলব্রুক স্ট্রীট, হ্যামট্রামিক ডি ৩১৩ ৮৭৩ ৭৭৮৭

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This week at the library...

The Hamtramck Public Library is operating as “Grab and Go” until further notice.

Grab and Go includes book pick-ups, remote printing, faxing, and scanning. Computers will not be available for use until further notice. Please send attachments you want printed to hamtramcklibrary at gmail.com.

Browse our catalog at home. If we have the title, please call us at 313-733-6822, and we will set it aside for you to pick up. If the title you want is at another library, you can place a hold on it. It will be sent here for you to pick up.

Don’t forget Hoopla (on our website under “eResources”) to find and download e-books and to stream movies and music! And don’t forget all the great resources available on Michigan eLibrary (MeL) for students: Britannica Kids, PebbleGo, and World Book Kids, and for adults: books, audio and video for learning and entertainment.

A thank you to the family of the late Wallace “Wally” Witkowski for the collection of beautiful Polish-language books and beautiful bookstand that they donated to the library.

For more information about events at the library call (313) 733-6822, or visit its website at <http://hamtramck.lib.mi.us> where you can also access the online catalog. The library is located at 2360 Caniff.

Second Front Page

Take a look back at the year 2020 and the news we experienced

Continued from page 2

ing but good news to report at its annual State of the District address.

This was the first such presentation made by Superintendent Jaleelah Ahmed, who was appointed to her position in 2019.

She enjoyed a successful year, to say the least.

The district was still boasting of a budget surplus of \$12.2 million. The district's Chief Financial Officer, Sherry Lynem, pointed out that the financial picture was in sharp contrast to 10 years ago, when the district was in a financial crisis and had a \$5 million budget deficit. The district managed to climb out of that financial hole by slashing the budget, and also by way of teachers and staff members taking deep salary cuts.

In 2020, the financial picture was better. Gov. Gretchen Witmer had increased per-pupil funding by the state by \$240. However, Hamtramck still received the lowest amount of state aid, at \$8,111 per pupil.

The district has about 3,500 students – a num-



Hamtramck Public Schools Superintendent Jaleelah Ahmed and her staff presented the district's annual financial report.

renovations to the district's existing buildings, and to actually construct a new school building on the grounds of Kosciuszko Middle School.

Alas, that was rejected by voters later in the year.

Once again, Paczki day was a resounding success. What can we say? It was the usual boozy fun, celebrated by thousands of revelers.

And it was a huge boost in business for our local bars, veterans posts and restaurants.

Who knew that it would be one of the last big public gatherings allowed before COVID came along a

How low can some folks in this city go? Pretty low.

The recently closed Wheelhouse bike shop was offering a reward for the return of its custom-painted sign, which someone had stolen.

To this day, the sign has not been returned.

MARCH

City officials received the data from a financial audit, which laid out where Hamtramck's government gets its money.

According to a recent audit of the city's 2019 finances, on the revenue side of the ledger, the city's prime revenue stream is from property taxes – which should come as no surprise, at least to property owners who are painfully aware of how much they pay each year.

Last year, the city collected over \$6.5 million in property taxes – down by almost \$50,000 from 2018.

The next highest revenue stream is from state revenue sharing, which netted the city over \$3.4 million last year, which is about \$83,000 more than in 2018.

Next up was revenue from the city income tax, which brought in a little over \$3 million last year – up by over \$300,000 from 2018.

On the expense side, 60 percent of the city's

budget, some \$10.7 million, goes toward police and fire services.

The next highest expense is for general government services, at \$3.4 million, and then for public works at \$2.6 million.

This year's financial outlook appears to be grim, not only for Hamtramck but for many communities that have experienced a great loss of revenue due to the COVID crisis.

For the second time in a week, a Hamtramck landmark business announced a huge change.

First, there was Hamtramck Drugs announcing its abrupt closing.

And then, the owner of Polonia restaurant, John Zurowski, put his business up for sale for \$450,000.

As we went to press this week, Zurowski still owns his restaurant, and it's unknown if he is still seeking a buyer

Continued on page 4

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Dec. 26 - Feast of St. Stephen,
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It looks like Paczki Day won't be happening this year. The coronavirus pandemic continues to spread in the state and nation, which has prevented public gatherings.

ber that has continued to increase in recent years.

There was one more huge financial goal the district was about to embark on trying to realize: Asking Hamtramck voters to approve a 30-mill bond, to pay for extensive

month later?

Will there be a Paczki Day celebration this year? We're kind of doubting it, as the disease just keeps spreading, and the national death toll now numbers around 300,000.

As the church bells ring proclaiming the birth of Christ we at

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Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve Vigil - Family Mass (English) 4:00 pm
Solemn Midnight Mass - (English & Polish)12 midnight
(preceded by singing of Christmas carols at 11:30 pm)

Friday, December 25
Christmas Day, Mass in Polish & English..... 9:30 am

Friday, January 1, 2021 New Year's Day
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (English & Polish) 9:30 am

Saturday, January 2, 2021
Mass (English) 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 3, 2021
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Review: Opinion Page

Other Voices: Guest Editorial

Maintaining a positive outlook

By Madelyn Porter

The Concerned Women of Hamtramck pray that you are in good health and spirits during these turbulent/unpredictable times of COVID-19.

It is important that we maintain a positive outlook for the future of the world and continue to survive.

The world, the country, and yes Hamtramck has lost so many beautiful souls to the pandemic of 2020. Let us welcome 2021 with open arms and embrace the well-being of humanity.

This year marks the Concerned Women of Hamtramck's 24th Annual MLK DAY CELEBRATION. Surviving the Pandemic is the theme for 2021. Unfortunately, we will not have a formal breakfast due to social distancing

restrictions.

However, we will carry on the tradition of honoring Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. via ZOOM invite: HAMTRAMCK'S GOT TALENT will proceed as follows:

- Students from the Hamtramck Public School District are encouraged to submit their talent to their perspective school administrator/faculty.

- Administrators/faculty from each school will screen contestants.

- Contestants will perform on January 18, 2021 via ZOOM invite.

NOTE: Students write essays or perform according to the theme - "How I Overcame (like Martin Luther King) Despite the Pandemic"

The Concerned Women of Hamtramck needs your support. We are request-

ing donations from our friends and constituents for the following:

- Scholarship program - Hamtramck Public School student(s)

- Family Relief Fund

- Community Outreach

NOTE: Checks payable to CONCERNED WOMEN OF HAMTRAMCK – 11411 Lumpkin Street, Hamtramck, MI 48212

A Zoom invitation will be emailed to all HPSD administrators, friends, and constituents. Moving forward towards a brighter future is paramount in 2021.

We look forward to seeing you on January 18. Thank you for your continued support.

(Madelyn Porter is President of Concerned Women of Hamtramck.)



Optimist news

On Saturday, The Optimists of Downtown Detroit held their annual oratorical competition via Zoom. The event was originally scheduled for March 2020.

At a later date, the first-place winner will receive \$300, the second-place winner will receive \$150, and the third-place winner will receive \$100.

The top three will receive a medal and all eight contestants will receive a certificate of participation and an Optimist lapel pin.

There were six impartial adults judging the competition. They deliberated at length because each student exhibited a myriad of oratorical and writing

strengths.

The topic was "Just iMagine a World without Boundaries."

The following Hamtramck Public Schools students took part by presenting their original speeches to Optimist club members and other interested spectators. They participated in a randomly selected order, which was:

Nilla Ghose, 9th grader at Hamtramck HS

Maha Uddin, 8th grader at Kosciuszko MS

Shayera Chowdhury, 8th grader at KMS – SECOND PLACE

Rawan Al-Jumae, 7th grader at KMS

Taufiq Islam, 7th grader at KMS – THIRD PLACE

Nura Uddin, 7th grader

at KMS – FIRST PLACE

Hamzah Chowdhury, 8th grader at KMS

Karima Ahmed, 6th grader at Dickinson East

The students began working on these speeches in October 2019. They received writing and speaking support from HPS teachers Rahiel Housey-Johnson, Karen Swords, and Heather Walsh.

They persevered through uncertainty and finally had their opportunity to compete after nine months of delays due to the pandemic.

The new topic for 2021 was announced and discussed: "Healing the World with Optimism".

Take a look back at the year 2020 and the news we experienced

Continued from page 4

With many people observing the state's "stay home, stay safe" policy, there was a slight increase here in Hamtramck in domestic violence.

And Hamtramck was not alone.



Grant money was awarded to help with the renovation of Hamtramck's historic baseball stadium.

Cities across the nation were also reporting more home assaults, as nerves got frayed between couples and family members from the constant confinement.

The crime trend continued throughout the year. Feeling like you can't control your anger? The first thing is to admit that. The second thing is to seek help. And sometimes it can be as simple as talking to a friend or someone you trust.

Talking about your emotions will help you realize that you are aware of a problem.

The restoration effort for the historic Hamtramck baseball stadium just scored a huge home run.

The National Park Service, through its African American Civil Rights Historic Preservation Fund, awarded the city and Wayne County \$490,729 to make improvements to the structure.

The baseball stadium, built in 1930, served the National Negro League. At the time, Major League Baseball forbade African-Americans from playing in the all-white leagues.

The stadium, one of only five surviving stadiums nationally that catered to the Negro League, was home to the Detroit Stars.

For years the stadium sat idle, slowly deteriorating to the point where it was not safe to go

into the grandstands. It wasn't until several years ago that the stadium's historical significance was discovered.

Up to that point, there was talk of demolishing the structure, but once research revealed its



unique role in American history, it was a whole new ball game.

Local officials and history buffs then moved quickly to save the stadium.

Through their efforts, the state designated the structure as a historical site, which helped lead to winning various grants to restore it.

A Cosmos basketball legend got a new home: The Hall of Fame.

Rudy Tomjanovich, an NBA star player and coach, and pride of Ham-



Basketball legend and hometown hero Rudy "T" Tomjanovich paid a visit to the Hamtramck Housing project, and he was also inducted into the NBA Hall of Fame.

tramck – having been born and raised here – was voted into the NBA Hall of Fame on his third time as a finalist for the nomination.

"Rudy T," as he is affectionally known, starred at Hamtramck High and the University of Michigan, before embarking on an illustrious pro career for the San Diego, later Houston, Rockets.

He played his entire ca-

reer for the Rockets, a career cut short by a vicious sucker punch by Los Angeles Lakers player Kermit Washington during a game in late 1977.

But Tomjanovich would not go quietly. He would, instead, embark upon a coaching career that managed to eclipse his playing one.

Although schools were closed due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, class lessons continued for the remainder of the school year.

To help continue those lessons, the Hamtramck Public School District handed out Chromebook laptops at all of the schools.

Each household received one laptop – at no cost to parents.

Face-to-face schooling was canceled for the year by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer because of the pandemic.

In a notice that Public Schools Superintendent Jaleelah Ahmed distributed to parents, she said: "HPS will loan Chromebooks to the families during the week of April 20th. We are looking forward to a full implementation of the online learning on April 27th.

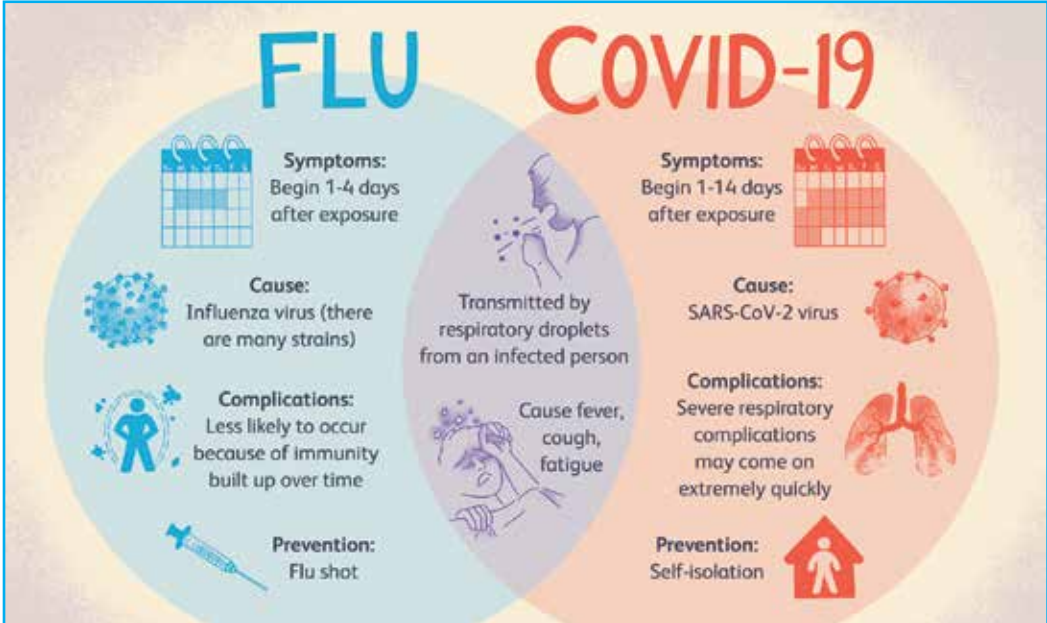
"Each school will share communication about their specific plans on their technology distribu-



tion plans. At this time, we are seeking to distribute one Chromebook to each household. Once we have ensured that all households have one Chromebook, we will work with families that request an additional Chromebook."

Hamtramck lost another community leader to COVID.

Continued on page 6



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Take a look back at the year 2020 and the news we experienced

Continued from page 5

The Rev. Darla Swint died, leaving behind a legacy of community activism.

Swint was also a champion of those who felt they had no voice in city government or in the community.

MAY

Hamtramckans have long complained about speeding, and reckless drivers.

The Review took a dive into traffic citations issued by Hamtramck police officers, to get to the bottom of this question: Just who are these folks behind the wheel? As it turned out, it is Hamtramckans.

According to traffic citations issued by Hamtramck police officers from June 1 to Dec. 31, 2019 – a six-month period – most of the tickets went to residents.

There were 1,078 tick-



The Review took a deep dive into just who is getting the most traffic tickets. Turns out it's mostly residents who get caught for speeding and other traffic offenses.

ets issued to residents.

The next highest violators came from Detroit – 985 of them.

The citations were for various moving violations, as well as for not having insurance, having expired license plates, and impaired driving.

The most common ticket issued was for speeding, for which there were 923 issued during that six month period.

The next highest was

for impeding traffic – 485 tickets – which is a catch-all ticket that usually means a police officer gave a driver a break for something more serious, such as running a red light.

Other most-issued tickets included: driving while license suspended (465), driving with no insurance (418), disobeying a stop sign (272), running a red light (125), equipment failures (48), failing to signal (47), careless driv-

ing (27) and squealing of tires (12).

In many instances, drivers were issued a combination of tickets.

The coronavirus wreaked more havoc.

This time, it was the new season of the Detroit City Football Club. As it turned out, an abbreviated season was held later in the year, but spectators were not allowed to see the games live in person.



The Detroit City Football team's season was cut short because of COVID safety concerns.

salaries for department heads by 5 percent, and her own by 10 percent.

No cuts were made in the fire or police departments. However, Fire Chief Danny Hagen became a part-time employee, and had his salary reduced by 50 percent.

The furloughs are different from layoffs because they were temporary, and most workers will be called back. However, Angerer said city finances will ultimately determine whether all of the employees would be returning.

While most folks were adhering to the state's quarantine order, there were some who were out on the streets causing an uptick in the number of graffiti sprayings.

As usual, it's rare that anyone gets caught in the act. The cleanup of the sprayings was the responsibility of building owners.

Continued on page 8

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12829 St. Louis, 2 story, 5 BR, upper and lower each have kitchen, bath, dining and living rm, Palo and Diane 248-659-2325.

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1/8

HOUSE FOR SALE

Detroit, 3904 Eldridge, 2 family, garage, lower level, 2 br., living, dining, kitchen. Upstairs 1 br., living rm., kitchen, 586-634-2502.

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Take a look back at the year 2020 and the news we experienced

Continued from page 6

Most of the new graffiti was concentrated in the Jos. Campau business district. About 20 businesses were hit.

For a few seconds, cooped-up Hamtramckans got a break from the monotony of quarantining.

The famed Blue Angels did a flyover in downtown Detroit one morning, and they made a turn right over Hamtramck.

The PNC Bank parking lot on Caniff Ave. proved to be a good viewing station, as the planes seemed to fly almost directly above it, before heading back downtown.

The flyover, involving seven U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet aircrafts, was in honor of hospital frontliners. The Blue Angels had been performing flyovers of cities that had been hardest hit with COVID-19.

It was called “America Strong” – a show of thanks to those working in hospitals.

Voting in the August and November elections got easier and safer.

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson announced that, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all registered voters would automatically get absentee ballot applications for both elections.

“By mailing applica-

tions, we have ensured that no Michigander has to choose between their health and their right to vote,” Benson in a press release. “Voting by mail is easy, convenient, safe,



The annual Hamtramck Labor Day Festival was canceled – again, thanks to COVID concerns.

and secure, and every voter in Michigan has the right to do it.”

Voting by absentee ballot later became a hotly debated national issue over whether it had led to fraud.

Yet another tradition was nullified by COVID. This time it was the annual Hamtramck Labor Day Festival.

Organizers said they had to make the hard decision, because the virus kept spreading.

It was also feared that, even if the event was held, very few people would have attended.

Next year, perhaps? So far, there appears to be no letup of the virus.

Hang on to those face masks, folks.

Desperate financial times for the city called for desperate action.

And how the city sur-

vives into the future, financially, would depend on voters.

Acting on a suggestion by the city administration, the city council agreed to ask for voter-approval of a millage to cover the cost of the police and fire pensions.

The city was collecting a half mill for the cost, but that raised only a little over \$103,000 a year.

The city’s actual cost is over \$2.2 million a year, which comes out of the city’s general budget.

To cover the actual cost, the city sought to levy up to 10.5 mills, which could be adjusted down if pension costs decreased, or if another revenue stream was found.

Spoiler alert: The millage failed miserably.

JUNE

Hamtramck was set to go hi-tech. As in, its parking meters.

The city agreed to hire Municipal Parking Services to install new parking meters up and down Jos. Campau, as well in the city’s two municipal parking lots.

The new parking fees will now be roughly double the old ones, at \$1 an hour, as opposed to the old 25 cents per 30 minutes.

Leave it to Hamtramck to have a sense of humor about the ongoing



Hamtramck has always had a sense of humor, even if it sometimes runs a little on the dark side. Someone dressed up as a “Plague Doctor” and picked up trash throughout the city. Their identity was never revealed.

COVID crisis.

Someone dressed as a “plague doctor” from the 1600s was seen picking up trash around town.

No one knew the identity of the person, and he/

she mysteriously disappeared from public view.

Considering the amount of litter in town, the job probably became too depressing.

For a moment, it appeared the COVID pandemic was receding. Gov. Whitmer allowed bars and restaurants to re-open, which they remained for the summer.

But the virus roared back with a vengeance in the fall, and the governor was forced once again to shut down those businesses. The closures presently will extend to Jan. 15.

Hamtramck joined the growing list of communi-

Abraham Aiyash, who appeared to be the lead candidate for the position, said that African Americans have long suffered, ever since they came over as slaves.

“For 400 hundred years, black Americans have had a knee on their neck,” Aiyash said.

He also advocated for the defunding of police departments, which has become a much-talked-about proposal, and for the diverting of those financial sources into schools and low-income housing.

Aiyash eventually did win the election.

Although the city’s budget was in deficit spending mode, alley repairs continued.

In fact, a majority of city councilmembers decided to double down on the repairs, and not only restored the budget for them, but increased the expenditure.

Last year, the city earmarked \$200,000 for repairs, but this year City Manager Kathy Angerer canceled the program because the city was facing a financial crisis.

The city council decided to override that decision, and agreed to expand the program up to \$500,000.

The proposal came from Councilmember Mohammed Hassan, who said that the city could dip further into its budget surplus, which the city was already doing to balance this year’s budget.

Councilmember Nayeem Chowdhury also supported Hassan’s proposal, saying that, although the city is in financial trouble, residents “deserve better.”

That’s it for this week. Come back next week for Part Two of our Year in Review.

ties protesting police brutality.

On a Sunday evening, about 100 people gathered in front of Alladin restaurant on Conant Ave., and then marched several blocks to Zussman Park, located in front of city hall.

During the walk, the crowd held signs, and chanted what has become a standard refrain: “No justice, no peace.”

Joining the speakers at city hall were local elected officials and candidates seeking the state representative seat that includes Hamtramck in its district.



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