

Bailey Newsletter

BAILEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



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Circulation: Rilla McHarris

February 2015, Volume 36, No. 1

29th ANNUAL VALENTINE'S PARTY

Place: Orchard Street Pump House

Date: Saturday, February 14th, 2015

Time: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Entertainment: 3:00 p.m. – Jeff the Magician

The B.C.A. and Community Relations Coalition invite you to the 29th Annual Bailey Valentine's Party on Saturday, February 14th, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Orchard Street Pump House (Orchard between Linden and Chittenden). Please join us for card making, cookie decorating, and door prizes. Delicious drinks and snacks will be provided. At 3:00 p.m., the *AMAZING* Jeff the Magician will read your minds, predict the future, and perform wonderful feats of magic! Don't miss this great party to brighten a cold winter's afternoon! Bring your big and little friends and sweethearts! **HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

MORE GREAT PUMP HOUSE CONCERTS

All shows start at 7 p.m.

The Pump House Concerts music series at the Bailey Pump House (corner of Orchard and Linden Streets) brings in top-level talent from Michigan, Nashville, and across the country to play in this special venue. **All shows begin at 7 p.m. unless there is contrary notice, and a \$15 voluntary contribution/person is appreciated for the artists.** More shows may be scheduled beyond those listed below. To check concert schedules, visit pumphouseconcerts@gmail.com to receive updates on shows, or go to www.facebook.com/pumphouseconcerts. You can also call Smitty at 517-927-2100. Here are some of the upcoming concerts:

FRIDAY, February 27th – Rod Picott: The son of a welder and former construction worker from rural New England, Rod Picott is a masterful songwriter and soulful singer who carries as fine a collection of songs as you'll find anywhere. Slaid Cleaves, Ray Wylie Hubbard and Fred Eaglesmith have all recorded Rod

Picott songs. From his debut CD in 2000, he has earned a reputation as an engaging and emotion-fueled performer. For more information, see: www.rodpicott.com.

Saturday, March 28th – Louise Mosrie: 2009 Kerrville Folk Festival New Folk Winner, 2010 Wildflower Festival Contest Winner, and 2011 Falcon Ridge Folk Festival Emerging Artist & ‘Most Wanted to Return,’ Louise Mosrie has won them all! She returns with a new CD, “Lay it Down,” featuring 10 songs of love, loss and surrender. “Basically, she’s William Faulkner with a guitar,” says Rich Warren of WFMT-FM Chicago. For more information, see: <http://www.louisemosrie.com/home.html>.

Thursday, April 16th – Brad Cole, Erin Sax with guest star Chris Edrington. Brad was a hit with his trio last spring. Now he’s back as a duo with the amazing Erin Sax. As a special treat, Christ Edrington will open the show. The songs of Brad Cole address the ups and downs of the human condition with wit and raw insight. His passionate delivery of roots-based folk music, woven with the grit and groove of old school bossa and rhythm & blues, moves the listener’s soul in unexpected directions. He was on the 2013 Top 20 Roots/American chart and 2014 Grassy Hill Kerrville New Folk Finalist. For more information on these three musicians, see: www.bradcolemusic.com, www.erinsax.com, and www.reverbnation.com/chrisedrington.

Icy Sidewalks, Property Owners Responsibility to Clear

As reported in the December *Bailey Newsletter*, the city is now enforcing Ordinance #1326 for snow and ice removal. That article focused on snow removal, but #1326 also requires property owners to clear or mitigate ice on the public sidewalks adjacent to their property. It states: **“Ice should be cleared or an abrasive (salt, sand, etc.) should be applied within 12 hours of formation.”** Following the recent alternations of thaws and freezing temperatures, many of Bailey’s sidewalks are extremely icy and impossible to navigate safely. Burcham Drive has been especially treacherous. *“City Pulse”* even posted Burcham Drive as “eyesore of the week” on January 14th.

Although the City plows the sidewalks along Burcham, homeowners backing up to, or facing, Burcham must still mitigate snow and ice accumulation as well. Ordinance #1326 is enforced by Parking and Code Enforcement (PACE). If you would like to see PACE do this, call them at (517) 351-4220, option 2. Ideally, give the address for the property adjacent to the sidewalk with a problem. We urge homeowners to get out their shovels and salt to improve this situation. (Thanks to Megan Clark, city liaison to the BCA, for her help with this article.)

Possible Redevelopment at NE Corner of Grand River & Spartan

In early January, Joe Goodsir, a principal in Community Resource Management Company, met with the BCA chair and vice-chair and a local homeowner to discuss a possible redevelopment project at the corner of Spartan Avenue and Grand River. This would encompass the former Tasty Twist and gas station and the fraternity to the north. Initial plans are for parking and some commercial space on the first floor and three upper floors of rental units, with no setback along Grand River or Spartan but a setback from the residences to the north. The proposal would require an upzoning of the fraternity property and removal of the large old tree in that yard.

The BCA board will discuss this issue at its next board meeting on Monday, February 9th, 7:30 p.m., in the Bailey Community Center gym. Please come if interested!

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING THE NEWSLETTER: The BCA is attempting to shorten the paper version of the newsletter to control copying costs. A more detailed version can be found online: <http://www.eastlansingneighborhoods.com/Home/Neighborhoods/Bailey/Newsletters>. We encourage you to read that version, too, for the stories below.

CITY COUNCIL VOTES TO CLOSE THE BAILEY COMMUNITY CENTER & REBUFFS EFFORT TO CONTINUE EARLY CHILDCARE THERE*

As you've read recently in the local press, the East Lansing City Council voted on January 20th to discontinue the city childcare program at the Bailey Community Center and use of the building as a community center. At the same meeting (article below) the council voted to set up a process to determine the building's future.

The City Council rebuffed a motion by Council Member Ruth Beier, to move that we direct the City manager to keep Bailey Child Care Center running on the first floor of Bailey until June 30, 2016 and to work with the Bailey Parents' working group to transfer the Child Care service from a city function to a tenant-run program as soon as possible, but no later than June 30, 2016." Only Council Members Beier and Boyle voted for the motion.

As reported in the December *Newsletter*, in September 2014 the BCA board learned for the first time that the city manager and Parks & Recreation Director, Tim McCaffrey, no longer wished to operate the program, which was experiencing declining enrollments and resultant revenue losses. The board also learned for the first time that the city expected two users of the center, the childcare program and the after-school program, to cover 100% of operational costs for the building although not taking up 100% of the space. That meant that losses from the childcare program would prevent the building from breaking even. Some questioned this mode of accounting, including former Mayor Mark Meadows.

Mr. McCaffrey's recommendation was all the more surprising to Bailey residents because in March 2013 the city had hired a new director for the childcare operation, Nora Thompson, and in 2014 had hired additional staff, even exceeding state staffing requirements, which they admitted had not been met until then. On March 10th, Nora Thompson attended a BCA board meeting to describe an initiative to create some raised garden beds in the Bailey Park. All seemed to be going well. Yet only a few months later, she resigned over the city's failure to implement improvements she felt necessary. Following her resignation, Mr. McCaffrey made his recommendation to close the daycare program, leading to the declining enrollments that led to lower expected revenues. The city had left very little time for its investments in the childcare program to yield returns. The program had made money in the past. Some believed that with proper nurturing, it could do so again.

Meanwhile, upon learning of Mr. McCaffrey's recommendation to close childcare at Bailey, a group of parents with children there began to meet with the objective of creating a nonprofit corporation that would continue the childcare program at the community center as an independent, self-sustaining operation. The entity would lease space at the center from the city, paying rent, utilities, service fees, and substantial amortized costs toward the identified deferred maintenance needs at the building. Should it succeed, such a program would meet many of the city's objections to continuing childcare at the center. Working intensively over a short period, the group, led by an MSU scientist and Bailey resident, a successful East Lansing businessman, an operations director for MSU's residence hall system, and an experienced rental property administrator, came up with a concrete proposal and budget to accomplish their goal.

This was presented to the City Council work session on January 13th. The childcare group repeatedly stated their need for the city to operate its childcare service beyond the stop date of June 2015 to give the group the chance to develop the tools and resources necessary to accomplish their goals. It was with this group's efforts in mind that Council Member Beier made her motion for the city to support them and continue operations through June of 2016. The group's efforts were extraordinary, and repeatedly supported by the Bailey Community Association.

During the time that the childcare group was working on their childcare proposal, the city engaged an architectural firm, the Mayotte Group, to inspect the Bailey Community Center to inventory necessary upgrades and repairs to the almost 100 year-old building and give estimates for those improvements. The group's report was presented to the city council at its work session of December 9th.

The report found many items to repair or replace, and separated its recommendations into two groups: those needing immediate action, and those that could be handled over time. The former group included many health/safety infractions. It further divided each group into two sections, a less expensive estimate and a more expensive estimate. The lower cost estimate for immediate repairs was \$476,845. The lower cost for less pressing items was \$280,200.

The costs varied because there were different ways to approach a given problem. For example, the most expensive 'immediate' repair recommended involved a trio of safety hazards: the lack of fire retardant on the steel roof frame, of 20 minute fire-rated doors, and of intumescent coating on certain ceiling tiles. To fix these would cost \$210,000. Alternatively, installing a fire-suppression system that would cost \$130,00 would obviate the need for the previous fixes. In total, the two cost estimates for items requiring immediate repair were \$476,845 vs. \$556,845. The costs for the less pressing items were alternately \$280,200 and \$690,200. The main difference in this case was over the type of heating/cooling method proposed. The least expensive would convert steam heating to hydronic heating for \$90,000. The more expensive, at \$500,000, would require installation of a Variable Refrigerant Flow in the original wing for \$500,000.

In its report, the Mayotte Group stated: **“When the facility was taken over by the City of East Lansing from the East Lansing Public School system in the 1980s, the use of the building as defined by the Building Code changed from Educational to a combination of Assembly and Institutional uses. This change in occupancy should have triggered an evaluation of the use of the building to determine deficiencies related to life safety components of the building construction and systems. It is not apparent that such an evaluation was completed.”**

Obviously such an inventory was needed, given that the Mayotte Group found serious safety violations in the building that had for years put users of the building at risk. Once found, those problems led the city to immediately vacate the second and third floors of the building. Why had the city not done such an inspection years before? And why did it only do so at a time when it was seeking to exit the Bailey building as a community center, thus piling onto the reasons for taking such an action? It's important to note that for years the city has estimated needed repairs for Bailey at about \$500,000. That's a constant, and alone would not have been cause to close the building. It was that cost **plus** the operating deficit from the childcare operation that served as the excuse to close the building.

At the Council meeting on January 20th, some 25 people spoke in favor of keeping the childcare program going or supporting the childcare group's efforts and in support of the Beier motion. Council Member Beier deserves thanks for all her efforts on behalf of childcare at Bailey. No one spoke against the motion, as reported in detail by www.eastlansinginfo.org. Citizens cited the importance of the community center to the stability of the neighborhood, its role in attracting families to the area, the failure of the city staff to properly weigh the costs of closing the building (both because the city would need to undertake a number of repairs in any case given that the first floor would remain occupied until September, and the city would need to keep the building heated and lit once closed), the need for daycare and its importance to those working downtown and at MSU, and the way that the childcare group's proposals solved many of the problems the city had cited as cause for shutting down their childcare service. All to no avail.

Those following this matter expected Mayor Triplett and Pro-Tem Mayor Goddeeris to vote against Council Member Beier's motion. They obliged. Mayor Triplett noted that the childcare program could not be looked at in isolation from the city's overall budget and the capital expenditures needed to improve the building. He stated that until the process to choose a use for the building was completed, it was unknown which expenditures would need to be incurred. He spoke of holding these costs 'in abeyance' rather than not doing them at some point. This seemed to concede that the city might end up making some or all of the improvements required by the Mayotte Group's list, making the issue of the cost to the city of capital improvements at Bailey questionable, since they might be done in any case for a different user.

Mayor Pro-Tem Goddeeris prefaced her comments by stating that while there was little question that the city needed childcare, the main question for her was whether the City should provide it. Given that the proposal before her was to support a group that would create a *private* entity to run a childcare program at Bailey, her statement seemed odd. In the end, having childcare at Bailey was simply not a priority for her over other city expenditures such as public parks, the aquatic center, or trails. She had publicly stated this position in September as well.

Most disappointing for the Bailey residents engaged on this issue was the vote against the motion by Bailey resident, and in this case, swing vote, Council Member Susan Woods. While proclaiming her love of the neighborhood, she could not support the motion because of other budget needs. She stated that there were two issues involved in the decision: the childcare proposal, and the building. She invited the childcare group to continue their work and seek to rent a space elsewhere to run their program, evidently failing to grasp that the group required the city to continue its childcare program for a while in order for the group's plan to get off the ground. She declared that the 'building' part of the problem was 'solved,' presumably by the process the council had just approved. She went on to call the possibilities for the building's future "exciting."

Several things became clear during the discussion of the Beier motion: (1) The city staff had not provided and did not know the costs to the city of closing the Bailey Community Center (costs to light and heat and seal, possible increased police costs to prevent vandalism, or possible costs to do some of the repairs mentioned in the Mayotte report). (2) The city council did not know the actual costs for any of the repairs outlined in the Mayotte report, for these were only estimates and they had not sought bids from contractors. (3) Depending on the outcome of the building-use process, the city might have to make capital improvements to Bailey (a major reason to close the building) in future. Those improvements were said by the Mayor to be held 'in abeyance,' rather than declined. Note that if the city council decides NOT to make many of the improvements, it will limit potential users of the building to those who can afford to make the repairs. This would eliminate many nonprofit groups. (4) Since the childcare group that was proposing to rent the east wing of the center had approached virtually all of the childcare groups in the region to see if they wished to operate out of Bailey and they did not, voting against the group's proposal most likely means that such a future use of the building is unlikely. (5) The final figures from the city staff about potential building repair and maintenance costs were only provided to the City Council on the day of their meeting, giving the council little time to digest them.

Throughout the discussion on January 20th, the Council never considered alternative ways to fund the childcare group's proposal or improvements to the building, such as a special assessment to the Bailey neighborhood or a loan of some sort (Council Member Beier at a previous meeting had suggested a kind of TIF to pay for improvements). Not once did a city council member take the city staff to task for having operated a city building that was seriously unsafe. (Note: the Council voted to change the stop date for the childcare program to September 4th at its January 27th work session.)

What's Next for the Bailey Community Center? Council Votes for 'Strategic Doing' Process*

At its regular meeting on January 20th, the City Council unanimously approved a resolution to initiate a process called 'Strategic Doing' to determine how to use the Bailey Community Center.

The resolution notably begins by recognizing that "the Bailey Community Center and the surrounding green space are important and valuable assets to the city of East Lansing" and that "the location of the Bailey Community Center and surrounding green space results in a significant impact on the Bailey neighborhood." These statements would seem to support the preservation of the community center building in a future scenario. The resolution instructs the City Manager or designee, along with a trained consultant, to "engage in a collaborative process such as the Strategic Doing model developed at Purdue University." The process is to begin as soon as possible, no later than June 1, 2015, and conclude no later than 6 months from commencement. *Here is the resolution in full:*

CITY OF EAST LANSING POLICY RESOLUTION 2015-2

A RESOLUTION TO ENGAGE IN A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
FOR THE BAILEY COMMUNITY CENTER

WHEREAS, the Bailey Community Center and the surrounding green space are important and valuable assets to the city of East Lansing; and

WHEREAS, the location of the Bailey Community Center and surrounding green space results in a significant impact on the Bailey neighborhood and its residents; and

WHEREAS, the East Lansing neighborhoods, including the Bailey neighborhood, are a crucial part of high quality life in the City of East Lansing, which the City wishes to preserve; and

WHEREAS, the City of East Lansing must consider the costs of the present use of the Bailey Community Center and the costs of the requirements of maintaining the Community Center and grounds to operate them in a safe and usable condition;

WHEREAS, the collaborative process developed at Purdue University known as Strategic Doing has been successful in developing complex strategic action plans and in helping communities meet challenges of this nature;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Manager, or his designee, together with a trained consultant retained by the City, shall form a core team to engage in a collaborative process such as the Strategic Doing model developed at Purdue University to determine how the building and grounds can best serve the Bailey neighborhood and the entire East Lansing community. Said process shall commence as soon as possible and no later than June 1, 2015, and shall be concluded no later than six (6) months from commencement unless otherwise directed by Council.

We don't know much about 'strategic doing,' and invite you to check out <http://strategicdoing.net>. The 'rumors' section of the city's website describes Strategic Doing thus: "The Strategic Doing process will result in the formation of a committee made up of City and community stakeholders who will collaborate to come up with an agreed-upon plan for the Bailey Community Center. The City also plans to gather community-wide input during the Strategic Doing process."

It is not yet clear what the city means by 'stakeholders,' who will sit on the committee, or the role the BCA or Bailey residents would play in that process.

Decisions about the future of the center face several hurdles if the city follows standard zoning procedures: (1) The Bailey Community Center (BCC) lies within a historic district and Bailey Street and Collingwood south of the center are both in a historic district. (2) The Bailey Community Center is zoned 'C' for community-type uses and surrounded by land zoned for low-intensity housing. The current comprehensive plan (2006), the 'Big Picture,' does not call for increasing the intensity of uses immediately south of the BCC. Certain uses, such as apartments or offices might therefore constitute a 'spot zone,' if proposed. (3) In order to sell the building, the city would at present have to get a 3/5ths majority of votes from the electorate, not easy to achieve. However, the city council is discussing changing the city charter to make sale of city property easier. (See article below.) (4) It is not true that the Comprehensive Plan now in place calls for repurposing the Bailey Community Center. It states: Action 6-1.1: "Based on an evaluation of community needs, consider alternative and/or additional uses for under-used public facilities such as the Bailey Community Center building..." Note that "additional uses" are considered in addition to "alternative uses."

City Council Takes Up Charter Amendment on Sale of City Property*

As an outgrowth of last November's failure to get a 3/5ths majority vote of the citizen to allow sale of City-owned parking lots to advance the Park District redevelopment, the City Council, at its January 27th work session, took up possible amendments to the city charter that would change Section 4.8.b, the charter provision that outlines procedures the Council must follow to sell City-owned real estate. As indicated, the charter presently requires that a 3/5ths "super-majority" vote (rather than a simple 50% +1 majority) of the electorate to approve the sale of City property valued over \$4/capita, or about \$196,000. Presently, City property valued at less than \$196,000 can be sold with the approval of a simple Council majority (3 out of 5 votes).

City Attorney Yeadon presented four charter amendment variations at the meeting, but the council couldn't agree on any of them. Most of the Council's discussion focused on whether approval of City-owned property sales, either by the voters or council, should continue to require a super-majority vote. In addition, the Council discussed amending the charter to raise the property value that would require any vote of the electorate, to a value of as much as \$25/capita, or a property value of about \$1,225,000. Since few City-owned properties would exceed that value, most non-park City property sales could be approved, under a charter amendment of that kind, by a simple majority vote of the City Council, without a vote of the electorate.

At Council's direction, Mr. Yeadon redrafted four variations of proposed charter amendment ballot language for consideration at their February 3rd meeting. (See the online version of this *Newsletter*.)

In order to get ballot language on the May 5th ballot, the Council will have to approve ballot language by February 10th. A number of neighborhood residents report receiving an automated telephone survey on such a ballot measure. To find out what happens next, read the agenda for the next City Council Meeting on Feb. 3rd at http://eastlansing.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=330. The four proposed amendments are under item #24. This is important, so you may want to watch or attend the meeting. (Thanks to Konrad Hittner for this article.)

***References:** The new web newsletter, www.eastlansinginfo.org, has detailed stories about the Bailey Community Center, the charter amendment proposals as well as logs of city council work sessions, which are not recorded. Important city council meetings taking up the matters discussed above are: work sessions for 2014 -- Sept. 23rd, item 8 (BCC), Dec. 9th, item 7 (BCC); 2015: Jan. 13th, Item 15 (Strategic Doing process); Jan. 27th, item 9 (charter), item 18 (extends close date for BCC to Sept. 4th). Regular City Council Meetings: Oct 21st, 2014, item 21 on charter, 2015: Jan. 20th (BCC) and February 3rd, item #24, (charter). To read the important memos and analyses on these and other topics, look at the agendas for the dates given and click on the memos and analyses. From the city's homepage at www.cityofeastlansing.com click "Departments" then "City Council," then "Archived Meetings." See also: <http://www.cityofeastlansing.com/576/Agendas-Minutes-Videos>.

About the Bailey Community Association

The Bailey Community Association was founded to enhance the residential quality of life for those living in the Bailey Neighborhood. The Bailey neighborhood extends from Hagadorn to Abbot, and from Saginaw to Grand River. Anyone living within the boundaries of the neighborhood is welcome to join the association. The BCA Board of Directors meets on the second Monday of each month except August at 7:30 p.m. at the Bailey Community Center. Meetings are open to the public, and all residents are urged to attend meetings with their concerns. If you have questions, please contact Chairperson Konrad Hittner at khittner1@gmail.com or Vice-Chairperson Erik Altmann at ema@msu.edu.

Dues help the Bailey Community Association to organize meetings where viewpoints and concerns can be aired, organize "meet the candidates" forums; organize and complete Bailey park and neighborhood cleanup days; work with MSU's Community Relations Coalition; work with the Pump House Board to organize social events such as the Ice Cream Social and Valentine's Party; and publicize these through emails and newsletters. Don't forget the **Bailey website** for updates and more information: <http://www.eastlansingneighborhoods.com/Home/Neighborhoods/Bailey/>.

BCA MEMBERSHIP and ANNUAL DUES FORM
NOTE: Membership dues are due only ONCE/year!

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

ANNUAL DUES:

\$10.00 for couples and families

\$5.00 for everyone else

(Please send dues to: Jim Liesman, 436 Division Street, East Lansing, MI. 48823.) Checks should be made out to the Bailey Community Association. If you are sending annual dues, please make a note of the date for your records. Thank you!)

Thanks to the City of East Lansing for helping to pay for the copying of this *Newsletter!*