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Quick Hits

Two causes worthy of your support

By Charles Sercombe

Rest up a bit this weekend, because next Saturday, Oct. 17, offers two lively community events.

First up is a community walk, sponsored by the police department to raise awareness of domestic violence and breast cancer.

Chief Hussein Farhat has invited the community to meet at 3 p.m. in Zussman Park, where folks will then walk the streets together. The walk will last about an hour.

“This event is an opportunity for our community to come together to raise awareness about domestic violence, support survivors, promote breast cancer awareness, and share a message of hope, strength, and solidarity,” said Chief Farhat.

After the walk, rest up a bit, and then get ready to shimmy at a fundraiser for the Hamtramck Historical Museum, being called the “Hamtramck Hullabaloo.”

The theme for the evening is the 1960s, and it’s a chance to get out your go-go boots and wear your tie-dye T-shirt or Nehru jacket for a groovy time, celebrating the music and fashions of that era.

Tickets are \$45 per person, \$85 for couples – or, for a bit extra, \$100 gets you one VIP ticket, which gets you reserved seating and a swag bag.

All tickets include one complimentary drink and an appetizer.

There will be food, drinks, a fashion show and a silent auction.

Hurry up and get yours, because tickets are going fast.

The event runs from 6 to 10 p.m. For tickets or more information, go online to: www.hamtramckhistory.com.

Be there or be square. Or, be both.

— HAMTRAMCK’S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Hamtramck’s Neighborhood Arts Festival takes over the city

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck not only experienced a perfect fall weather day last Saturday, but also a city-wide arts festival.

Hamtramck artists were once again in the spotlight in the 16th annual Neighborhood Arts Festival this past weekend, and, by all accounts, it was another smashing success.

“Each year we develop and grow HNAF, and this year we’re excited to offer such a vast selection of events, as that so represents our Hamtramck community!” said co-organizer Timothy Price.

“Also, we’re honored to coordinate and partner with such a variety of artists, venues, and arts and cultural institutions, along with Hamtramck businesses!” he added.

Price had earlier described the event as a “loosely curated showcase of artists, writers and musicians.”

He continued:

“This isn’t your typical festival; participating creators in the community host the audiences in their home studios, on front porches, or in parks, coffee shops, or galleries around the city.

“It’s a community-organized festival that allows anyone in the city and the surrounding neighborhood to contribute to, or host, an event.

“The HNAF embraces the idea that art is for everyone – all are welcome to participate, and all are welcome to tour the artists’ workspaces and attend the day- (and night-) long events.”

Here are some photos of the event, thanks to co-organizer Timothy Price.



Mayoral candidate says bribe offered

By Charles Sercombe

The battle over who Hamtramck’s mayor actually is took another twist among its many turns in this eight-months-long-and-counting dispute.

In the latest development, mayoral challenger Muhith Mahmood confirmed rumors that he had been offered a bribe to end his pursuit to be the city’s mayor.

Asked to provide more information, Mahmood told The Review: “I don’t want to go through all the details as of now.”

He said that the offer made to him was not recorded. Mahmood added that he will not take an offer to end his quest to become mayor.

“Not at all. That’s not something I would accept,” Mahmood told The Review.

The accusation creates a suspicion that the offer came from Mayor Adam Alharbi or one of his associates. He denied having any connection to such an alleged offer.

“I have not made any offer to Mr. Mahmood to withdraw or drop his appeals. So that’s completely false,” Alharbi told The Review.

Alharbi continued:

“We are at the final stage of the legal process regarding these 37 ballots, and we have always let the legal and canvassing process take its course. If any third parties have reached out to Mr. Mahmood, you would have to ask him, or them, directly about their motivations.”

The mayoral election from last November evolved into a dispute over whether the 37 uncoun- ted ballots should be included in the final election result.

The ballots in question were discovered a day after the election in the city clerk’s office, where they had been left unsecured.

Alharbi has argued that, since the uncoun- ted ballots had lost their proper “chain of cus- tody,” the ballots should not be counted, noting that someone could have tampered with them.

The stakes of the elec- tion remain high, since Alharbi won the election by a slim 11-vote margin.

Mahmood counter-ar- gued that not counting the ballots deprives those 37 voters of their vot- ing rights.

Continued on page 2



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Mayoral candidate says bribe offered

Continued from front page

After months of haggling in the courts, the state court of appeals ruled that the ballots should be counted.

All that's left now is for the Wayne County Board of Canvassers to schedule a meeting to finally count those ballots, which is likely to happen next Friday, Oct. 16.

(As of Thursday, when The Review went to press, the county had not yet scheduled a meeting for the ballot count.)

The ballots were not originally admitted by the county board of canvassers because its four members deadlocked in a 2-2 tie vote on the matter.

Because of that tie vote, county rules prevent those ballots from being included in the full tally – thus, the subsequent court journey.

Even if the ballots upend the election results, and Mahmood comes out on top, Mayor Alharbi, through his attorney Nabih Ayad, told WXYZ Channel 7 news that there will be a further challenge.

“Counting means that they have to be counted, looked at. There’s still the ability to challenge those 37 ballots for something that’s not proper,” Ayad told WXYZ.

That’s not the only aspect of the issue Alharbi is pursuing. He is chal-

lenging whether Mahmood is qualified to hold elective office in Hamtramck, accusing him of not being a resident, but instead living in Troy with his family.

Mahmood says he lives in Hamtramck, and visits his family in Troy. A prior internal city investigation by a legal firm, however, concluded that there is evidence that Mahmood does not live in Hamtramck.

So far, Alharbi has struck out in the courts over the residency claim.



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Review: Opinion Page

In Our Opinion

Get ready for another bumpy election ride

Brace yourselves, folks. A Wayne County Circuit Court judge is now ordering the Wayne County Board of Canvassers to count the 37 uncounted ballots from last November's city election.

At stake here is the possibility that Mayor Adam Alharbi will be removed from office and his challenger, former city councilmember Muhith Mahmood, will replace him.

This saga has been playing out since last year, when November's election results were tallied.

Mayor Alharbi has been in office all of eight months.

No matter what, it's frustrating that our judicial process carried on this long. It's unfair both to the mayor and to Mr. Mahmood.

And, of course, it's deeply unfair to the residents of the city, as well.

What we find interesting in all this is why these two political combatants have fought so hard, and spent so much money, on this matter. Alharbi hired a lawyer to prevent the ballots from being counted, while, obviously, Mahmood spent money for his own legal fight.

Alharbi's legal bill, which could be as much as \$200,000, is now being paid by the taxpayers, thanks to a controversial vote by the city council.

So, consider again the massive amount of money being poured into this legal dispute, and then answer (if you can): Why would anyone rack up legal bills like that, all to just get to be the mayor of Hamtramck – a position that pays a nominal several thousand dollars per year?

Think about that.

And then, if you come up with an answer, please let us know.



City Hall Insider ...

*What is our City Council up to these days?
We have the highlights of the latest council meeting.*

By Charles Sercombe

The city council met on Aug. 11, and all councilmembers were in attendance.

Hamtramck firefighter Joseph Wylie was honored for helping a family escape from a house fire. Wylie spotted the fire as he was driving into work, and he immediately drove to the scene, where he climbed to the second floor of the dwelling to help family members escape.

Hamtramck Fire Chief Matthew Wyszczelski said Wylie's actions are "huge for us. It's our job as firefighters and police officers. We rush to danger."

Community Economic Department Manager Isabel Allaway talked about a proposal to limit how long people can park on Jos. Campau to four hours at one space.

She said that, ever since the city removed parking meters on the streets, there have been complaints from business owners about people who park their cars all day and hog parking spaces.

The proposed four-hour limit would be in force from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day of the week.

Police officers would be tasked with monitoring parked cars, and then ticketing ones that overstay their allotted time.

A discussion was held on the practice of councilmembers adding items onto the council agenda right before, and during, meetings.

Mayor Adam Alharbi reasoned that it's not fair to the public for items to be added on at the last minute. He said the public has a right to know what will be discussed at a meeting before it starts.

"This is something I've stated many times before," he said. "Everything should be on the agenda."

One example, he said, is adding on an agenda item to give a street an honorific name.

"It should be on the agenda because, what if there are people in the public that oppose it?" Alharbi said. "They need to know ahead of time."

During public comment, Chuck Brainard encouraged the council to pass a resolution giving Berres St. the honorific name of Hamtramck tennis legend Jane "Peaches" Bartkowicz.

(The council's agenda erroneously referred to the street as Barres.)

Brainard said that Bartkowicz is well-known in the state for her achievements in tennis, at the highest levels.

"Peaches was the very best," Brainard said.

Later in the meeting, the council approved the resolution for the renaming.

A representative from the Al-Islah Islamic Center urged the council to discontinue allowing a festival music stage to be erected in front of his mosque, on the northwest corner of Jos. Campau and Caniff.

The request was in reference to the annual Hamtramck Labor Day Festival and the location of its main stage.

The representative requested that all festival stages be set up a block away, at Holmes St. The representative said that the stage volume interrupts its prayer services throughout the day and evening.

Later in the meeting, the council agreed, in the future, to require festival stages on Jos. Campau be placed no closer to the mosque than Holmes St.

Councilmember Mohamed Hassan said the new stage placement will be "good for the festival committee, good for the bank, good for the mosque, good for everybody."

(The bank he referenced was PNC, which is across the street from the mosque.)

Councilmember Yousuf Saed objected to the change, saying the festival has

Continued on page 5

Odds & Ends

Going green... The city's ongoing campaign to plant 1,000 trees is once again underway this fall.

The city has, so far, planted 400 out of 1,000 trees that a national parks grant funded. The trees are being planted in the right-of-way in front of residences. That's the spaces between the street and the sidewalk.

The trees are free for the asking to any resident. You have three options of trees to choose from: ornamental, shade, or native.

For a number of years, the city has had various tree-planting programs. Hamtramck lost over 500 trees during a tornado in 1997.

If you are interested in getting a tree to plant at your residence, go online to: <https://hamtramckcity.gov/grow-hamtramck/>

Once there, you can fill out the Hamtramck Resident Tree Request Form.

Other online contact methods include: ced@hamtramckcity.gov, or call at (313)-800-5233 (extension 818).

Get involved ... Former Hamtramck City Clerk August Gitschlag, who is now city clerk for the City of Fraser, passed along this election tidbit:

"Election security is directly related to economic security. As trusted sources of information, employers and business leaders have a direct role to play in supporting Michigan's election and the democratic process.

"The Chamber is partnering with the Democracy Defense Foundation, Detroit Votes 2026, and Leadership Now to provide an on-demand webinar that outlines how businesses and their employees can take action, from sharing reliable information to volunteering at their local clerks office."

The on-demand webinar features election administration experts, business leaders, and bipartisan former elected officials, including:

- Daniella Ballou-Aares, Chief Executive Officer, Leadership Now Project
- Michael D. Bishop, former congressman
- James Blanchard, former governor, State of Michigan
- John D. Cherry, former lieutenant governor
- John Engler, former governor, State of Michigan
- James Martinez, Vice President, Communications and Business Intelligence, Detroit Regional Chamber
- Chris Thomas, former director of elections, Michigan Secretary of State

The webinar is online at: www.detroitchamber.com/2026-general-election.../

Flower thief ... In one of the several Hamtramck social media pages, it was pointed out that three flower bushes were stolen from Pope Park.

Yes, someone actually took the time to dig them up.

Mayor Adam Alharbi said he'd follow up on this, saying in a Facebook post:

"I don't understand who would do that. I wonder if there's cameras around there. I'll look into this with CED (Community Economic Development Department)."

Biking program ... The Hamtramck Parks Conservancy is offering another community program – this time for girls who are 14-18 years old. For those new to bike riding, they are being offered free bike-riding instructions on Oct. 17, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

The program is limited, though, with only 20 openings. So, don't wait to reserve a space. To register, go online to: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/Huwxv3W6zx>

"The event provides free bike rental, helmets if needed, and other gift bike accessories," said the Conservancy. "Luki Bike Adventures will be on-site to lead riding instruction, as well as an introduction to bike safety and basic bike maintenance/care."

You will be meeting up at the east parking lot of Veterans Park.

Speaking of the election ... As of this week, the Michigan Secretary of State office said more than 201,000 Michigan voters have already cast their ballots by mail.

That's a 30-percent increase over the number of ballots returned at this point before the 2022 General Election.

This year's general election is Nov. 3 – a mere three weeks away. You can also opt to vote early at the city clerk's office, starting on Oct. 24, in Hamtramck City Hall.

Hours to vote are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

So far, over 2 million voters in the state have requested an absentee ballot for the election.

It's advised that, at this point, you skip mailing back your ballot and instead drop them off at the Hamtramck's city clerk's office in person or at the city hall drop box located in front of Zussman Park – directly across from city hall.

For those not registered to vote, there is still time to do so – including on the day of the election.

Appointment ... There has been controversy over an appointment made by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. She appointed the vice chairman of DTE Energy to the Natural Resources Commission.

Basically criticism – from both Democrats and Republicans – comes down to the proverbial fox guarding the henhouse.

Former state Rep. Abraham Aiyash, a Democrat formerly of Hamtramck, reacted to the appointment with the pithy abbreviation: "lol."

That translates to "laugh out loud" to those unfamiliar with today's internet and texting shorthand lingo.

Planet Ant scares up a show... Local theater troupe Planet Ant often creates original works that get their start from the world of improvisation.

Improv, as the kiddies call it, is its own style of (usually) comedy, with its own set of rules. Done right, with skilled performers who are quick-witted, it can be side-splittingly funny.

There are several groups in town, including Go! Comedy up in Ferndale, but Planet Ant certainly holds its own with the best of them, with its long tradition of dedication to the form.

Whether or not the current

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*Friends of Historical Hamtramck is a 501c3 organization that operates the Hamtramck Historical Museum

City Hall Insider ...

Continued from page 3

operated at that location for many years.

“Why are we changing?” he said. “Leave the festival as is.”

A resident spoke out against councilmembers adding agenda items at the start of meetings.

“Please don’t do it,” the resident said. “Residents should know about (these items), and there are a lot of people who read the agenda before the meeting.”

In an email, Charles Blackwell said that Councilmember Hassan should resign since he was convicted of a misdemeanor charge of making a false statement in a case involving election fraud.

In old business, a lengthy discussion was held on whether to sell three properties on Conant back to two (out of the three) previous owners. The properties, one of which is the former Kabob restaurant, were lost due to delinquent property taxes.

Councilmember Nayeem Choudhury said that “It doesn’t make sense to give back to two owners and leave another owner out.”

At this point, councilmembers talked over each other.

Councilmember Mohamed Alsomiri said the deal is “under the table.”

The council eventually OK’d the sale, with Councilmembers Alsomiri and Yousuf Saed objecting. The city sold the properties for \$100,000.

A discussion was held on whether to fund the creation of a traffic weigh station for trucks, to check if they are overloaded.

Interim City Manager Syed Aamir Hassan said enforcing truck weights will bring in revenue from fines.

The cost of the station, to be located on Hamtramck Dr., would be \$200,000.

City Attorney Odey Meroueh said fines from tickets will produce “a lot of revenue. Truck tickets are way more lucrative than regular tickets. Please approve this.”

Ticket fines are \$1,000, Meroueh said.

Police officers would be assigned to monitor trucks on Hamtramck’s portion of I-75, and trucks that are suspected of being overloaded will be directed to the weigh station.

Deputy Police Chief Andy Mileski said overloaded trucks are “damaging the new roads, and that’s why we have state laws.”

Mayor Adam Alharbi said the cost of the weigh station “will pay for itself.”

Interim City Manager Syed Aamir Hassan said enforcement will help “protect our roads. A lot of trucks are overloaded. We are spending a lot of money fixing these roads because we are not obeying the law. These trucks are getting away with it.”

The proposal was approved.

The council cleared the way for Gajiza L.L.C. to open a restaurant in an empty storefront on Jos. Campau, thanks to a matching \$25,000 grant from the state.

A proposal by Councilmember Choudhury to change city hall’s operational hours on Tuesdays to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. instead of the standard 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. was approved.

Choudhury said this will allow people who can’t make it to city hall during normal business hours to still be able to conduct their business.

“The public comes first,” Choudhury said.

In the mayor’s report, Alharbi said:

“I look forward to make sure that our city moves forward. We have to make sure that we’re focused on the city, and try to not make any disagreements, division.”

He added that the council needs to focus on “improving the lives of our residents.”

Councilmember Hassan commented on his misdemeanor conviction connected with election fraud.

“My case for the election is completely done, with the provision whatever I have done was done by the book,” Hassan said. “I follow the rules. Information was correct, but I have to respect the court judgment. Respectfully, I disagree.”

Hassan then talked about helping a family he

knows from Canada, and that he gave the city a heads up about a “suspicious” signature related to an absentee ballot.

Councilmember Choudhury said, in his turn to speak:

“We are all in this together. The vote is your own vote. You can have your vote your way and other councilmen can have their vote their way.”

He also urged the council to begin searching for a new city manager. He said the city’s interim city manager is also the city’s full-time finance director.

Hamtramck, Choudhury said, needs a professional city manager to stay focused on city employees and various projects.

He said the process to find and hire a city manager will “take a long time. It won’t be just a quick one, two, three searching for a right, perfect candidate for the city. ... It’s going to take time, so we need to start that. That way we’ll have productive and constructive decisions and a better understanding of the city.”

Councilmember Muhtasin Sadman said his votes on council are “based on applicable laws and rules. ... I don’t think we’re doing any illegal stuff here.”

During public comment, Bill Meyer questioned how much money the marijuana dispensaries pay to the city. He said the public was told millions of dollars would be collected.

(According to the state, about \$100 million a year is shared back to communities that are eligible to receive payments collected from dispensary taxes and fees. Over \$116 million is also funneled to public schools. In 2024, Hamtramck received over \$230,000 from its state share.)

On the subject of lawsuits filed against the city, Meyer said the public is not informed about the status of the lawsuits.

“We never know who’s winning the lawsuit. Who lost it? How much it costs? The public doesn’t know. Maybe we’re losing hundreds of thousands (dollars). We don’t even know,” Meyer said.

As for the sale of the Conant properties, “There are conflicts of interest here,” Meyer said, about unnamed city councilmembers.

“We have people on this council who are very close to the owners of this place,” he said. “They probably even own part of the thing. I don’t even know.”

Meyer also accused an unnamed councilmember of signaling to the buyers of property when the sale went through. He did not elaborate.

Later, Councilmember Hassan said he was signaling to someone else in the chamber.

Another speaker during this public comment period asked for transparency, and noted that the lawsuits filed against the city are “way too much. It’s time to stop the lawsuits. Let’s fix the streets.”

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• Hourly 50/50

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Parks Conservancy expands its tennis program for youths

By Basmah Jabril
Special to The Review

A new pilot tennis program held on a few recent evenings at Veterans Park gave more young people in Hamtramck the opportunity to pick up a racket, step onto the court and discover a new sport.

Over the past three Tuesdays, the Hamtramck Parks Conservancy partnered with the Youth Advisory Council to loan free tennis equipment to youths at the Hoxie Courts in Veterans Park.

The program allowed young folks to use rackets and balls without having to purchase their own, removing one of the barriers that can prevent young athletes from getting involved in sports.

Tennis has already developed a following among older teenagers in Hamtramck, but the new program is helping introduce the sport to an even younger group of athletes. Middle school students have now begun taking advantage of the opportunity, mirroring the expanding interest in tennis throughout the community.

The equipment was made available through a grant from Leveling the Playing Field, a nonprofit organization that works to provide sports equipment to young people.

Hamtramck youths are taking up tennis lessons at Veterans Park. File Photo

The grant was secured through an application submitted by Hamtramck's Youth Advisory Council, with the goal of making sports more accessible to local youth.

For many young athletes, having access to the proper equipment can mean the difference between watching a sport from the sidelines and actually participating. Programs like this give students the chance to practice their skills, and experience the sport without the financial commitment of having to purchase equipment.

The program also provided an opportunity for young people who may not have previously considered tennis to try something new. At the Hoxie Courts in Veterans Park, participants learned basic skills while becoming more comfortable on the court.

It was not immediately known if the program will continue next season.

(Basmah Jabril is in the 11th grade at Michigan Great Lakes Virtual Academy.)

Odds & Ends

Continued from page 3

rent show germinated from such seedings, we can't say for sure, but we suspect it might have

Titled "My Daddy is Haunted!," this timely October spook piece follows the fictional Maplesquatch family, as they "explore an ancient castle-turned-AirB&B" which once belonged to the much-feared "Sterling Mandrake."

In the vein of old comedy monster thrillers stretching back to the shenanigans of Abbott and Costello as they met the Mummy, Frankenstein and the Werewolf, this show means to spook you even as you howl – with laughter.

The show opens tonight, Friday, Oct. 9, and runs weekends through Sat. Oct 24, with Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 3 p.m. at the Ant Hall, 2320 Caniff (just west of the public library).

Tickets at the door are \$35, but you can save \$5 by going to planetant.com/events and pre-buying them for \$30.

FROM THE OFFICE OF

WAYNE COUNTY TREASURER ERIC R. SABREE



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THIS SUNDAY'S FEATURED EPISODE

TV Show



THIS SUNDAY'S FEATURED EPISODE

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