

Bailey Newsletter

BAILEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



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February 2014, Vol. 35, No. 1

28th ANNUAL VALENTINE'S PARTY

Place:	Orchard Street Pump House
Date:	Sunday, February 9th, 2014
Time:	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Entertainment:	2 p.m. – 3 p.m., The Jugglers
Entertainment:	Beginning at 3 p.m., Jeff the Magician

The *B.C.A.* and *Community Relations Coalition* invite you to the 28th Annual Bailey Valentine's Party on Sunday, February 9th 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. From 2 – 3 p.m. **THE JUGGLERS** will circulate, showing off their art and teaching the basics of juggling to those who ask. At 3:00 p.m., **the amazing Jeff the Magician** will read your minds, predict the future, and perform UNBELIEVABLE 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 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, so to check concert schedules, please send an email to pumphouseconcerts@gmail.com to receive updates on shows, or go to www.facebook.com/pumphouseconcerts and www.baileyneighborhood.org. You can also call Smitty at 517-927-2100. Here are some of the upcoming concerts. Please consult the above sources for more information.

SATURDAY Feb 8th - DRIVE SOUTH: What do Freddy Fender, Ringo Starr, Gerry Rafferty and Drive South have in common? Roger Brown - a visionary songwriter whose versatility and accomplished finger style guitar work drive this duo's creative take on traditional country and Americana music. Mary Sue Wilkinson is a perfect complement to Roger, with

a voice as pure as a Northern Michigan stream and as warm as a southern night. More information at www.drivesouthmusic.com.

FRIDAY Feb 28th - LIZ LONGLEY: Liz Longley, a Berklee College of Music grad, is best known for her stop-you-in-your-tracks voice and for crafting intimately personal portraits through her songwriting. Liz recently won top prize in the BMI John Lennon International Songwriting Competition, the International Acoustic Music Awards and the Rocky Mountain Folk Fest Songwriting Competition. The Washington Post declared that Liz is “destined for a larger audience”. John Mayer is a fan calling her music “gorgeous, simply gorgeous.” For more information, see www.lizlongley.com.

SAT. Mar 29th - NATHAN BELL (NOTE – date is tentative!): As the son of Iowa’s first poet laureate, Nathan Bell brings literate and literary songwriting supported by a solid grounding in guitar-based American music forms. He was Alt-country & Americana long before these terms were coined. “Peopled with drinkers and fighters, lovers and flings, [Bell’s] carefully drawn tales are united by a strong sense of character, story and emotion.” ---- *Rolling Stone*. For more information, see www.nathanbellmusic.com.

Park District Update

At the January Bailey board meeting, Lori Mullins, the City’s Community & Economic Development Administrator, updated the board on what’s happening with the Park District (City Center II). When the original plans for this development did not go forward because of financial and other difficulties facing the original development group, which was led by the East Lansing based Strathmore Development Company, the city put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) asking for developers to come forward with proposals to develop the city’s portion of the project. The original plan had included both city-owned property and privately owned property that was managed by Strathmore.

After seven proposals were submitted to the city, in February of 2013 the City Council selected DTN Management Company to move the project forward. DTN was given until December 31st to come up with a site plan, but found the task more complex than anticipated and requested, and received, an extension until February 28th 2014. Creating the plan requires many iterations and back & fourth discussions among different stakeholders.

Of interest to board members was the information that Scott Chapelle, the President of Strathmore Development, still may partner in this endeavor. Strathmore has paid its taxes and escaped foreclosure. The total area of the land controlled by the City and the Downtown Development Authority in this project, consisting primarily of eight properties, is 2.8 acres. The area controlled by Strathmore, including the old bank building on Abbot and Grand River, is about 1.5 acres. Thus far, all of DTN’s plans have included the Strathmore properties.

Two existing public parking lots are included in the footprint of this plan, one south of Dublin Square and one north of People’s Church. These must be sold by the city for the project to go forward in current form. However, the sale of this property requires approval from the voters. That election is likely to be timed for the primary elections in August. State law requires that if property is valued at \$4/citizen or more, its sale requires a vote of the people.

If you would like to see the various plans for the development, look at www.elparkdistrict.com or www.cityofeastlansing.com/parkdistrict or. (Thanks very much to Lori Mullins for her help with this article.)

New Proposal by DTN for Garten Haus Apartments (the small cottages on Beech and Gunson)

In addition to the Park District redevelopment, DTN Management is also continuing its redevelopment efforts for the property it manages at the corner of Gunson and Beech Streets, known as the Garten Haus Apartments. A previous DTN proposal for this property was rejected in the Fall of 2012 by both the Planning Commission

and the City Council. On December 17th 2013, DTN's new consulting architect, Dave Vanderklok, presented a new redevelopment proposal for the property to a dozen nearby Bailey residents during a meeting held at the Pump House. Vanderklok advised that the existing small buildings on the site had become uneconomical for DTN to keep repaired, hence, the firm's desire to replace them. DTN's new proposal, which, unlike the previous proposal, would not require rezoning of the property, includes demolition of the existing buildings, and construction of five new 2-story, 4-unit buildings that would feature ground-level parking under each unit, and two bedrooms in each unit for a total of 40 licensed beds. Vanderklok indicated that this number of beds is actually fewer than the property is currently licensed for (48).

With vehicle parking arranged under the 4-unit buildings, and units being two-stories above that, the overall height of the proposed structures and their visual impact, as presented in Vanderklok's renderings, were among several concerns for the nearby residents who attended the meeting. Vanderklok said that he would rework the proposal further to try and reduce the buildings' apparent height and visual impact, and that he'd bring back the revisions for another meeting with concerned residents. A timetable for a presentation of a revised plan by Vanderklok, further public approval processes, or construction, all remain undetermined at this time. (Thanks very much to Konrad Hittner for this report.)

Increased Building Heights Proposed for B2 District

The City proposed a new ordinance, Ordinance No. 1322, that would amend Section 50-573 of Division 3 of the City's Zoning Code (Chapter 50) to change building heights in B2 districts.

Its effect is to allow buildings in B2 districts to be up to six stories in height on any size parcel; the current ordinance allows a maximum of four stories on parcels less than 2 acres and six stories on parcels of 2 acres or more. Maximum heights are allowed only with a special use permit. Special use permits place additional requirements on new structures such as bigger setbacks from adjacent residential property and demonstrations that the added height will not overburden public utilities or services or harm traffic flow.

B2 districts are scattered throughout the city, including the Trowbridge corridor, the Park District (the site of Bigby and Crunchy's), and, in Bailey, along the north side of Grand River between Kedzie and Hagadorn.

The staff report accompanying Ord. 1322, published with the agenda for the Jan. 22, 2013 Planning Commission meeting, indicates that the rationale behind limiting 6 story buildings to parcels larger than 2 acres "has been questioned in the past by both the City Council and the Planning Commission," but does not indicate a basis for the questioning and does not spell out specific benefits of allowing 6 story buildings on smaller parcels.

At the Bailey board meeting of January 13th, several board members suggested that allowing additional building height in the B2 districts might be the basis of a mechanism to transfer rental licenses from single-family homes to apartment buildings. City Council members suggested this possibility in work session discussions last year. However, the proposed ordinance, as written, specifies no such mechanism. Other board members expressed misgivings about allowing buildings of this height adjacent to single-family residences.

The Bailey board awaits further elucidation from the city staff on this matter and is monitoring it as it goes forward. (Thanks to Erik Altmann for his help with this article.)

The Aftermath of the Ice Storm

I. The City

Citizens of East Lansing were hard struck by the ice storm of December 22th. While some Bailey areas such as parts of Bailey Street did not lose electricity for long, others such as the block bounded by Snyder, Beech, Butter-

field, and Collingwood, lost power for 10 days.

On January 13th, the Bailey board discussed the city's handling of the crisis with Megan Clark, Assistant to the City Manager.

She began by referencing a presentation about the city's response to the event given by the City Manager, Fire Chief, Police Chief and Public Works director at the January 7th, 2014 City Council meeting. (This presentation may be viewed online at the City's website http://eastlansing.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=253 or visit cityofeastlansing.com/meetings; under Archived Meetings, click on City Council and then 2014). She recommended that everyone view this in order to understand the city's response. She also noted that the city, like many, only had information being provided by the BWL, thus basing its initial actions on the time line provided.

She suggested that all citizens should do as much as possible to prepare their individual households for emergency events. This might consist of having on hand stocks of bottled water and canned foods, having a 'go pack' to allow quick exit from one's dwelling, and having family communications plans in place for such events. She advised citizens to check out a local website called DO1THING.com, which she compared to the federal Ready.gov, to get helpful information on such preparations.

In general, she noted that the city's emergency preparedness plan was part of a broader county plan. For example, East Lansing has no shelters, which must have food preparation areas as well as sleeping quarters, but had offered the Bailey Community Center as a 'warming center.' Shelters are typically run by the Red Cross because of the training and potential special requirements. They are not permanent, but created in different locations depending on the emergency. Neither Hannah nor the Bailey Community Center had backup generators in case of emergencies, thus would not currently qualify to serve as a shelter.

Bailey board members raised several concerns. First was the lack of communication. Without electricity, how could citizens know what the problems were or how the city was handling them since their televisions and computers were not working? B.C.A. chair Konrad Hittner suggested that radio communication might get around the electricity problem. Megan Clark indicated the city did send out press releases to local radio stations, but those stations may have chosen not to report. Working with those stations for assistance in future situations is something that the city could work on, or on other methods of emergency broadcasting.

It is also true that many citizens are unaware of the region's broader plans to handle emergencies. For example, if people must evacuate, say after a tornado or flood, what routes should they take? How can they find out where county shelters are located? Can neighborhood networks be created to facilitate communications between citizens and city and within neighborhoods? Should the city consider creating local shelters or overnight warming stations by adding generators to some of their public buildings in cases where there is even more widespread and longer-lasting electrical outages? Shouldn't there be better systems in place to allow communications between the city's fire, police, and emergency personnel and the utilities? These are areas that need further clarification from the city. (Many thanks to Megan Clark for her helpful comments on this article.)

II. BWL

As most of you know, the Lansing Board of Water and Light has come under considerable criticism for its handling of repairs to the electrical system following the ice storm. In response to public outcry, it has held several forums to elicit the observations and suggestions from citizens affected by the outages. One of these was held at the Hannah Community Center on Wednesday, January 15th. Peter Lark, the General Manager of BWL and other members of the upper management attended the meeting as well as Dennis Louney, Vice Chair of the Lansing Board of Water and Light. East Lansing City Council member Diane Goddeeris and City Manager George Lahanas attended as well as State Representative Sam Singh. Over 100 members of the public were at the meeting.

This report is primarily based on the detailed notes provided by Alice Dreger, and the recollections of Thomas Baumann, Secretary of the Bailey Community Association, and former council member and Bailey resident Bev Baten, both of whom attended this meeting. Its purpose is simply to state the most frequent points made by the participants.

After Mr. Lark opened the meeting by reading an apology to the community for not having gotten power up more quickly and for failing to provide accurate information about restoration efforts and other matters, he indicated that this forum was an effort to learn from the community. He promised that by mid February the BWL would issue a full report answering people's questions.

As over twenty people spoke in some detail, a number of themes emerged:

First, many recounted their personal stories about how they had coped with the outage, dealing with spoiled food, motel stays, missed holiday plans and privations. The timing of the outage during a holiday period added poignancy to their narratives.

Many, however, emphasized that a power shortage of that length was not simply an inconvenience, but a disaster, which held life and death consequences. For persons with disabilities (mental and physical), the elderly, and the economically disadvantaged, the disconnect of electricity meant a disconnect from their ability to get aid. Several people described the arcing of electricity over their housetops, and fire from downed lines in the street. The situation held considerable danger.

A number of people expressed anger at Mr. Lark for celebrating Christmas in New York with his son while people in the broader Lansing community went without heat or light, and BWL linesmen put in 16-hour days making repairs. Some called for his resignation. In addition, several people compared BWL's response to the emergency unfavorably to the response by Consumers Energy. A number of people were upset that East Lansing residents had no representation on BWL's board and felt this had led to dismissive treatment of East Lansing residents' complaints. A few called for East Lansing to use Consumers Energy instead of BWL in future.

Many also discussed their inability to report their problems to BWL, the ineffectiveness and impersonality of the recordings supposedly taking their information. More broadly, people complained about the lack of communications coming from BWL so that people could understand where the outages were and where power was being restored, how to use private contractors if necessary, and general information about how to proceed in such a situation.

While many agreed that BWL lacked a good communications system, some also noted that reliance on email, twitter and social media would not help in a situation where people lacked power. Some suggested that in such circumstances, boots on the ground was the only system that worked for sure. One person suggested making better use of public libraries as information centers.

Some noted that while many people were able to cope during this outage, others had problems. They suggested that the authorities needed priority lists of those who were most vulnerable: the elderly, sick and disabled. Such lists, which could be developed in part from voter lists and medical priority lists, would allow authorities to target these individuals and households for emergency assistance and power restoration. Better coordination with non-profit organizations such as Meals on Wheels and senior citizen organizations was also suggested.

One person suggested the creation of micro-grids to help isolate emergency services and the development of local sources of renewable energy.

Many people stated that the BWL had been poorly prepared and needed to develop a much better emergency preparedness plan, as well as a much more robust system of maintaining and updating its infrastructure. From this meeting, one gained a sense of people left adrift at a difficult time, a chaotic and poorly planned response

from the BWL, and less help from other public officials and authorities than was needed.

To contact BWL with questions, go to grs@lbwl.com. For general information and announcements about changes being made by BWL, go to their website at lbwl.com. For a complete copy of Alice Dredger’s wonderful notes, please refer to bit.ly/1eH9CoV. (Thanks to Erik Altmann, Bev Baten, Alice Dreger, and Thomas Baumann for help with this article.)

Bailey Annual Meeting will be on Thursday, April 24th

The Annual Meeting for the Bailey Community Association will be held on Thursday, April 24th, time and place to be announced in the next newsletter. All residents living in the Bailey neighborhood who wish to nominate themselves or others to be on the board are encouraged to apply to the board to be nominated. To be eligible, a person must live within the neighborhood’s boundaries and be a member of the association (membership form below). We also encourage those so inclined to attend Bailey board meetings to get a sense for what the position entails. Please see the article below describing the purposes and meeting schedule of the association and the contact information for the association’s chair and vice chair.

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.

BCA Website

Don’t forget the Bailey website for updates and more information: www.baileyneighborhood.org.

BCA MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

ANNUAL DUES:

\$7.00 for couples and families

\$4.00 for singles

\$3.00 for couples and singles over 65 or for students

(Please send dues to Michelle Lane, 417 Butterfield Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823. Checks should be made out to the Bailey Community Association.)

Thanks to the City of East Lansing for helping to pay for, and put out this Newsletter!