

HAMTRAMCK STATE OF THE CITY 2012



Welcome, everyone, and thank you for coming to Hamtramck's 2012 State of the City address. Witam. Mire se vini. Merhaba. Dobro dosli. Laskavo prosimo. Shagatom. Welcome.

Let me recognize some of the members of the audience who are with us here today: our elected officials, city council member; our state senator Bert Johnson; our State Representative, John Olumba; our County Commissioner, Martha G. Scott. Please join me in acknowledging our city staff: Acting City Managr Kyle Tertzag, who we welcome to Hamtramck for the first time; Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko; Police Chief Max

Garbarino; Fire Chief Paul Wilk; Department of Public Services Director Steve Shaya; Community and Economic Development Director (and new Hamtramck property owner!) Jason Friedmann; Downtown Manager Darren Grow; City Treasurer Mike Wilk; and a special thank you to our City Clerk, Ed Norris, who will be moving on to another position before the end of this month. In tumultuous times, Ed has been a rock of stability, quietly and competently and professionally doing his job, and making our difficulties a little more bearable. These are the department heads, but under their supervision work many other dedicated individuals who keep things running smoothly, and who deserve our thanks and gratitude. So will any other employees of the city please stand. In sorrow we also mourn the loss of a dear friend and dedicated city employee, Deb Nevinski.

I'm pleased to welcome our Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Tom Niczay. And we are joined by members of the Hamtramck Board of Education: Ms. Yvonne Myrick, Titus Walters, Hedy Shulgon, Al Shulgon, Erik Burkman, Nasr Hussain, and Magdalena Srodek.

Welcome to our District Judge, Paul Paruk.

I would also like to acknowledge the members of our various boards, commissions, and committees who are here today. If you would please rise as your organization is called: Beautification Commission; Board of Review; Downtown Development Authority; Economic Development Corporation; Historical Commission; Housing Commission; Human Relations

Commission; Library Board; Plan Commission; Recycling Commisison;
Zoning Board of Appeals.

As we enjoy the library's hospitality once again, I'd like to thank Library Director Tamara Sochacka, our volunteer AV whiz Greg Kirchner, and all the library staff.

And finally, I'd like to acknowledge the assistant to the mayor's office, an unpaid but invaluable appointee, Ms. Catrina Stackpoole, as well as her team of Wayne State University graduate students in Social Work. The students have worked on projects like the bike trail and the Hamtramck Shuttle, the recent the cat clinic at City Hall, the Hamtramck United Social Services scholarship program, and the annual clean sweep.

HUSS Scholarship Luncheon



Hamtramck
Clean
Sweep

Thank you.

This is the seventh time I've come before you to review the path we've traveled together in the past year, to give you a preview of where we hope to go in the days ahead, and to invite you to walk that road--the rough spots

and the smooth--together with your neighbors, and with me.

Neighbors, Family, and Friends



Your presence here today signifies one of Hamtramck's fundamental strengths--we are more than a city, we are a community. We are more than a place where people lay their heads at night, we are a place where people invest their hearts and souls. If we sometimes argue with each other, it's because what happens here matters so deeply to all of us. It's because Hamtramck so often inspires and delights us. Sometimes it also confounds us. Sometimes it drives us crazy. And, sometimes it breaks our hearts. That, everyone, is what love is all about.

We all love Hamtramck



We are all here because we love this crazy place, our own sweet little village. Let's remember that deeply emotional, even inexplicable attachment to this little piece of earth we share; let's remember that it can unite us as easily as divide us; let's remember that it is, like Hamtramck itself, our common ground.

Folks say that nothing joins people together like shared adversity, and we've had our share of it in the last few years. You'll hear about some of it today. But that is not the whole story of the last year. And it's not the whole story of who we are. Despite all the difficulties we've shared with so many other communities around the nation, and especially here in Southeast

Michigan, we've managed to accomplish much to be proud of, and set the stage for what I am heartened to think can be good things to come. That says so much about the good that's in this place, and in all of you.

One very good thing that has happened since my last State of the City is the promotion of Max Garbarino as our new Chief of Police. The department is evolving under his leadership, implementing civilian dispatch and other long-awaited restructuring initiatives. New K9 and Weights and Measures positions are in progress, and the traffic safety program, while not always popular, is slowing down drivers and putting more officers on the street. The department has negotiated better terms with its own contractors, as well as settled new labor contracts with significant savings to the City.



Hamtramck Police Department



Community Outreach

The department has also taken significant steps to reach out to the community and to our many ethnic groups, which has been an issue in the past. Our Police Reserve Corps, which is growing after years of decline, will at last become more diverse and representative of our residents. The Hamtramck Citizens patrol and block clubs are stable, with an increasing number of events and participants. Perhaps not unrelated, crime appears to be down from this time last year. I say that while remembering that early 2012 brought a sudden wave of serious and disturbing crimes of violence to our city. As shocking as those incidents were to all of us, they have all been solved, and we thank the Hamtramck Police Department for its work. They also helped bring the community together in common cause to stand

up and stand together against those who would threaten the peace of our streets and the safety of our residents and visitors.



Hamtramck Takes Back the Night

The Fire Department has also undergone some major changes in the last year, including many retirements and promotions. Not to mention that we were very happy to welcome Paul Wilk as our new Fire Chief.

The department has been working diligently to secure grant funding to take the burden off the city's general fund. In May the department took delivery of a 2012 Sutphen Aerial Tower to replace the 1986 model. The tower was

purchased through a FEMA grant totaling \$700,000.

Blessing of Hamtramck Firefighters and New Aerial Rig St. Florian Church



The department has also submitted a FEMA grant for the purchase of new ambulance and fire fighting equipment. And most recently the department's grant committee with the help of the acting city manager and an outside grant team worked on and submitted a SAFER Grant to FEMA for the funding of 12 fire fighters' salaries and benefits for 2 years. This grant will help prevent looming layoffs in the department. An additional grant to place Automatic External Defibrillators in city hall is also in the works.

The Fire Department rightly prides itself on the service it offers the residents of the city, and the city is certainly proud of and grateful for that service.

Which reminds me, Fire Safety Month is coming right up in October, and the department will be offering its free smoke detector program once again.

Our Department of Public Services also welcomes a new director, Steve Shaya. With the new director come initiatives to improve processes and accountability. The department has clamped down on delinquent water bills and started an aggressive collection program on large outstanding water accounts. After starting out with a \$30,000 delinquency, the program now shows a positive cash flow. New controls for billing disputes and dismissals have regularized departmental procedures. And an aggressive enforcement program aimed at those who tamper with or attempt to bypass our water meters is also now in place.

The Building and Engineering Department has played an important part in the construction and renovation going on all over town as part of the last stages of the R31 project,

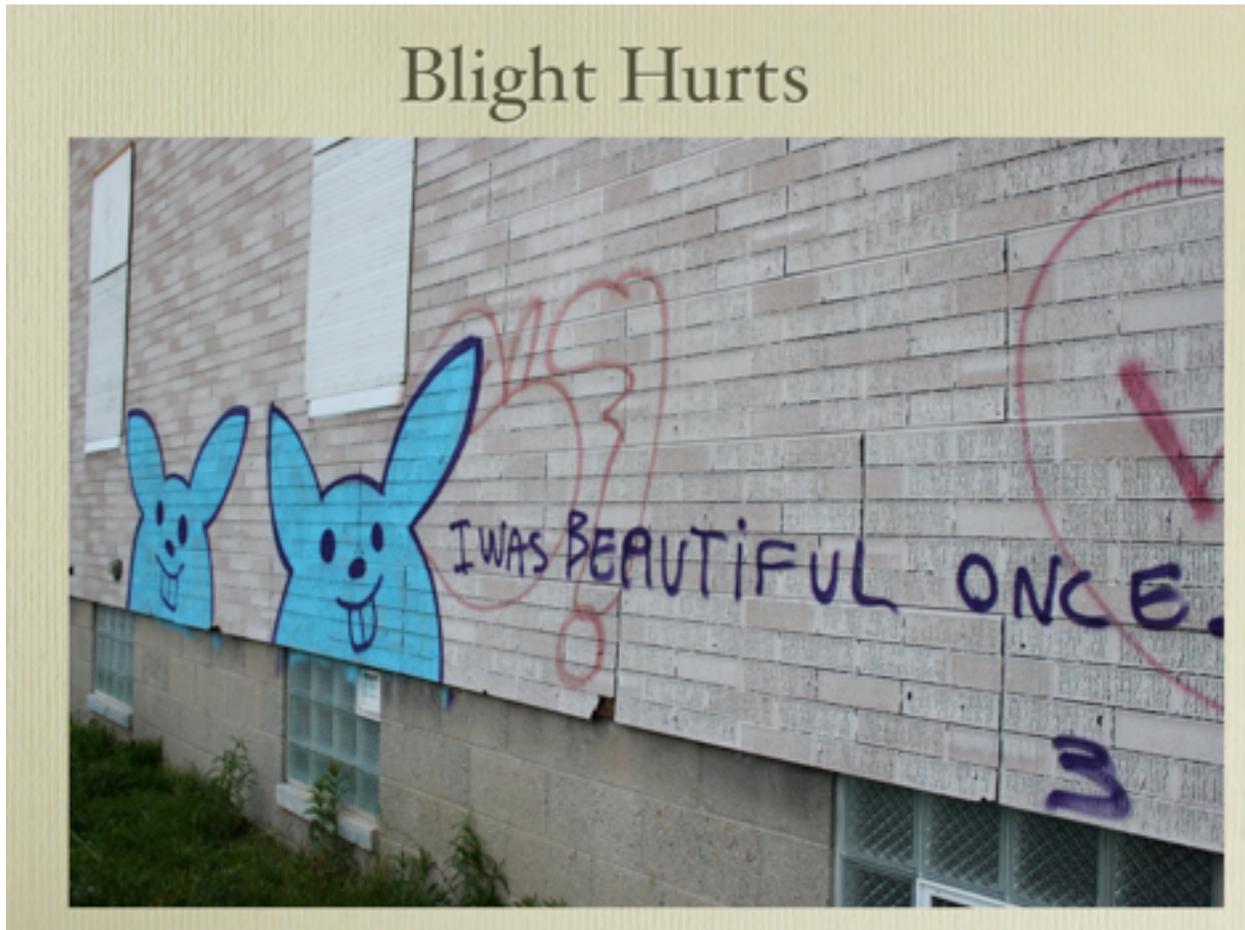
Hamtramck Dept. of Public Services and R-31 Project



funded by the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The department has been involved in the process from preliminary and final site plan review, to rough and final inspections of all trades, to the handling of all architectural and engineering concerns. And if you've noticed just how much construction has been going on around town, you know that that is a tall order.

The Department of Public Services has taken over the demolition of abandoned buildings, working to remove these eyesores and clean up the sites. Most recently, three long-term problem houses have been taken down: on Faber Street, at the corner of Trowbridge and Brombach, and at

Wyandotte and Lumpkin. Two more are in the works.



After making changes in the Rental Department, we are starting to see more of our residents coming in and registering their rental properties. The result will not only be more revenue for the city, but more importantly our residents who rent will be assured of housing that is up to code and meets safety requirements.

For many years the city has also faced the problem of construction going on without permits. The department's monthly statistics now show that the focused efforts of Building and Engineering Inspectors are resulting in

greatly increased revenue from permits. In addition, we have the assurance that work being performed on our residences and commercial buildings is being done safely and in conformity with codes and regulations. These may sound like simple and obvious procedures, but anyone who lives here for long knows that this has not always been the case.

A recent project with workmanship of which we can be truly proud is the 3300 Denton concrete road paving, supervised from start to finish by the Department of Public Services. I think I could ask anyone in town what the worst street is in Hamtramck, and the unanimous answer would be Hewitt. So I'm very happy to say that very soon--as early as this Monday, I'm told--

the DPS will begin supervising the asphalt repaving of Hewitt Street.

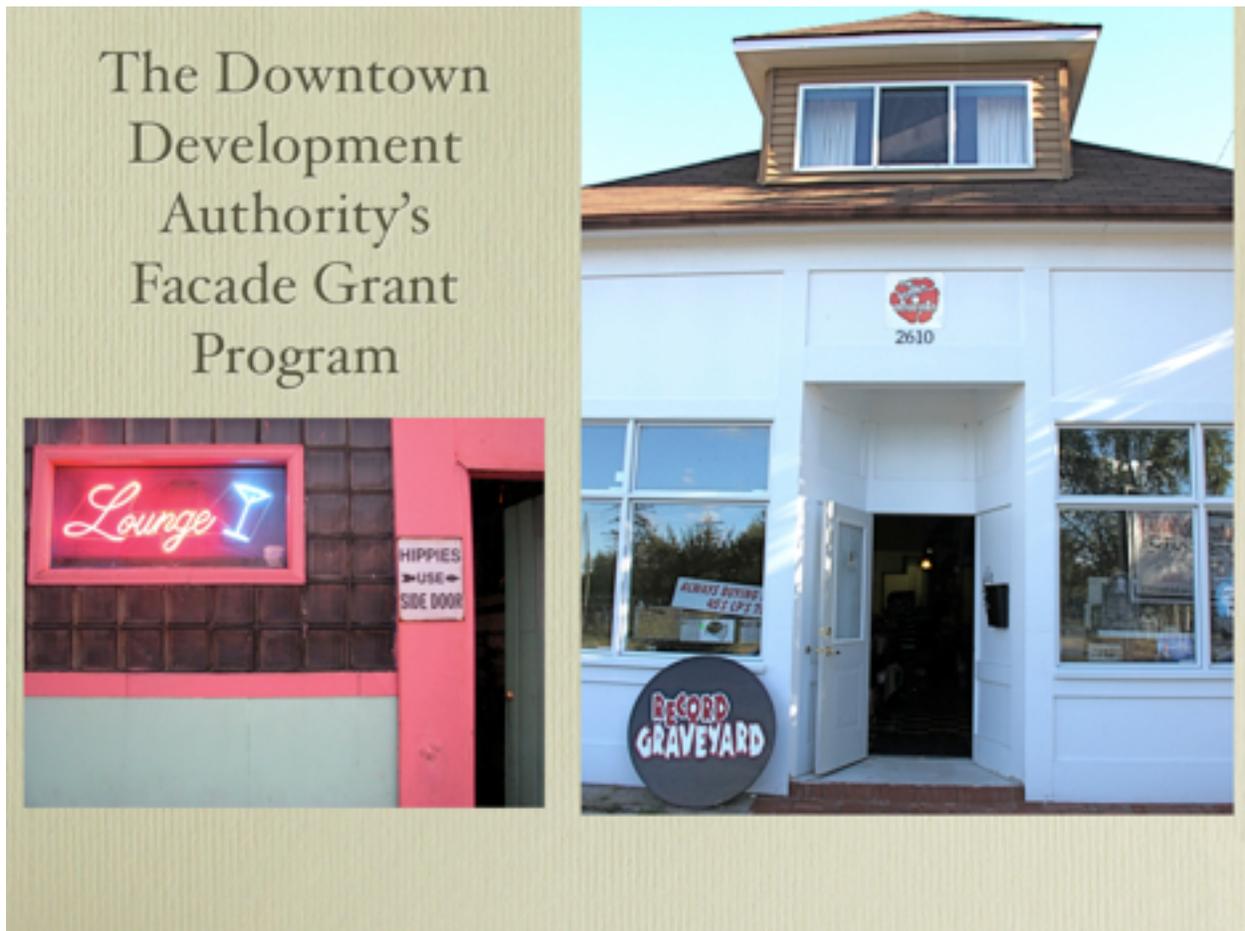


Another large-scale public works project is also underway--the Hamtramck Renewal Project. Mich Con is replacing service lines and gas mains from Roosevelt to Caniff. I know is causing a lot of headaches for residents. We'll all be glad when it's over. But we'll also be glad that it was done.

Finally, I'd like to mention a simple program implemented by DPS that should make life better for everyone. There is now a dumpster available for at the city lot on Denton Street. Residents are invited to drop off up to 2

yards of trash free of charge Tuesdays through Thursdays from 12:00 to 3:00.

The density, hominess, and security of Hamtramck's neighborhoods are among our points of pride. Equally a part of Hamtramck's unique urban character is our traditional downtown. It is the Downtown Development Authority that works with business owners on Jos. Campau to maintain and improve our trademark commercial strip, through programs like the Façade Grant Program.



The program is funded by Community Development Block Grant dollars allocated by the Community and Economic Development Department and

approved by council. In the last year local business and property owners received \$12,500 for architectural design services and \$75,000 for construction services to restore their facades to their original condition.

Dale's Party Store, MGM Pawn Shop, Yoga Suite, Record Graveyard (at its new Carpenter location) and The Painted Lady were the recipients of facade grants over the past year. Another \$85,000 has been earmarked for design and construction of new facades at Suzy's Bar, Bromberg & Associates Translations, Flavor Restaurant (coming soon to 10023 Jos. Campau), 2321 Caniff, and Fleures D'Amour Gift & Garden Center at 11338 Conant, to be completed over the next 6 months. This is a departure from the previous facade grant program, which restricted recipients to the Jos. Campau DDA district. This flexibility to work with businesses outside the DDA district recognizes the continuing evolution of Hamtramck's business climate.

It's well known that green space in Hamtramck, once known for its tree canopy, is well below the average. It will take some time and concerted effort from residents, the city, and outside organizations to turn this situation around, but the DDA helped further that process when, with the help of a DTE Tree Grant, it organized and facilitated the removal 35 dead, diseased and/or dangerous trees along Jos. Campau and the side streets between Caniff and Holbrook. Twenty-two of the trees were replaced with new urban friendly species and six new trees were also planted at the entrance

to Veteran's Park. The remaining 13 trees will be replaced over the next three years as funding becomes available.

In conjunction with the tree replacement program the DDA also organized and facilitated the removal, repair, and replacement of all concrete between Caniff and Holbrook and between Jos. Campau and the alleys just East and West of Campau. The DDA initially funded the project but was reimbursed by the city's Act 51 fund when the DDA faced a financial emergency created by diminishing real estate values.

In conjunction with the Community and Economic Development Department, the DDA continues to host quarterly Merchant's Meetings for the city's business and property owners. The events take place at and/or are catered by local Hamtramck establishments. Recent hosts have included Aladdin Sweets and Café, Leka's Clock, Maria's Comida, People's Community Services, The Detroit Zen Center, and The Belmont Sports Bar. Additional catering has been provided by Srodek's Quality Sausage, Bosnian Specialties, Hamtramck Coney Island, and Main Street Restaurant. The events help bring customers to local Hamtramck businesses and each meeting offers presentations by organizations offering valuable services to small business and property owners. Merchant meetings are provided at no cost to the attendees and attendance and participation continue to grow.

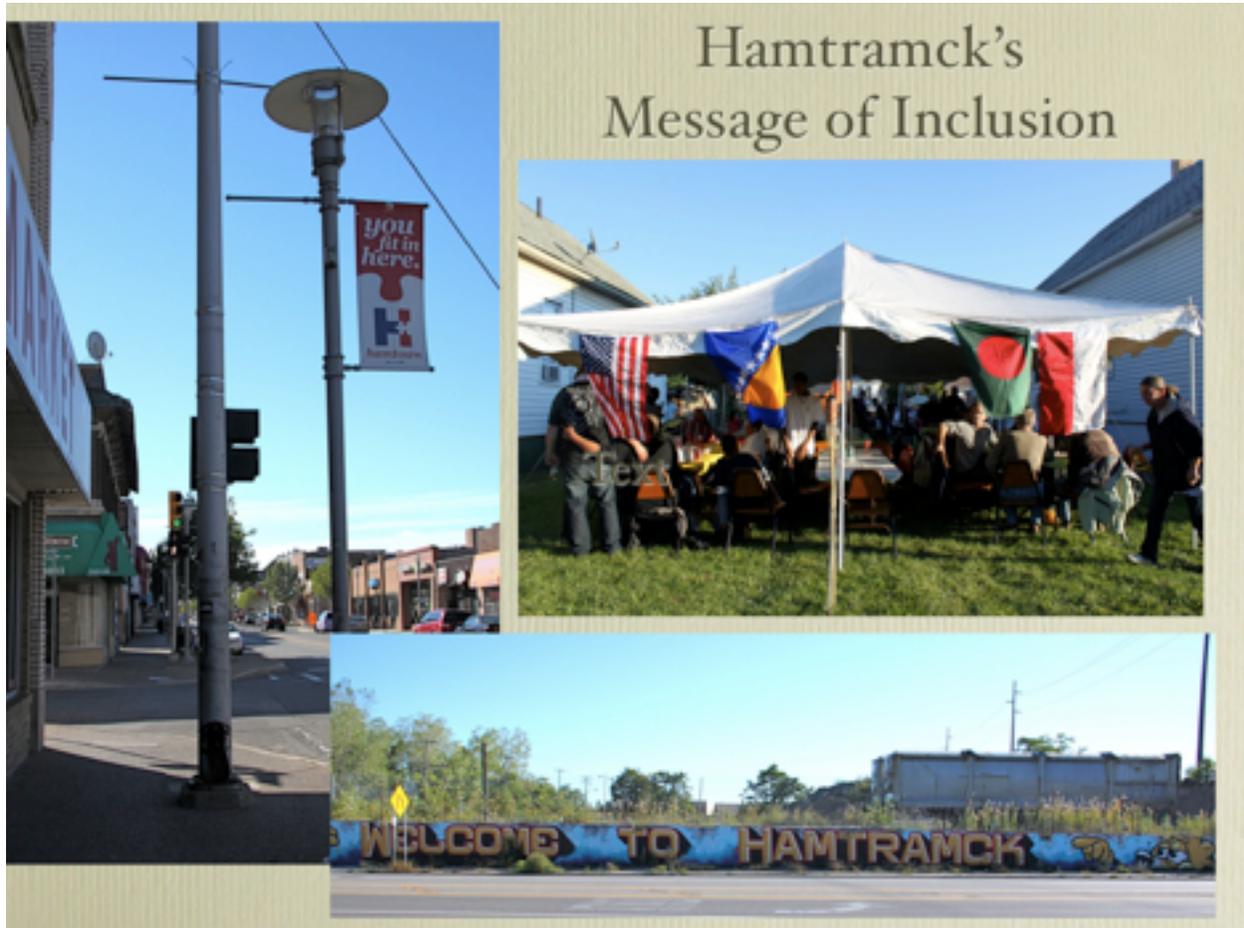
The DDA continues to be integral to the Hamtramck Labor Day Festival.

Hamtramck Throws a Party



The DDA has provided special licenses (liquor, raffle) for the festival for the past three years and accepted complete financial responsibility for the 2011 festival. The DDA's Executive Director sat on the 2012 Labor Day Festival Committee and assisted in making it a success. The DDA intends to create a 501(C)(3) (non-profit corporation) in order to simplify the fund raising and sponsorship process for future festivals in the hopes of providing years of future festivals at no cost to the city, tax payers or DDA. And here I think we all owe a special thank you to the Festival Committee, and particularly to the co-chairs, Shannon Lowell and Konrad Maziarz.

The DDA has partnered with the SEEDS marketing firm and the Hamtramck School Board to create a branding program for downtown, the school district, and perhaps eventually the entire city.



In August of 2011 the DDA purchased 20 banners for the light poles with the new branding slogan, "Hamtown: You Fit in Here." The slogan emphasizes Hamtramck's diversity and the message that regardless of background and circumstance, everyone has a place here in Hamtramck. As an extension of the program the DDA has offered business owners the opportunity to purchase banners featuring the slogan and their business photo and logo. Participation has been positive and a new batch of more than 20 business sponsored banners will be up by the end of autumn.

The DDA provides holiday lights along Jos. Campau from late November through early January. This past year lights were placed on the street poles rather than in the trees, greatly reducing costs while creating a non denominational holiday feel downtown.

The DDA also continues to participate in the Michigan Main Street Program at the Associate Level and will apply this year for acceptance into the Main Street Select Level.

Michigan
Main Street
Program
Supports
Traditional
Downtowns



The Main Street program was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is a proven four point approach to revitalize historic

downtowns through historic preservation and grass roots economic development. As a member of the Main Street Select level, Downtown Hamtramck will be entitled to thousands of dollars in training, with consultation and design services provided by MSHDA at no cost to the city, tax payers or DDA.

While we're talking historic preservation, let me congratulate the city and particularly the Hamtramck Stadium Committee on receiving National Historic Designation for Hamtramck Stadium,

Hamtramck History: Alive and Well



Hamtramck Stadium



Hamtramck
Historical Museum

one of only a handful of intact Negro League stadiums in the country.

Efforts are now underway to plan for the preservation and reuse of this landmark.

And I know everyone is waiting for the opening of the Hamtramck Historical Museum. We should have an official announcement of its final location any day now, and then it will be full steam ahead to get preliminary renovations underway, items moved in, and programs started. The Historical Commission and its many supporters will soon be creating an important destination for our many visitors and for our residents. This has been made possible through generous grants from MSHDA and the General Motors Foundation, as well as a major private donation and the help of our many, many supporters.

The DDA often works closely with the Community and Economic Development Department. Of all the work the department does, nothing has been so all-consuming over the last several years as our commitment to fulfilling the requirements of the Sarah Garrett vs. City of Hamtramck

housing discrimination lawsuit, often referred to as R-31.

R-31:
Bringing New Homes
and Residents to
Hamtramck



This is the longest-running housing discrimination case in the country, but the city is now moving quickly toward meeting the terms of the settlement. This would not have been possible without the help of the federal government and our state and regional partners, especially MSHDA, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, which for the last several years has sought creative ways to support our efforts. We are now wrapping up construction and the administration of the City's \$15 million dollar Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP 2) grant – the largest grant the city has ever received. In the last year a combination of new

construction single-family homes, rehabbed homes, and townhomes have resulted in 52 housing units that will go toward the resolution of the R.31 lawsuit. These homes alone will generate \$90,000 in new taxes for the City. In addition, over 80 blighted homes have been demolished, or deconstructed, greatly improving neighborhoods throughout the City.

Earlier this year, the City completed thirty five (35) new construction rental units north east of City Hall in cooperation with MSHDA, utilizing low income housing tax credits and NSP 1 funds. With a total investment of \$9 million dollars, and are completely occupied by R-31 plaintiffs and their families.

The City is also working with Wayne County to build additional homes towards the settlement of the R-31 lawsuit. Four (4) homes were renovated with Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP 1) funds and sixteen (16) additional homes are being built with US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) HOME funds, resulting in an additional \$2.9 million dollar investment. Once these last 16 homes are completed the City will have fulfilled its requirements and the R-31 lawsuit will be put to rest. We are not there yet, but we can see the end from here, at long last.

Judge Damon Keith is so pleased with the City's progress he has agreed to lift the prohibition on the sale of City-owned residential property. This will become official at the next R.31 Court Conference (November 13, 2012) so

the CED Department is working to develop a plan to liquidate over 400 City-owned properties. Options range from selling parcels to individuals and developers to build new homes, to preserving key lots for community gardens and pocket parks. This is a huge step in the redevelopment of city neighborhoods.

The City of Hamtramck Plan Commission recently granted Preliminary Site Plan Approval to Green Power Technology, the company that will be developing the Hamtramck Resource Recovery Center on the former Missant site on Conant. The current 300,000 square foot obsolete building will be demolished and replaced with a \$300 million dollar state of the art, energy efficient recycling and resource recovery facility. Essentially, this operation takes municipal waste, uses an automated system to sort out valuable recyclables, then uses high temperature steam to break down the remaining organic material into a bio-mass--synthetic coal--that is then pelletized and reused to create a green energy source. All operations are conducted inside the building in an environmentally friendly manner. This development will bring up to 150 new jobs to Hamtramck and is expected to bring over one million dollars in direct revenue to the City through increased property taxes and hosting fees.

Green Power will be a fitting neighbor to Hamtramck Recycling, another multi-million dollar investment being built just down the road on Denton.



Although like many municipalities we have lost some long-standing businesses during the recession of the last several years, we are also continually adding new businesses, many of them established by immigrants or the growing number of young adults who are moving into town.

Hamtramck Entrepreneurs



A 30-something pharmacist recently purchased and completely renovated the burnt out creamery building at the corner of Holbrook and Gallagher. Many thought the building would have to be demolished after a devastating fire, but after investing almost three quarters of a million dollars, the building reopened Memorial Day weekend as a pharmacy and medical office for three doctors.

CHIIPPSS..... is a new skateboard shop that opened in the former hardware store on Joseph Campau just north of Belmont. The business' dramatic green façade and half pipe skateboard ramp has brought a lot of

attention to the block and is attracting a new demographic to the City that has followed the owner from his prior location in Plymouth.

Of course, we all miss Maria's Comida restaurant, but we're delighted that Marie and family have found a new niche for themselves as producers of salsa, and that the old restaurant site will soon be transformed into their retail space. Several new restaurants are also slated to open: ACME Food Company in the former Bangkok Thai space, Beigles & Coffee, and Flavor on the next block. We're also happy to see that Al's Corral has reopened, and wish them well.

Lo & Behold is a vintage resale shop/record store/headquarters for Richie Wofhiel's recording and publishing company. Richie has held many live performances in his space and brought a lot of interest to the city.

Last month the Hamtramck Family Medical Services opened on Joseph Campau and Neibel, and Azaal Pharmacy opened on Conant.

New Businesses Mean
New Investment,
New Services,
New Visitors, and
New Opportunities



And Your Special Day draws customers from all over metro Detroit who are looking for prom, wedding and formal wear--and good publicity, too.

A number of new Hamtramck businesses focus on health,

Healthy Alternatives: Good for You and Good for Hamtramck



including three (3) new fitness centers--New Breed, Hamtramck Main Event, and Detroit Kudo--that have opened on Joseph Campau over the last 18 months. A growing Hamtramck Farmer's Market is held every Wednesday in Pope Park. Several local growers offer a wide range of vegetables and unique food products which are harvested or baked that same afternoon.

People are growing more of their own food with large scale projects ranging from the superbly planned and marketed Hamtown Farms,

Hamtown Farms



to smaller single parcel gardens located throughout the City. Garden permits have grown from 2 permits in 2008, to over 50 permits in 2012.

The City of Hamtramck was part of a group that was awarded \$10M in federal transportation funds to extend the Dequindre Cut greenway in Detroit to Hamtramck. Effectively connecting Hamtramck to Midtown, Downtown, and the Riverfront, this funding will greatly enhance bike accessibility for Hamtramck residents, and visitors to the City.

In addition, the City expects to receive funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation to complete a series of bike lanes throughout the City by fall of 2013.

The Hamtramck Plan Commission took the final steps to adopt a new Master Plan in 2012. The Community and Economic Development Department is working with many residents, businesses, community organizations, and City Departments to implement the recommendations set out in this very innovative plan.



Initial steps range from stepping up code enforcement, to bringing more public art to the city through murals and street art, and to promoting the City's great diversity, walkability, and wide range of food choices.

The City is in final stages of negotiating a shuttle service that will connect the City to Midtown Detroit, the SMART bus system on Woodward Avenue, Amtrak, Wayne State University/the College for Creative Studies, the Detroit Medical Center, Eastern Market, and the Detroit Riverfront. This system will both serve the need of current Hamtramck residents, as well as attract many potential transit users to the City.

Unfortunately American Axle has shut down operation at its Detroit/Hamtramck facility; however, the entire complex is for sale and has generated a great deal of interest. More than likely several smaller operations will move into the complex, thus making the City less susceptible to the whims of a single corporate entity.

General Motors' Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly--the Poletown plant--is causing us headaches again (this time with a tax dispute that will not just deprive us of expected personal property tax revenue on plant equipment, but require that we repay monies that were paid for legitimate taxes over the past several years.) But in the long run GM's longterm investment in the plant, with the assembly of the Volt and now the Chevy Malibu, should generate additional tax revenue for the City.

That said, the financial challenges in the past year have been enormous.

The past year has been one of the most financially challenging on record, for the City of Hamtramck, and that's saying a lot. Due to the decline in

revenues from various sources--property taxes, American Axle, GM, City of Detroit etc.--Hamtramck has exhausted the positive fund balance that we worked so hard to build by the end of fiscal year 2011, and we've ended the fiscal year 2012 with a budget deficit. We have tried hard to manage our scarce resources to balance our books and pay down the outstanding debt, but for the short term we will need some financial help in form of a low interest emergency loan from the state of Michigan.

The escalating cost of health care and the State mandated cap on health care spending forced the administration to take a hard look at past practices and insurance policies and come up with an innovative plan that keeps the premiums in check while maintaining the same coverage to its employees and retirees. Had the city not taken these steps to upgrade the medical insurance plan the way it did, with the projected increase in health care costs, we could have come to a point that the city could have not afforded to provide the promised benefits to its employees and retirees.

The lawsuit from the flooding event of several years ago

Solving Old Problems



was settled last year and we are in process of paying the settlement during the current year. We expect a full payment to the plaintiffs--Hamtramck residents whose basements flooded just like yours and mine did--by the end of December 2012. (By the way, we have taken the first step in the costly process of updating our inadequate infrastructure with a planning grant that will help us determine the most efficient and cost effective fix to this decades-long problem.)

This lawsuit by Hamtramck residents and others that we have faced have had a negative impact on our liability insurance premiums and we had hard

time finding an underwriter to renew for this year, forcing us to take on more risk and increase our deductible to a high level in order to keep the upfront premium low.

Another challenge we are facing is to properly fund the MERS retirement system. As the result of past practices of escalating labor costs, especially in overtime payments, the City is being faced with an increased liability to fund its pension fund through MERS. In recent years, the city's contribution on behalf of its employees (especially for its police and fire departments) has increased dramatically and is expected to continue to escalate.

Despite of all these challenges, there is a ray of light at the end of the tunnel:

We have settled all the major union contracts and are working to restructure contract with our other vendors.

We have applied and expect to receive a SAFER grant for the next two years that will keep our fire department in place and provide the level of service that our citizens expect and deserve.

By paying down one of the major loans that was obtained by the former emergency financial manager back in 2002, we are going to get some relief when it comes to debt payments. We also lowered the interest on the other outstanding bond.

We are applying for a low-interest state loan to provide a cash-flow cushion.

And finally, we have put together a deficit elimination plan that will allow us to pave our way over the next few years to the goal of a balanced budget.

Taking these steps has not been easy, as you know. It has been a contentious process that has tried everyone's nerves and shaken the foundations of the city administration. It has meant many trips to Lansing and conversations with the State Treasurer's Office.

Working with
Our State
Partners
to Create a
Stable, Fiscally
Sound
Hamtramck



And it's a testament to the commitment of our Finance Director that we have come to a point where we can begin to see a way out--a painful, uncertain, and longterm process, to be sure, and one with many moving parts--we don't know what will happen with the American Axle facility, or what to expect next from GM. We don't know if Wayne County will shut down our jail when its new one is completed. We don't know what the final status of the Emergency Manager law will be. We don't know what the final outcome will be of the state legislature's determination to do away with personal property tax on businesses. We don't know what to expect from the national economy. We don't know if we'll receive the grants and loans for which we've applied. Yes, there are many moving parts as we try to craft a fiscally viable, sustainable way forward for Hamtramck.

But of those many moving parts, let's remember the most important of all-- we, the residents of this Hamtramck.

We are Hamtramck



It is how we choose to act, how and how we choose to move forward together, that determines the future of this odd and dear little place. So many people tell me, "Hamtramck is changing."



We are
Hamtramck



Nothing lives without change, everything living grows and evolves. And Hamtramck needs all of us to to guide that change, to be those moving parts that move the city through difficult times toward the future we all want

here for ourselves and those who come after us.



Michelle Obama, in her speech just last week at the Democratic National Convention, said that “Doing the impossible is the history of this nation.”

We are Hamtramck



Many would say it's been the history of this city.



We are
Hamtramck



It's part of what makes us who we are.

We are Hamtramck



We have seen hard times, and woken up each morning to face the next day.



We are
Hamtramck



At our best, we've sustained our neighbors with human kindness.

We are
Hamtramck



We've nurtured each other



We are
Hamtramck



and tried to build a Hamtramck that can promise a hopeful future for the generations that will inherit our handiwork.

We are
Hamtramck



The work we have now ahead of us is among the most challenging, and most exciting, the city has ever faced. Challenging, because the financial pressures we are now under might be the end game in a less determined, less resourceful kind of place. Exciting, because it means that the Hamtramck that we are tasked with crafting can be a more creative, sustainable, and prosperous community.

We are all Hamtramck



Elected officials, department heads, union members, organizational leaders, community volunteers, young, old, newcomer, longtime resident...The city needs you, and it needs your neighbors.

You've heard about the many good programs the city is conducting and the good things we've been able to do. You also know the precariousness of our fiscal situation, and the threats to our stability. I know in Hamtramck we like to be a little crazy. That's been a source of strength, and of uncertainty. So let's be crazy in a good way. Let's be crazy dancers, crazy singers, musicians, and artists.

Crazy for Hamtramck



Let's be crazy thinkers and dreamers. Let's be crazy lovers of our homes and neighborhoods. And let's try something else just crazy enough to work--let's put our finances on solid ground, regularize our internal procedures, develop a culture of professionalism in city hall, while still bringing all our creativity and resourcefulness to bear to continue growing a diverse and welcoming community of strong neighborhoods, entrepreneurship, and urban living on a human scale.

This is only possible if we--Hamtramck's most essential moving parts--agree to move together, in the same direction, toward a common goal and with a common commitment to our collective good.

Moving Forward



Moving together, walking forward.

Walking Together



It may mean giving up some some old ways of doing things.

Walking Together



It will require trust in each other.

Walking Together



It will require good will, cooperation, and a spirit of generosity.



Walking Together



It will require humility, and courage, which go hand in hand in the best of us.

Walking Together



I hope these challenges to our hearts and minds will not be more difficult than the ones we face on the balance sheet. Because if each of us can call on our better angels, we can meet and work through those threats to our survival. But without a spirit of good will and cooperation, no budget surplus can make us a community. So, I say to all of you, the days ahead will require most of all a belief in Hamtramck.

HAMTRAMCK



A belief in this impossible little corner of the world where people come from all over the globe to fulfill their dreams and ambitions. Where we can argue and then break bread together. Where our neighbors know our business but like us anyway. Where we share unfamiliar food across fences that don't divide us. Where we peek out the window when we hear a noise to make sure our neighbor is safe. Where we work together, struggle together, move together, to build a good place for each other.