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What's on the Agenda, update on Streets and Sidewalk millages, results of the recycling survey..



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Dear neighbors,

The picture (above) shows Plymouth Park and the effects of the recent rainfall and resulting mudslide across Plymouth Road. This park is currently closed while the City works with the County and State. What's the delay? Across Plymouth Road is more of Plymouth Park, but a section that is dedicated as wetland. The entire wetland was damaged when the soil under the railroad bed became saturated by the May rains, and blew out. Although the tracks are again supported by a new bed, the wetlands have to be recreated. Right now, the area where the wetlands were is dirt and a few uprooted trees. As a result, it doesn't hold water effectively.

This is the type of unforeseen problem that City budgets simply don't effectively address.

## Recycling

Many of you responded to the recent survey on recycling and RecycleBank. I provided all members of City Council with the [results](#). Some found the information more compelling than others.

The Council voted to increase the funding for RecycleAnnArbor by \$0.30 per cart (from \$1.25 to \$1.55 per week. My change of heart was caused by my realization that the rate per cart is based upon how many carts are out there, not how many are used in any given week (the dollar amount needed divided by the number of carts

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deployed). Because the City admits that it provided incorrect information about how it works, it's hard to say there's a good reason why we should have used the wrong figures to set its rates. We need to accept responsibility for our mistakes.

At the same time, I think it's clear that most people who can are simply not using RecycleBank coupons, and that the value of the coupons as an incentive to recycle more effectively is limited. At \$150,000 per year (right now, but able to increase over the next 9 years), I don't believe this is an effective program. Other members of Council want to wait to see if you and your neighbors will recycle more if offered coupons.

The vote to recind the contract with RecycleBank was postponed to September 19th. Please contact me with any questions, and tell me what you think of this program!

### Streets and Sidewalk millage

I had planned to discuss the Streets and Sidewalk millages that the Council placed on the ballot at the last Council meeting. However, I just can't. I've looked over the figures on fund balances and expenses, and I'm not confident yet about what I'm seeing.

I know we need to renew the Streets millage. These funds are vital to maintain the street resurfacing program. And no matter how much you've heard about the poor condition of the streets, they certainly won't improve if there's no money for rebuilding and repaving. I'd like to show you how much the City has spent in the last year from the Streets millage fund, and on which projects. Without that information, there's no good way for you to evaluate what the City has been doing, and why. However, the information I received from the City doesn't actually answer that question in a way that makes me confident I understand. Although I've asked for clarification, I haven't yet received it. Perhaps everyone is on vacation.

The City's staff estimate that we (you and I) spent about \$1.7 million each year of the last 6 years repairing and replacing sidewalk slabs that were considered trip hazards. Before the Council put the sidewalk millage on the ballot, I proposed an amendment that requires staff to draft a change to the ordinance

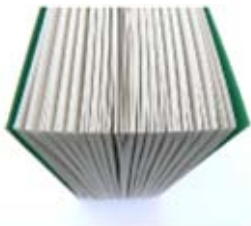


## Coffee wakes some of us up

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

While I'm there, I work on Council business. I enjoy having people stop by to discuss the issues that concern them -- potholes, parks, trash pickup, construction noise, zoning, City staffing and changes they like or don't like. When they bring their children, that's a bonus.

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.



## What am I reading?

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removing specific responsibilities from adjacent property owners.

Council passed this ordinance; if you support the sidewalk millage, individual property owners will no longer be responsible for repair and maintenance of slabs.

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I spend a lot of time reading. I read about other communities, Lansing government, development and planning policy, transportation planning . . .

My current pile of reading includes:

Several papers on climate change and cities.

***The Theory That Would Not Die: How Bayes' Rule Cracked the Enigma Code, Hunted Down Russian Submarines, and Emerged Triumphant from Two Centuries of Controversy,***  
by Sharon McGrayne

I continue to read about zoning and planning.

If the sidewalk millage passes, it will join the streets millage (they will become one fund, not two). The sidewalk millage should bring about \$500,000 annually for sidewalk maintenance. This money will not be used to fix curb cuts (that's being done from another fund).

When I believe I can speak to the details of current spending and the effect of the millage on the budget, I'll bring this up again. I hope to be able to do that just after Labor Day.

## Council meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup>

You may wonder why I don't send these updates out sooner, and give you more time to read and respond. I receive an early version of the agenda on Wednesday, but it tends to be updated several times between Wednesday and Friday evenings. Frequently, members of Council add agenda items on Monday, too. I'd like the information I send to be as complete as possible. Because the agenda changes frequently, here's a [link](#) to the agenda page.

The Council agenda for Monday, August 15 is relatively light. Although this is the silly season (that time in late August when odd issues percolate to the top of the pile) I don't anticipate any major surprises.

## On the Agenda

New ward boundaries will be finalized at Monday's meeting. Changes to the boundaries are all in the downtown area, where the five wards meet. Most of the changes result from a larger population growth here in the First Ward than in the other wards. The actual changes are minor, however (moving a few blocks from one ward to another).

## Bond Sales

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There's an ordinance authorizing the issuance and sale of water supply system revenue bonds (\$7 million) These bonds are planned to finance a portion of the costs of additions and improvements to the City's water distribution system, including the Arbor Oaks Subdivision Water Mains Replacement, Catherine Street 16" Water Main, Dover Court/Collingwood Water Main Replacement, Physical Security Enhancements, and Barton Dam Concrete Repair projects. The Bonds will be sold directly to the Michigan Finance Authority (the "Bond Bank") as part of its Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRf) program. Both the Catherine Street and Barton Dam projects are in the First Ward.

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### Retirement Board

There's a resolution to amend the City Charter in order to alter the composition of the Board of Trustees of the City's Employee Retirement System Board. This charter amendment, if approved, would appear on the November ballot for your vote. Unfortunately, this is a place-holder, and I cannot tell you what the possible change would be.

Sometimes, staff and members of Council put place-holder items on the agenda to provide the public with an idea of what may be coming; because the final language isn't approved, place holder agenda items give us just enough information to be curious. Since this is a ballot issue, I hope to see the final language earlier rather than later tomorrow.

### Loan

There's a resolution to approve an inter-fund loan (from the Pooled Investment Account to the Municipal Center fund) of \$3 million. This loan is being proposed because the Municipal Center fund expected to receive about \$3.2 million from the sale of the First and Washington project. Although the income from the sale is supposed to go into the General Fund, the budget for the Municipal Center project has relied on these funds to meet construction costs. If the the developer of the First and Washington project buys the land, the Council will have to make a further authorization from the General Fund to meet this obligation.

### Medical Marijuana application fee

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There's a resolution authorizing an application fee of \$600 to apply for a Medical Marijuana Dispensary License. This application fee represents the cost of City staff time to evaluate dispensary license applications. It is not the same as a licensing fee. The licensing fee has not yet been determined or discussed at a Council meeting.

### Idle time

There's a resolution authorizing the City Staff to draft an ordinance regarding idling engines. I've received a few comments about this proposal since it appeared on the agenda earlier this week. Here's a [link](#) to the actual proposal. This resolution does not establish the ordinance. Instead, it is asking for support to continue working on the ordinance. I favor education about idling, fuel usage, and pollution. I note that electric and hybrid fuel cars can be in 'idle' without burning gasoline, and that more and more new cars don't need much time to warm up on a cold morning or cool off on a hot one. I'd like to see a serious campaign to provide information about idling. I'm less inclined to ask our police department to issue tickets for this practice.

If you have opinions about this or any other issue on the Council's agenda or that concerns the City, please let me know. Come to office hours or just invite me to talk.

### Shameless political plug

This year no one filed to run against me in either the August primary or the November general election. Of course, I'd like to believe that's because I'm doing my job so well. But whether I am or not, I still need to campaign. There are a number of ballot initiatives for your consideration, and you



### Recycling survey? What recycling survey?

Actually, because I was able to have AnnArbor.com post a link to the recent survey on

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should be able to talk with me about your concerns

Sometimes you come to me, but I'm happy to go to you.

Since the last newsletter, in addition to office hours last Monday, I visited with a resident who had a concern about the State's work on M-14 (the State removed some vegetation, causing an increase in noise in his back yard). I attended a neighborhood party -- not my immediate neighborhood! -- where I was able to discuss several issues as well as eat a fine meal. I attended a reception for the incoming School Superintendent, Patricia Green. I met with the Chief of Police and spoke with several police officers.

On Tuesday, I'll be learning more about the HRWC's plans for the Huron River.

If you and your neighbors would like to talk, I'd like to listen. Please give me a call.



recycling and RecycleBank, over 63 individual surveys. 11 responses came in. I thought hard about pouring over cross-referencing the responding, creating my own charts, and itemizing the more interesting comments. But in the end, the results were still overwhelming. You can find the basic results [here](#).

If you want, ask for the raw results.

Even better, if you believe the results reflect your experiences, let members of Council know. The City Council voted to postpone deciding about whether to continue funding the Recycle Rewards program -- and they won't address this issue until the second meeting in September (September 19).

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