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Hamtramck

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— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —



Time to take a break and look back: Year in Review – Part Two

By Charles Sercombe

This week we highlight the news happenings from July through December.

JULY

A familiar face was appointed as interim city manager.

In a special city council meeting, Max Garbarino was tapped to fill that position.

Garbarino had been serving as the city's director of community safety and services.

Former City Manager Kathy Angerer had announced her resignation, effective July 15.

Garbarino is the city's former police chief.

Garbarino's salary was set at \$10,000 a month, and he would continue to receive his current benefit package.

In the meantime, the council also set into motion a request for proposals from search companies to find "qualified and experienced city managers" to apply for the job.

The council later decided to skip hiring an outside search company, and instead conduct the search themselves. The position is still posted on



Max Garbarino was tapped as interim city manager while the city council and mayor search for a new city manager. So far, no appointment has been made.

the city's website. There is Jan. 10 deadline for candidates to apply for the job.

Poetry was in the air on a July Saturday afternoon. The first cultural event in what was called "Our City Series" kicked off in the Rose Garden area of



The city's cultural series kicked off with a poetry reading at Immaculate Conception's Rose Garden.

Immaculate Conception Church, and was sponsored by the Hamtramck Arts and Cultural Commission.

About 50 people came out on a blistering hot day, but they were able to sit under a tent and in a

largely shaded yard. Several readers presented poetry and other writings. They represented the ethnic make-up of the city: Yemeni, Bangladeshi, Polish, Ukrainian and more.

The first reader was Hamtramck's own Mayor Ameer Ghalib. The mayor, a practicing nurse by trade, is a writer of poetry himself, but he chose instead to read a poem by fellow Yemeni, Dr. Abdulaziz Almakaleh.

Matt Wyszczelski became Hamtramck's new fire chief. He had risen up through the ranks, over the past two dozen years, to the position he now holds.

He told The Review that "The one big thing I bring to the job as fire chief is that I came directly from the floor to the chief's office.

"What this means is

that, up until I became chief, I was a captain, riding the rig and responding to fires with the crews. This allows me to see things now from both perspectives: what is happening in the field, and with the administrative side of things."

Hamtramck recorded its first two homicides for the year.

A 25-year-old Hamtramck man and a 24-year-old Detroit woman were found shot dead inside an apartment at the Hamtramck Housing Commission.

Multiple shell casings were found at the site, suggesting that the weapon used was an automatic gun.

The housing apartment complex is located off the southbound service drive



Hamtramck firefighter Matt Wyszczelski got a promotion to chief of the department.

of I-75. The shooting occurred in among the back units of the complex, near to Oklahoma St.

Police were seeking two black male suspects, who fled in a silver or gray newer-model Dodge Durango.

Police declined to comment on a possible motive for the shootings.

"At this time, police believe this was not a random incident," said Police Chief Anne Moise, in a press release.

The case is still under investigation, and anyone with information about the matter is asked to call (313) 800-5280.

Hamtramck's community television channel got up and running.

Well... sort of.

Greg Kirchner, who was put in charge of organizing the channel, said at the time that there would be limited programming on WHPL (Comcast) Channel 19 during this introductory period.

But, here's what Kirchner had to say about the ultimate plans for the channel:

"Some of the content we would like to broadcast includes: council meeting highlights; commission meeting highlights; library programs for adults and for children; story times for young kids; events sponsored by local organizations.

"Also, school events; sports events; social gatherings; informational videos prepared by governmental entities; opinions expressed by residents and business owners; debates and discussions on local issues; performances by local musicians and artists.

"Additionally, one or more game show(s); local news; a calendar of events; speeches by political leaders; lectures by intellectual personalities; interviews with both locals and visitors; and more."

Kirchner further explained that the focuses will be to "serve as a communication hub for our community; promote Hamtramck; bridge the divide between different ethnic groups; and start a dialogue between residents with a wide spectrum of opinions and habits."

Funding for the ongoing broadcast comes from a grant.

Hamtramck's financial woes received a major fix.

But it was only temporary.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that the state was allocating \$750 million to "underfunded municipal pension systems."

Hamtramck was included in that list of communities.

At a city council meeting, Sue Feinberg, of the Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS), said the city could receive about \$17.6 million.

The city still had to apply for the financial aid, Feinberg said, and it won't come until next summer or so.

"There are a lot of bugs to work out," Feinberg said about the funding source.

City Manager Kathy Angerer said that what monies are coming will boost the city's pension funding, from being at 45 percent to being at 60 percent of what's fully needed.

The city's financial commitment to the pension



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Time to take a break and look back: Year in Review – Part Two

Cont. from front page

fund ate up \$5.7 million out of its total \$18 million budget, or nearly a third.

Angerer, who left the city on July 15 for a new job, welcomed the news.

“We have worked hard to communicate to leaders in Lansing about the challenge of the pension obligation. I am so pleased that the State of Michigan finally recognized (the issue), and the legislature came to agreement to relieve the burden the underfunded pension obligation is for our city and others, and using the one-time available funds to do so,” Angerer told The Review.

“This is so good for Hamtramck. I will leave my tenure as city manager knowing that this problem is on its way to being solved.”

While this was a one-time allocation, according to a state press release, there was still leftover federal funding that could be tapped into again in the future.

Former Mayor Karen Majewski was added to the growing list of local notables having a street renamed in their honor.

Majewski was mayor of Hamtramck for 18 years – tying former Mayor Robert Kozaren for having served in that position for that length of time.

Majewski lost her bid for re-election last November.

City officials and residents gathered across from city hall to unveil an honorary street sign that now sits atop the Winfrey St. sign. The honorary sign reads: and Mayor Karen Majewski Ph.D St.

(Majewski has an academic doctorate degree from the University of Michigan.)

“This is a great honor, and I’m very moved by it,”

Majewski said. “When I was persuaded to run for



The display of a pride flag on a city flagpole once again spurred a debate over the flag.

I was full of apprehension



Former Mayor Karen Majewski had a street across from city hall renamed in her honor. Majewski was mayor for 18 years.

not just about the difficulties of elected office in a city like Hamtramck, but about the ways my life plans, my career, my direc-

tion, would change.

“I was right – my life did profoundly change, and my career did shift direction. But the journey was also a great and challenging gift, and this final gift from the city is a most touching culmination.”

The display of the pride flag was once again an issue in Hamtramck.

It came to light that a pride flag – a symbol for gay rights – was being flown on a city-owned flagpole on Jos. Campau, near Carpenter.

Russ Gordon, chairman of the city’s Human Relations Commission, said he was asked to fly the flag by Timothy Price, who is chairman of the city’s Arts & Cultural Commission.

Gordon has been volunteering to raise money for the 18 flagpoles on Jos. Campau for a number of years, and has also been the one who raises and lowers the flags each year.

Price said, to those opposed to the display: “We have to separate church and state. Hamtramck is a place for all.”

He also reminded elected officials: “(You) represent all the people.”

The display took some city officials by surprise.

On the city’s Facebook page, this notice was posted:

“The City of Hamtramck is aware that there has been much concern over the status of the Pride Flag flown on Jos. Campau in our City. These flag poles and flags are maintained exclusively by the Hamtramck Human Relations Commission whom is a commission of the city, but has authorization to act on this matter independently.

“The City of Ham-

Continued on page 3

This week at the Library . . .

December 30, 2022

Digital Services: Check out the electronic resources you library card grants access to: Transparent Language Online with over 100 languages and deep multi-level coursework to help you attain fluence; Improve your English courses; and LOTE for kids, collection of new and classic children’s tales in over 40 languages. Visit www.hamtramck.lib.mi.us and check out Kanopy, Hoopla and OverDrive under the eResources tab and start exploring.

Adoptive Yoga and Thai Chi: The group exercise sessions at the library will start up again in the second half of January 2023. Check the library column for exercise schedule for the coming year.

Book Suggestion: Romance? Check, Drama? Check, Happy ending? You will have to read it to find out for yourself. Grab a copy of Oliver Higgins Prouty’s novel. “Now, Voyager”, enjoy the emotional crescendos that run throughout and join us on Friday, February 24th at 11:30 am for our Read Up and Meet Up book chat. Sure, that is months away, however, it is a great title for some late night winter reading.

MiLibrary Quest: For parents and teachers of restless teens, we want to let you know that the MiLibraryQuest will be returning this winter with a new theme, a new interactive puzzle to solve , and (of course) some new prizes to win. Sponsored by the Library of Michigan.

Big Library Read: Looking for a story with a bit more action? Give the writings of Elmore Leonard a shot. Although not a Michigan native himself, his family relocated to the Detroit area during his youth and it would be a shame for locals with a taste of crime, thriller, and western fiction to not be familiar with this prolific writer. A number of his stories have been adapted to the big screen or been developed into a series. From “3:10 to Yuma”, and “Justified to Out of Sight” and “Get Shorty”. Nothing says the holidays like a book with bit of grit.

Story Time: Where can you find live, in-person, story time entertainment for your kids? The library, of course! Beginning on January 9th at 4 pm on Mondays, we will be offering up a selection of silly tales that will make your little one’s day.

Game Night: What is better than sitting alone, being bord? Joining us for Game Night at the library, of course. We are serving up something fun each Friday starting January 6th at 4 pm. Stop by and let us know that you have come to play.

ESL Classes in the Library: They will start up again on January 9th for the rest of the 2022-23 school year The ESL classes organized by Horizon School and are held in the library four days a week (Monday to Thursday). There are two sessions with the first staring at 9 am and the second at 11:30 am

Library is located at 2360 Caniff Avenue, Phone (313) 733-6822
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Second Front Page

Time to take a break and look back: Year in Review – Part Two

Continued from page 2

tramck's elected officials and administration were not made aware prior of this specific installation. With that said, we understand that there are very strong views both for and against this flag from our residents.

from the 1960s of targeting primarily African-American neighborhoods for housing demolition.

That demolition was part of a national urban renewal effort to clear out dilapidated housing for redevelopment.



The annual Diversity Festival celebrated the Bangladeshi community.

“We strive to maintain a peaceful welcoming community for all of our residents and visitors here in Hamtramck. The flag will remain in place until further notice. City officials intend to meet at a later time to discuss the ongoing plan for display of this flag.”

According to sources, Mayor Ameer Ghalib, the city's first Yemeni-American to hold this office, had ordered the flag to be removed. The Review reached out to the mayor for comment, and he gave this response:

“The mayor didn't and will not do anything about it. It's not my issue, it's a divisive community issue made by the person who solely decided to rise it in Jos. Campau for the first time from a commission that its main mission is supposed to be bringing people together.”

The pride flag issue had first come up the year before, when a divided city council debated whether to allow it to be flown on the city-owned flag pole in Zussman Park.

The outcry against the flag has come mostly from Muslim community leaders.

By December of next year (2023), the city will have an important milestone to celebrate.

All it will take is the final construction of three more houses to finally put an end to a housing discrimination lawsuit, filed against the city back in the 1970s.

Recently, the city council accepted a \$950,000 grant from Wayne County that will pay for the construction of the houses.

Work is expected to begin next year.

When the houses are completed, the city will have finally met all the terms in the settlement of a lawsuit filed against the city back in the 1970s. The lawsuit, named after one of the plaintiffs, Sarah Garrett, accused city officials

It took decades before a settlement was reached, and it wouldn't be until some more years later that various funding sources would step in to actually help get the housing units built.

Several years ago, it was thought that the city had successfully finished the last of 200 housing units the settlement called for, and there were even celebrations.

But guess what?

The attorney for the plaintiffs counted up the total number of housing units built, and the city was



State Rep. Abraham Aiyash (D-Hamtramck) was re-elected, and was appointed by his colleagues as the House Majority Floor Leader.

still three short of the 200 required units.

Unfortunately for the dozens of plaintiffs, most – if not all – had died by the time any of the housing units were built. Among those deaths was Sarah Garrett herself, the lawsuit's namesake.

AUGUST

State Rep. Abraham Aiyash of Hamtramck was virtually guaranteed a second term.

In the August primary election, he won his newly-drawn district, which now includes the Grosse Pointes, with 4,348 votes.

Aiyash could pretty much count on being re-elected in November, since his district always votes heavily Democratic.

Spoiler alert: He was indeed re-elected.

Two other Hamtramck candidates weren't so fortunate. In fact, they both

mysteriously disappeared from the ballot.

Sam Alasri and Hamtramck City Councilmember Mohammed Alsomiri were eliminated from the ballot as candidates for Wayne County Commissioner in the 3rd district.

That's the seat that Martha Scott has long held, and she was seeking re-election.

Alsomiri told The Review that he believed “someone was behind this.” He added that he suspects it was a politician.

He was correct.

The matter was cleared up by the Wayne County Election Clerk's Office.

A staff member for Martha Scott, Robert Davis, challenged Alasri's and Alsomiri's qualifications to be on the ballot, because they had both failed to fully fill out their affidavits of identity to qualify for office.

They were eventually removed from the ballot by Wayne County Circuit Court Chief Judge Timothy Kenny.

Armani Asad was also a Scott challenger, but he lost his bid to unseat her – as expected, considering that Scott has been long-entrenched in her position.

In the past few years, Scott has actually brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars to Hamtramck, from the county, to improve

more colorful festivals once again took over a portion of Conant Ave.

The Hamtramck Diversity Festival is a yearly celebration of the area's Bangladeshi community, which numbers around 20,000 in an area that includes mostly the eastern edge of Hamtramck, along with the Detroit neighborhood just north and east of the city.

The festival was an explosion of colorful food, native Bengali clothing and jewelry.

Besides offering tastes of Bangladesh, there were a number of performers and bands, some of whom traveled all the way here from Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a smaller country that sits along the eastern border of India. It is home to the eighth largest population in the world, cramming 166 million people into an area about the size of Iowa.

It is also the unfortunate target of frequent devastating floods, being so low-lying; these disasters have been known to kill tens to hundreds of thousands at a time when they occur.

Updating the city's ani-Continued on page 4



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Holy Mass 9 am

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Sunday, December 25Christmas Day

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Sunday, January 1, 2023New Year's Day

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.....9:30am (Polish)

Sunday, January 8, 2023 Epiphany of the Lord

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What's on this coming week?

Historical Museum,
Board of Education meetings,
New Kamal Rahman Show "In My Opinion",
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Children's programs, Motivate Me 313 programs, Foreign Language Programs,
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Time to take a break and look back: Year in Review – Part Two

Continued from page 3

mal ordinance turned out to be no ordinary task.

An issue arose when some in the city's Muslim community noticed that, in a proposed update of the ordinance, the sacrificing of animals is prohibited.

Some in the Muslim community demanded that the city allow such ritual sacrificing because it is a practice that is part of their faith, especially during the Eid holiday.

"We want to practice our religion," said one resident, at a recent city council meeting.

But another resident, a non-Muslim, objected to the practice.

"This practice, while sacred to some, would be extremely offensive and traumatizing to others," she said.

Others also objected, saying that slaughtering goats and other animals in backyards could cause health and vermin hazards from spilled blood, animal feces, or from entrails and carcasses sitting out in garbage cans.

City Attorney James Allen said there was precedent for the council to legally allow the sacrificing of animals for religious reasons, if it chose.

In 1993, the US Supreme Court ruled that religious animal sacrifices are allowed and protected under the First Amendment that, in part, provides that

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise."

Councilmember Moham-



The issue of whether to allow the slaughtering of animals for a religious observance was debated throughout the year and remains unresolved.

med Hassan, who is a Muslim – as are the entire rest of the council, and the mayor – suggested a compromise, by allowing the slaughtering of animals in a designated location in the city.

Councilmember Nayeem Choudhury, who was on the sub-committee revising the ordinance, argued that the city should allow animal sacrificing in order to make "accommodations" for those of the Muslim faith.

Goats, lambs or chickens are the most frequent-

ly sacrificed animals.

The resignations of City Manager Kathy Angerer and City Attorney James Allen left the mayor and some councilmembers confused.

At a council meeting, Mayor Ameer Ghalib wondered out loud whether they were resigning because of him being elected as mayor – as well as there being some new councilmembers – or if there was something he or the council did.

"It was surprising to us that you are leaving," Ghalib said. "Nothing happened from us. We had no intention of firing anyone."

Angerer said that the mayor and council had nothing to do with her decision to take another job.

Angerer is now working for the state Department of Agriculture as a deputy director.

"It's been a good 10

The party was held at a sort of homemade park area at St. Aubin and Carpenter. It was geared toward both kids and adults, and featured plenty of grilled food, along with potluck dishes brought by attendees.

Kids had plenty of games to play, and, of course, took part in face painting because, well, that's a huge kid thing.

Hamtramck firefighters stopped by with their trucks, and kids and adults got to gawk at the trucks and ask all sorts of questions.

The get-together made one wonder: why can't the city have more of these homegrown events?

SEPTEMBER

After several weeks of putting off a vote on whether to grant a tax break for the development of the former Missant property, the



Another city cultural event was held at a homemade park on Carpenter and St. Aubin.

years.... Hamtramck is in a good spot," she said. "I don't think I would have resigned two years ago, because I don't think we were in that spot."

She added: "I'm not leaving because of any one of you. Some opportunities come to you that put a smile on your face."

Allen also stressed that city officials had nothing to do with his decision.

"I've had zero friction," he said.

But Allen said he has been faced with an on-

city council agreed to the deal.

At a city council meeting, the council voted 4-2 in favor of granting a 10-year tax abatement to 8801 Conant Holdings, LLC.

The company plans to demolish any decrepit buildings on the 25-acre site, and then lease it to Zbox Global, LCC, an e-commerce company that specializes in selling truck equipment.

A new building will be constructed at the site as well.



A tax abatement was granted to allow the redevelopment of the former Missant plant site on Conant.

slaught of criticism from some community members, and has felt like "you're walking with a target on your back."

Ghalib said he is confident that the city "will keep running."

Once again, the Arts and Culture Commission came up with another winner for Hamtramck.

The commission's block party was a great success, despite a later threat of rain.

The abatement will freeze the property taxes at their current rate, which is about \$60,000 a year.

The council had been split 3-3 over this issue for several weeks, until Councilmember Adam Albarmaki changed his position and voted for the abatement.

Albarmaki said that, after talking with various people, he decided that "we want to send a clear message to investors to come to

Continued on page 5



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(313) 591-7423

Dickinson East Elementary
3385 Norwalk
(313) 591-7406
K – 6th Grades

Dickinson West Elementary
2333 Burger
(313) 591-7407
K – 6th Grades

Early Childhood Elementary
11680 McDougall
(313) 591-7410
Pre K – 2nd Grades

Holbrook Elementary
2361 Alice
(313) 591-7408
K – 8th Grades

Tau Beta School
3056 Hanley
(313) 591-7409
K – 8th Grades

Kosciuszko Middle School
2333 Burger
(313) 591-7405
7th – 8th Grades

Hamtramck High School
11410 Charest
(313) 591-7401
9th – 12th Grades

Horizon School
3225 Caniff
(313) 591-7404
9th - 12th Grades



Time to take a break and look back: Year in Review – Part Two

Cont. from page 4

Hamtramck.”

He added: “This (tax abatements) is something common in the state of Michigan.”

Councilmembers Mohammed Alsomiri and Khalil Refai were opposed to the deal, and had counter-offered a tax break for six years instead of 10. That proposal was rejected by fellow councilmembers.

The site, located on Conant near the county jail on Hamtramck Dr., has been vacant for years and had turned into an eyesore. The current owner of the site promises to not only raze the old buildings, but also to install landscaping.

As it turned out, the parade was a huge, and fun, success.

As for the Hamtramck Labor Day Festival: It was



Councilmember Adam Albarmaki resigned from council because of work obligations. He was one-year into his four-year term.

Turns out Hamtramck doesn't need no stinkin' Polish Day Parade.

The Labor Day Festival committee decided to throw their own parade, after being told by the organizers of the Polish Day Parade that they were no longer going to participate in the yearly tradition.

This year, the festival and parade were going to be extra-special. Parade co-organizer Jessica Urban explained:

“Being that it is Hamtramck's 100th Birthday, we decided to organize a special parade to commemorate the city's centennial history.

“We have reached out to many current organizations, as well as organizations that have been active in Hamtramck's history.”

The parade's Grand Marshal was Hamtramck's own Vera Burk, who was 94 years old. Burk has been part of numerous city commissions and organizations for many years.

Many residents knew her as having been president of the Hamtramck Block Club Association, as well as for her role as a city code enforcer.

Burk was also a member of the city's Human Relations Commission.

Burk, an African-American, has also long fought for civil rights, and was part of the fight against housing discrimination here in Hamtramck.

She has also been active in the Hamtramck Community Initiative, and is President of the Sarah Garrett Park.

tion.

To beef up election security in the state, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson created an \$8 million fund for local and county com-

munities to tap into to prepare for the election.

“My administration has worked with election clerks and law enforcement across the state to ensure they have the information



The annual “canoe race” during the Hamtramck Labor Day Festival was once again wild and wet.

and resources they need to protect voters and their rights, and voters can cast their ballot tomorrow confident they will be safe and their vote will be counted,” Benson said in a press release.

“We will not tolerate any voter suppression or election interference attempts in Michigan.”

In Hamtramck, City Clerk Rana Faraj said that security had not been much of an issue.

“Other than some campaigners harassing my door people, I can't think of anything at the moment,” Faraj told The Review.

For a city that's only two-square miles, Hamtramck has a lot of tax-exempt properties.

In response to a Review Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, the

city listed 229 buildings, municipal-owned parking lots, places of worship, schools, veteran posts, a county jail, vacant lots, and more, that Hamtramck does not collect property taxes from.

In total, there are about 7,000 properties in Hamtramck, most of which do produce property taxes.

Property taxes are no small matter. The city was projecting to collect \$6.6 million in such tax monies during the year.

That chunk of change is the largest revenue source for the city. The next highest amount of revenue comes from state revenue sharing, at \$4.5 million, followed by income taxes at \$2.3 million.

The City of Hamtramck itself is the biggest single owner of properties that do not pay taxes, which includes buildings such as city hall, the fire station,

press release, saying that the HPS teachers' union (the Hamtramck Federation of Teachers) had agreed to the deal.

“We hope passionate and compassionate educators apply for the open positions, and take advantage of the opportunity to advance their own education,” said Interim Superintendent Nabil Nagi in the press release.

The positions the district sought to fill included school psychologist, school social worker and speech pathologist.

“Candidates can hold endorsements for cognitive impairment, learning disabilities and/or emotional impairment, or be teachers who are in a degree program earning an Autism endorsement,” the press release said.

The Hamtramck Public School District wasn't alone in offering hiring incentives.

The City of Hamtramck offers a \$1,000 bonus for those who are hired into the police department.

The money, however, is restricted to the covering the purchase of uniforms.

The department has a long history of officers leaving for greener pastures in other communities. The incentives are usually better pay and better working conditions.

At a city council meeting, it was explained, in a note to the council, that:

“The ability of police agencies to recruit, hire and retain qualified police candidates has been a dif-



Wayne State University students displayed their finding from this year's archeological dig.

ficult task throughout the country.

“Quite often, even if candidates are hired, they receive extensive training and ultimately move on to

other agencies for a variety of reasons but often for monetary reasons.”

OCTOBER

It didn't look like much: Just a sea of tall weeds littered with broken bottles, pieces of smashed china and a wide variety of things that most of us would just call trash.

But, to a group of Wayne State University students, those are keys to the past. And they can open doors that have been locked for years – more than 100 years, in this case.

The 13 students (plus a handful of volunteers), armed with shovels, spades, measuring tape, markers and whatever else they needed to carefully dig into and document the past, explored what may have been the richest archeological site in Hamtramck.

“What we've learned, through preliminary archival research thus far, is that this site was the location of commercial and residential buildings, from at least 1881 onwards,” said Krysta Ryzewski, WSU chairperson and professor of anthropology at Wayne State, who was directing the students.

“There is a record from 1881 of a barn, possibly a railroad barn, where 33 Polish immigrants were living in squalor, in cramped quarters, because they were poor, and housing was unavailable. So, there's the potential to learn about the experiences of the early wave of

City of Hamtramck Notice of Public Hearing

Zoning Board of Appeals

NOTICE is hereby given that the city of Hamtramck Zoning Board of Appeals will conduct a public hearing in the 2nd Floor Council Chambers of Hamtramck City Hall (3401 Evaline Street, Hamtramck, MI 48212) on **January 17th, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.** Public comments will be limited to three minutes. Public comments may also be heard by submitting a written comment to CED Coordinator at afarrell@hamtramckcity.com.

The subject of the hearing is: Applicant Architectural Planners Inc. is requesting a variance to the zoning ordinance section 155.080(D)(4) and 155.114(C)(2) for address 9531 Buffalo Street, Hamtramck. Parcel # 41-008-02-0025-301. Proposed new construction building does not meet side yard setback and parking stall length requirements.

The City of Hamtramck will provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids, and services for individuals with disabilities at the public hearing upon advance notice by writing or by calling the Clerk's Office at 313-800-5233 x343. Please contact the Clerk's office at least 10 days in advance.

The Hamtramck Review

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Time to take a break and look back: Year in Review – Part Two

Cont. from page 5

Campau. The property is owned by Hamtramck Recycling, which had agreed to allow the students to do the dig.

“The Denton Street site is part of the Old Hamtramck Center,” Ryzewski said. “The historic buildings had been lost to the expansion of industrial facilities in the area.”

Blame it on a lack of concrete.

That was the reason why Evaline, between Jos. Campau and Gallagher, had been blocked off for over a month.

That portion of the street had gotten its old lead water lines leading to the homes replaced, a job that had been completed weeks prior.

But, because of a concrete shortage, there was a delay in the reopening of the street.

“This is an ongoing thing with supply and demand,” said Bill Diamond, the Director of Public Services.

The 12th annual Hamtramck Neighborhood Arts Festival and the ongoing “Our City Series” took place on a Saturday.

The Neighborhood Arts Festival was spread throughout various locations in town, which included houses, porches, galleries, art studios and just about anywhere else you could imagine.

Some of the highlights included:

- A jug band perfor-

- mance at Hamtramck Disneyland (6-7 p.m.)
- Hamtramck’s art collaborative, Hatch, which hosted 16 Detroit area artists and their works.
 - 9398 Mitchell (just past Bumbo’s), which featured sculpture and live funk music
 - Henna body art – a Southeast Asian folk art – which was offered at 10225 Jos. Campau
 - Popp’s Packing on Carpenter featured the works of Faina Lerman
 - The Ukrainian American Archives & Museum (9630 Jos. Campau) featured the artwork of R. Baranyk

The city council considered beefing up code enforcement.

Instead of the city’s code inspectors first issuing a warning notice, Councilmember Mohammed Alsomiri proposed skipping the warning and instead immediately issuing a violation.

Violations would come with a financial penalty. Misdemeanor tickets could be as much as \$500.

Councilmember Khalil Refai, who is a city code enforcer, said that issuing warnings can sometimes create problems, or additional work for workers.

Councilmember Nayeem Choudhury said that not giving a warning first will “backfire,” because a number of people work long hours and are not home much.

“People should be allowed to clean up,” he said.

The American culture



The city has over 200 properties, including empty lots, that are not generating property taxes.

For about two years, during the height of the covid pandemic, the state forbade communities from shutting off water service because of non-payment.

That ban came to an end in October, and Hamtramck was poised to turn off water to about 500 households.

But, since word got around that shutoffs were coming, Interim City Manager Max Garbarino said that most of those homeowners have ponied up what they owe.

He said there were just over 100 households holding out.

There’s still a helping hand available for those struggling to meet water bills.

Wayne County offers a program called WRAP (Water Residential Assistance Program) that helps

financially-stressed households.

Some Hamtramck Yemeni-American residents were urging voters to switch political parties over growing cultural issues involving LGBTQ and abortion rights.

Councilmember Adam Albarmaki recently told Hamtramck voters to vote straight Republican on a Facebook page called “Hamtramck Square.”

He also urged voters to reject state Proposal 3, which would ensure the right of women to get an abortion, but he faced criticism from some, who accused him of spreading misinformation about the proposal.

He spoke of the Democrats as having a “sinful agenda.”

He joined a small – but possibly growing number – of Arab-Americans who have recently been upset

by LGBTQ books being in school libraries, particularly in the Dearborn Public School District.

The backlash against Albarmaki was immediate – so much so, that he deleted his posts from Facebook.

In an explanation to The Review as to why he deleted his posts, he said:

“I was expressing my feelings toward a political party. I am not against any specific group. I learned a great deal while researching Proposal 2 and 3. There is a lot of propaganda and misinformation going around in the community. I am not here to tell people how to cast their votes.

“Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and should utilize their right to vote. Our council is non-partisan, so as long as we are working as a team for the city we can disagree on state and federal matters. I deleted my post to avoid divisiveness.”

While there seemed to be a growing call for Arab-Americans to vote Republican, nationwide about 70 percent of Arab voters vote Democratic.

There are about two million Arab-Americans who live in the U.S., according to the Census. About 500,000 Arab-Americans

She said one issue to be considered is whether a councilmember has to provide proof that their absence is legitimate.

“We don’t have anything to work with,” Jaczkowski said.

Councilmember Nayeem Choudhury took Hassan and Albarmaki to task.

“We choose to be on council,” he said. “If you want to be a good councilmember, you want to be here.”

In the end, the council agreed with Jaczkowski, and tabled the issue indefinitely to work out a policy.

A month later, Albarmaki resigned from the council because of work obligations.

Hamtramck voters stuck with Democrats, as well as supporting women’s right to have an abortion in results from the November election.

Democrats, in fact, also received support across the state from voters who also supported abortion rights in Michigan.

Not surprisingly, Hamtramck’s own State Rep. Abraham Aiyash (D) won his second term. His newly-drawn district, which includes Hamtramck, was expected to vote heavily Democratic.

Aiyash was later chosen



Parents and others attended a school board meeting to discuss their concerns about what reading materials are available to students.

live in Michigan, the highest number of any state.

NOVEMBER

Work and school duties proved to be a problem for city councilmembers Mohammed Hassan and Adam Albarmaki.

Both missed a number of meetings during the year. For Hassan, it was work obligations, and for Albarmaki it was a triple-whammy of trying to balance work, school and city council duties.

Their absences raised a question of what constitutes an excused absence from attending a meeting.

The city council struggled with this issue after Councilmembers Hassan and Albarmaki asked for their previous absences to be officially excused.

The question raised was: do councilmembers have to tell someone on council, before a meeting, that they can’t make it, or can an absence be excused later?

The council spoke at length on the subject, with Councilmember Amanda Jaczkowski saying “It’s silly to look backwards.”

Instead, she said the council needed to settle the matter going forward.

by his colleagues to be the House majority floor leader.

It is his job to coordinate and schedule legislative plans, as well as to keep taking the pulse on what his party members think about the issues being considered.

Aiyash is the first Muslim to hold this position.

For the first time in 40 years, voters supported the Democratic governor with a Democratic majority in the state legislature.

The American culture war on what kinds of reading material should be available to school kids came to Hamtramck.

The Hamtramck Public School District posted a letter to the community, on its Facebook page, saying that a separate posting on a social media site erroneously claimed that the district allows students to access “certain materials for our students that contain inappropriate language, images, and concepts that are inappropriate for our students.”

The district did not provide further details on the material in question, nor the social media site

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