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First Ward News -- Sabra Briere, Ann Arbor City Council.
On the agenda, updates and what's on the horizon.



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Survey Survey Survey

Dear neighbors,

You may have noticed that there's yet another [survey](#) linked to this report. I hope you aren't tired of these surveys. I use the information you provide as a reality check -- for me, other members of Council, and the staff. Your responses help guide policy. The last survey, on transportation and the budget, resulted in this [report](#). If you haven't looked at the responses yet, or you want a reminder, I've posted the report on my [website](#).

Last December the Council appointed me to the Environmental Commission. Although we may all consider ourselves environmentalists, I'll cheerfully admit that this isn't my area of expertise. But because I'm on this commission, I've been taking a crash course in the impact we have on the environment while looking at the affect of local laws and policies. Right now members of the Environmental Commission are reviewing the 2002 - 2007 Solid Waste Plan -- the plan that brought us single-stream recycling and reduced leaf and Christmas tree pickup. The staff aren't ready yet to survey the public -- but I am. Over the next two months (April and May) I'll have a short survey attached to each newsletter. All the surveys will remain live for two weeks. This [survey](#) is about how we shop -- and what we do with the stuff we discard. If you are

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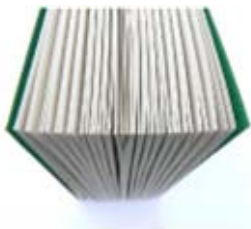


Coffee wakes some of us up

I hold office hours 7:30 to 9 am on Mondays at the Northside Grill.

While I'm there, I meet with neighbors from all over our community to discuss the issues that concern them -- potholes, parks, trash pickup, construction noise, planning, zoning, City staffing and changes they like or don't like.

The folks at the Northside put up with political talk early in the morning. If you see me there, please wave, and if you have time, please, join me for coffee and a chat.



interested in the City's current environmental goals, in the current Solid Waste Plan, or in learning more about our community's commitment to environmental issues, here's a [link](#) to the City's webpages on the environment. The **Ann Arbor Chronicle** ran a [series of articles](#), written by City staff, about environmental issues, too.

One of the goals I have in sending out surveys is to increase the feedback on issues that I receive from you. It's easy for me to assume I have my finger on the pulse of Ann Arbor -- I read the Chronicle and AnnArbor.com, including the comments, I go to many meetings, and I make myself available for phone or face meetings. But if I were to think that means I know how you feel, I'd risk thinking I know the answers. I just want to know the right questions. Thank you all for sending your feedback and survey responses. I really appreciate it.

On the [Agenda](#)

Ordinances and Resolutions, Public hearings

The City Council will hold public hearings on two site plans (these are RESOLUTIONS) and one ORDINANCE.

Ordinances, Public Hearing and Second Reading

The City Council will hear a [proposed amendment to the "parking ordinance"](#) language in Chapter 59, Title V of the City Code. One of the changes proposed is to alter the parking requirements for new construction in D1 and D2 (the new 'downtown' zoning districts). From the report: "Special Parking District Options - The intent of the proposed modification to Section 5:169 (Special Parking Districts) is to improve flexibility of providing off-street parking in the newly created D1 and D2 zoning districts. The modification adds an option for developers to meet their off-street parking requirements by execution of a contract for parking permits within the City's public parking system."

The change would allow a developer to lease all or some required parking from the City or make a cash payment in lieu of building parking. There's a related [resolution](#) on the same issue, establishing the Contribution in Lieu of Parking policy.

Resolutions with Public Hearings

There are two public hearings on site plans. (Site plans do not require ordinance changes, but still need to be approved by the City

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I'm re-reading some of the articles in [The Localization Reader: Adapting to the Coming Downshift](#), edited by Raymond De Young and Thomas Princen.

As part of my self-imposed educational plan -- about the environment -- I'm particularly interested in climate change, and how our community could adjust to changing circumstances.

Some of the stuff I read is so grim it's like reading dystopian science fiction. But as we see increasing chaotic weather patterns and increasing fuel costs, I have to think about the repercussions of any climate change for our community. I'm eager to hear your thoughts on this, as well.

Caucus

The City Council holds a caucus meeting each Sunday prior to a Council meeting. This meeting is an opportunity for members of Council to discuss agenda items -- and pending issues - - with each other in public view. Members of the public are welcome to attend to bring issues to the attention of Council members. I go to almost all Caucus

Council.) One is on a commercial building (Noodles on West Stadium) and the other is on a unique building near Argo Park [Les Voyageurs](#). The City Council rezoned this site to Planned Unit Development (PUD) a month ago.

Ordinances, First Reading

The City Council will take up, at First Reading, ordinances that would

- amend the traffic code (creating a new level of enforcement for those driving while impaired with **blood alcohol above .17**);
- amend the streets and sidewalk code to clarify sidewalk occupancy permit dates;
- amend retiree benefits ordinances to reflect new contracts and allow staff to 'opt-in' (three separate ordinances);

There is also an ordinance revision, proposed by the Medical Marijuana Licensing Board, to the ordinance governing medical marijuana licensing. Related to that is a resolution requesting that the City Council send the Medical Marijuana Zoning ordinance to Planning Commission for review and amendments. (I sit on the Medical Marijuana Licensing Board, and sponsor both the ordinance revision and the resolution.)

Resolutions

Old Business: The City Council has postponed voting on a resolution to direct the City Attorney to limit enforcement of the Medical Marijuana ordinances. This item returns to the agenda.

New Business: The Council will consider two other Council-sponsored resolutions: one that directs staff to [recalculate the TIF capture by the DDA](#) and one that directs the City Attorney to provide a [written opinion on using street millage dollars to fund public art](#). **Steve Kunselman** has drafted both of these resolutions. And as long as we're thinking about public art: The Council will consider approving a contract to [design, build and install a piece of public art](#) for the lobby of the Courts/Police building.

(You may remember that this is an issue about which I feel strongly.) The proposed \$150,000 budget was approved as part of the Police/Courts building plan; the funding is proposed to come from those funds allocated to public art from the construction of the Police/Courts building. I have, in the past, been skeptical about the art -- and in this case, I remain so. The location proposed for the [art](#) is pretty inaccessible to the public. The windows are tinted, so in daylight it would be difficult to see from outside. Lobby access is

meetings.

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restricted, and one cannot enter without surrendering one's camera or camera-phone. Each person entering must pass through a port-like screening. This creates -- I believe -- a hostile atmosphere for those of us who might want to see the art. There are better, more public locations for art that have not been seriously considered.



Surveys

[Solid Waste Survey #1](#) -- how we buy and what we do with the stuff we no longer want

[Transit and Budget Survey report](#)

The Council may approve a contract for street resurfacing. The streets to be resurfaced can change, but right now the plan is to work on [these](#).

The Council will consider [submitting a request to MiDOT](#) to reconfigure Jackson Road between Maple and Revena, **reducing the number of lanes to three (3)**.

Of course, there's other business to conduct. The City Council will vote on street closings and on whether to purchase an additional four (4) vehicles for the Police Department. I only highlight a few issues. Here's a link to the entire [agenda](#).



Talking about the Budget

The Council will hold its third working session related to the budget on April 9th. The DDA will present their budget as will the Ann Arbor Housing Commission. The full budget (in draft form) should be presented to Council at the April 16th meeting.

The final (proposed) budget will be presented on May 14th at a working session.

Many of us would like to see



Care to participate? Did you already participate?

The parks and open space millage expires this year. Staff are recommending that this millage be renewed. To learn more and to voice your opinion, please go to one of these meetings:

- Monday, April 9, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Ann Arbor Senior

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the City able to hire more police and fire personnel remain hopeful that, if this isn't in the proposed budget, the Council will amend the budget in order to free some funds up for new position. I am happy the City is currently filling vacant positions, but I'd also like to see the practice of leaving those positions vacant decrease in the future.

Were you interested in setting priorities for City spending? Here's a [link](#) to a chart of your responses from the Transit and Budget survey you filled out in March.

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- **Wednesday, April 11,** from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Cobblestone Farm Center, 2781 Packard Road.
- **Monday, April 23,** from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Leslie Science & Nature Center's Nature House, 1831 Traver Road.
- **Thursday, April 26,** from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Ann Arbor District Library Traverwood Branch, 3333 Traverwood Drive.

The DDA conducted a survey for the Connecting William Street project. Here's a link to the [survey overview](#) and another to the [raw results](#). Let me know what you think about the project.

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