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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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Dear neighbors,

I know some of us think of Thanksgiving in terms of Christmas (black Friday, catalogues, guests from out of town . . .). For me, Thanksgiving is an excuse to make a feast and invite the neighbors. We've been doing this for over a quarter of a Century. The silver is polished, the rarely-used crystal is out, my collection of antique dinnerware is put on the table for use, and we are all using company manners.

So, I'm a little slow getting this newsletter out to you, but I've been cooking and cleaning.

I hope your Thanksgiving allows you time to be thoughtful and thankful.

On the Agenda

I read through the Agenda and select those items that I think are interesting. Of course, there are always other things on the Agenda – some of which you might want to know more about. Here's the [link to the Agenda](#). Please let me know about any of your concerns.

Ordinances

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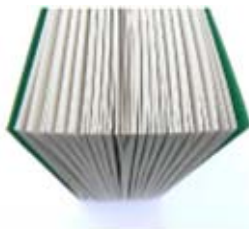


Coffee wakes some of us up

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.



The Pedestrian Crossing ordinance revision and public hearing – postponed until December 19.

When the Council passed the ordinance revision at the November 10th Council meeting, the discussion at the table indicated that the Council wanted to receive a briefing from the staff on pedestrian-controlled crossing lights and other devices that might improve pedestrian and driver safety before voting on the ordinance. Unfortunately, there was no motion; this item was inadvertently placed on the Agenda. However, there will be no public hearing and no vote on Monday, November 21.

Here's a link to the [version of the ordinance](#) that passed First Reading.

There have been repeated articles in AnnArbor.com about safe pedestrian crossing -- and safe driving! If these interest you, you can find them. Here's a link to the coverage in [The Chronicle](#) of the Council meeting at which this item was discussed and another to a [humorous commentary](#).

Percent for Art ordinance revision

I've been working to address some issues related to the Percent for Art program. Sometimes people call this funding program 'public art', but of course, the City has a lot of public art. In the past, most of this art was donated or paid for by private dollars. In 2007, the Council passed the Percent for Art ordinance, which specifies that 1% of the budget for each capital improvement will be placed in an account to use for art acquisition.

Maybe my concern is the amount of money that the Public Art Commission has unspent; maybe it's that art selection by committee always makes me concerned. In one way, my concern is that public dollars spent on art should be specifically for art that will stand the test of time

What am I reading?

Submitting replies?

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-- and not for artistic pavements, as one suggestion has
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I spend a lot of time reading. I read about other communities, Lansing government, development and planning policy, transportation planning . . .

Here's my current and recent reading list:

The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes

by John Forester.
This isn't a new book, but the topic remains timely. The DDA is preparing a community participation plan as part of their mission to develop plans for 5 city-owned parcels in the downtown (the Library Lot, the Old Y lot, the ground floor of the 4th and William parking structure, the Palio's lot and the Kline's lot). The better I understand good participatory planning, the more I can do to help shape the process. I'm attending the meetings of the Partnerships Committee and the subcommittee working on this project.

I was asked to find a compromise between those who want to reject the program funding mechanism and those who want to limit the number and type of capital improvements that qualify for this 1% funding. On Monday, the Council will consider my [proposed amendment](#). At that meeting, there could be changes, or the Council could reject it at First Reading. The Public Art Commission's [annual report](#) is an indication of what they have done and plan to do.,

Rezoning for University Bank (PUD)

University Bank (at the Hoover Mansion) has asked to be rezoned as a PUD. The issues that have delayed approval by the Planning Commission include the driveway from Washtenaw and covered bicycle parking. Here's a link to the [staff report](#). This item is up for First Reading.

Greenbelt Boundary expansion

The Council will consider an ordinance to amend the boundaries of the Greenbelt (adding 3 sections in Salem Township, 7 sections in Lodi Township, and redefining eligible land). Here's a [link to the ordinance](#), which is being heard at First Reading. Note the map -- which I always need to see to understand these things.

Resolutions

Non-Discrimination Ordinance protection

It seems odd to me that the City *needs* to protect the Non-Discrimination Ordinance. You could, legitimately, ask 'what are we protecting it from?' The answer, unfortunately, is legislation being considered in Lansing that would affect certain definitions in our ordinance,

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including gender identity, sexual orientation, and student status. BSS (Sandi Smith and Steve Miller) and Christopher Taylor (Ward 3) are bringing forward [this resolution](#) re-stating the support for Ann Arbor's Non-Discrimination Ordinance.

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Arbor Hills Crossing shopping center, public hearing and site plan

Many developments come to Council as PUDs. This one fits the zoning for the site. The Council will hold a Public Hearing prior to voting (one time) on the site plan.

This shopping center proposal is across Washtenaw from Whole Foods. The proposal shows that most buildings will be no taller than 2 stories, that parking will be interior (rather than fronting Washtenaw) and that the entrance will be off Platt Road as well as off Washtenaw. The developer has also arranged for approval of a stop light at Platt and Washtenaw, as well as crosswalks and a bus stop. Here's a link to the [report](#). The developer has also requested brownfield tax incentive funding.

701 Miller

The City provided a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) to the previous owner of 701 Miller (Parkside Apartments). The property has since been sold to Avalon Housing; the City and Avalon must enter into a new PILOT. Here's the [information on the funding](#).

Argo headrace

The photo in the header is of the new run at Argo. The path isn't open yet, and I haven't walked far onto the berm, but clearly there's been a lot of work. In support of that work, the Council will consider increasing the funding for this project. There's a [resolution on the Agenda](#) to amend the contract so that the entrances into the headrace can be made more attractive and inviting. Don't forget to read the Memorandum of Understanding with DTE, or to look at the attached drawings of the improvements.

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Fuller Bridge repairs

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These days, whenever I see 'Fuller' on the agenda, I become more alert. In this case, there's a [resolution on the Agenda](#) to increase the amount of a contract (by less than \$5,000) in order to fully pay for repairs to the sidewalk on the bridge over the railroad tracks (Fuller at Glen). The City pays for this maintenance, not out of the sidewalk millage, as the bridge is public property.

There are always other issues and events that I don't cover in this Newsletter. On Monday, the City finally breaks ground for the reconstruction of the Stadium Bridges. Later on Monday, representatives of the City will attend an award ceremony -- the City shares in a \$3 million grant for [affordable housing and sustainable development](#). I'll continue to keep you posted on issues that affect our lives.



Talking about the Budget

The City Council will meet -- in either early December or early January -- to talk about the budget for 2012 - 2013. Usually, the Council holds a retreat; sometimes there are two retreats.

Budget issues dominate Council decisions -- and



Thank you

Some part of me feels as if I've just been elected to Council. Another part feels as if I've been doing this for years.

I've just finished my fourth year as your representative on Council. I became involved because I thought neighborhoods were frequently ignored, and that those of us who live here have to cope with decisions of people

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yes, I know it doesn't
always seem like [RSS](#) [translate](#)
But revenues and
expenses are part of
nearly every
consideration. I usually
run a survey based on
what I prepare for or what
I learn at the Council
retreat. I'll do so again
this year. Maybe our
voices will be louder --
the City Council's been
talking a lot about hiring
more safety staff.

who don't always seem to
listen to our concerns
I've become more certain
of my voice on Council,
but also more humbled
by your support.

Thank you for keeping
me aware of your issues
and inviting me to
meetings and events. It
means a lot to me, and
helps me do this job.

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