

Northville Matters

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City of Northville • 215 West Main Street • Northville, Michigan 48167

Parks & Recreation Commission enhances lifestyles and the environment

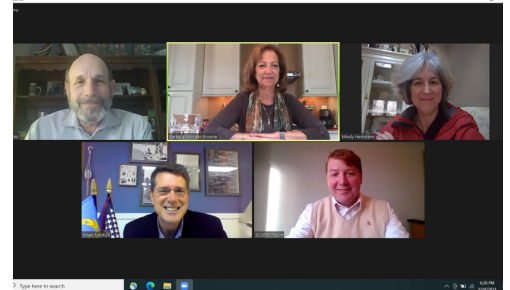
Northville residents and those from surrounding communities have access to more fun, more friends and more activities due in large part to the commission that sets policy for the Department of Parks & Recreation, a shared service between the city and township. Local residents enjoy everything from soccer, lacrosse and softball to parties, tennis, pickleball, yoga, day camp, musical performances, and outdoor movie nights.

The Northville Parks and Recreation Commission is dedicated to providing quality recreation experiences that encourage healthy lifestyles, enhance social and community development, and cultivate lifelong enrichment opportunities for all ages on a year-round basis, while striving to be good stewards of our natural resources. That's the mission statement of a board comprised of two City Council members, a school board member, and three Township trustees. They are Mayor Brian Turnbull, City Council Member Barbara Moroski-Browne, Township Supervisor Mark Abbo, Township

Trustees Scott Frush and Mindy Herrmann, and School District Board Member Angela Jaafar.

The commission sets policy and the budget for the department with input from Recreation Director Mark Gasche and his staff, residents, and agencies that deal with the environment and sports/activities. One of the biggest policy moves in recent years was switching the department administratively from the city to the township on Jan. 1, 2018. While seamless to those outside the two municipalities, it changed the department's fiscal year, Human Resources, Accounting and other support services. Construction at Hillside has displaced the department offices during remodeling of the original building. When the staff returns in Fall 2021, they will have gained a new entrance, new offices and a new parking lot. During construction, temporary offices were set up at the Northville Township Administration Office.

"It's nice to have support from multiple staff and managers (city and township) to work



Clockwise, from left: Supervisor Mark Abbo, Barbara Moroski-Browne, Mindy Herrmann, Scott Frush and Mayor Brian Turnbull. Not pictured: Angela Jaafar.

with, and be able to get assistance from elected officials," said Gasche. "We also have a wonderful partnership with the school district."

A big win for the commission and department was the completion of a nearly \$1 million project to rebuild the banks of the Johnson Creek in Fish Hatchery Park. That was accomplished last summer at the popular park that offers tennis courts, a play structure (to be replaced in 2022) and baseball fields. New plantings and a pathway

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Retailers, restaurants are rebounding from the pandemic

When the novel coronavirus struck Michigan in March 2020, some people were fearful that businesses in Downtown Northville would crash and burn. After all, people were on lockdown – no commuting to jobs or taking kids to school and after-school activities. New work-from-home routines took effect.

As such, people no longer stopped at the local coffee shop for their morning brew or swung by

a trendy clothing store or flower shop while out and about. Downtown workers who often ate breakfast and lunch at local restaurants began making their own meals at home. New clothes, massages, nail treatments, and hair styling weren't a priority for people with no parties or events to attend.

What's a business to do? For Northville retailers, restaurants and the DDA, the answer

was to get moving, stay connected to cohorts and the community, and deploy creative solutions.

From mid-March through early June, most restaurants and some stores were open only for online orders, pick-up or deliveries. That worked for some, such as Browndog Barlor, which sells specialty food items, but not for others, such as Pear-aphernalia, a home goods store, and Dear

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Left: Paul Gabriel, co-owner of BrownDog, in his restaurant.



Right: Mother-daughter team Jenny Grochowski (left) and Peggy Stoe are thriving in their new location at 111 Main.

NOTICES

Northville Public Schools Operating Millage Renewal

Consider voting by mail – a safe way to vote

All registered voters in Michigan have the right to vote by mail without providing a reason. To obtain an absentee ballot for the May 4 Special Election, you can complete and submit your application online through this link: <https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/avapplication>. The application is emailed directly to the clerk. Applications are also available in the City Hall 24-hour vestibule.

The deadline to have a ballot mailed is 5 p.m., April 30. Apply earlier to avoid mail delays. You can also pick up your own ballot in person at the City Clerk's Office through 4 p.m. on May 3. The photo ID requirement is in effect.



Voter Registration April 20 to 8 p.m. Election Day, May 4

Register in person at Northville City Clerk's Office, 215 W. Main Street. Residency verification is required. You may vote by absentee ballot or at your polling place on Election Day. Residency verification documents must have your name and current address. Digital copies are acceptable.

Facts at a glance:

Polls open: 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Precinct 1 (Wayne County voters): Northville Community Center, 303 W. Main St.

Precinct 2 (Oakland County voters): Amerman School, 847 N. Center St.

Am I registered to vote? Where can I view the ballot? Do I need a photo ID?

To learn the answers to these questions and more, visit the Elections and Voting section of the City website. In addition to checking your voter information, you can also view and print a sample ballot.

Water meter replacement appointments

If you received a letter from the city to replace your water meter and haven't yet scheduled it, please call 248-449-9930.

Siren sounds could be a test or the real thing

The outdoor warning sirens are tested on the first Saturday of each month from March through November at 1 p.m. If the siren sounds at other times, take notice and take action. Every year, people are killed or injured by tornadoes or high winds, which can bring down trees and power lines, and also cause serious structural damage to your home.

The National Weather Service will issue a Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Watch when weather conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, including the possibility of tornadoes. Put away small objects such as garbage cans or bicycles, which could become dangerous if tossed around during strong winds. A Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Warning will be issued when a tornado has been sighted or when a tornado or severe thunderstorm is indicated on radar.

The City of Northville has three outdoor warning sirens that can be activated to provide advance warning of impending severe weather. They are located on Cady Street by the library, on Taft Road north of Eight Mile Road, and in the vicinity of South Main Street and Seven Mile Road. These sirens will be activated by the dispatch center in the event of a Tornado Warning or a Severe Thunderstorm Warning with winds of 70 miles per hour.

The sirens will sound for three minutes, and this is your signal to immediately seek shelter. Go to an interior room, away from windows, on the lowest level of your home or in a sturdy building. When safely inside, check weather reports to learn what's happening. Avoid calling dispatch just for weather information as they will be busy attending to emergency needs. Stay alert, seek shelter and stay safe. Oakland County has information on its website about emergency preparedness. View it here: <https://tinyurl.com/2xszey2>



City Hall is open by appointment only

City Hall is closed to the public except for scheduled appointments when a transaction must be done in person. Citizens are encouraged to conduct business online and by phone, email, regular mail and by using the drop box in the vestibule or circular drive. These measures are in effect since COVID-19 cases remain high in the region and state.

Inside the building, masks must be worn. Cover your coughs and sneezes with the inside of your arm. Please refrain from using the City Hall restrooms. Drinking fountains have been turned off. Elevators should be used only by individuals who can't climb steps.

Meetings continue to be held online (Zoom platform) with login and call-in information posted on the website and in City News.

Visit our website for news and updates about city services. If you have questions, please call the city manager at 248-449-9905 or send an email to info@ci.northville.mi.us. To schedule an appointment, call 248-349-1300. Follow us on twitter and Facebook for more immediate updates.

COVID-19 vaccine clinic draws 3,000

The city, township and Wayne County teamed up to open a clinic for Northville residents on March 26 and April 1 at the VisTaTech Center at Schoolcraft Community College. In total, 3,000 inoculations were given by the National Guard along with Wayne County nurses.

People age 18 and older made appointments online and by phone at the township. The second dosage of Moderna will be given at the same location and scheduled time 28 days after the first.

Lines at VisTaTech snaked around the building but moved quickly. Residents who received an inoculation were grateful to be protected against a virus that saw rates of infections climb in March.

"Thank you for your continued patience as we work hard to do our part in stopping the spread of COVID-19 with this clinic," said Northville Mayor Turnbull.

More clinics may be held in the future. For updates, visit VaccinateNorthville.com and the City of Northville website.

Retailers...continued from page 1

Prudence, a clothing store for women and teens.

"We shut down March 23 and thought it would be for a few weeks but ended up closing for three months," said Jenny Grochowski, co-owner of Pear-aphernalia. "We almost lost the business. We applied for everything (COVID-19 financial relief funds) but got nothing."

In June, the DDA and City Council, with strong support from businesses and residents, adopted a plan to close Main St. between Hutton and Center and N. Center St. between Main and Dunlap to create an L-shaped outdoor pedestrian mall. Retailers set their goods on the sidewalks and restaurants expanded their seating areas. There was live music on weekends for ambiance. Social distancing and masks (inside businesses) were required.

"In June, people were scared and weren't coming out," Grochowski recalled. "It was eerie, there were no cars. When restaurants opened a week or so later, things picked up. Our customers came through. We would take pictures of items in our store and text them at their request. We had some huge orders."

Aimy Young, manager of Dear Prudence, said when the streets first closed, they lost a segment of business. "Center Street was a little New York

during rush hour. We got calls from people in their cars asking us to hold things they saw in the window."

When the car-window-shopping business halted, the Social District brought back local customers and new shoppers from out of town. "People who were reluctant to come downtown decided it was safer when the Social District opened," Young said. "We were seeing a lot more families and people from other cities. The City has done a good job promoting it."

Dear Prudence was determined to keep all of their staff. "As a small business, we rely on our staff. Without them, we would not be who we are. We paid our staff the entire shutdown," said Young. "Our customers know that they are supporting a local business that supports their people."

Paul Gabriel, co-owner of Browndog Barlor, said, "For us, the #1 thing we did right was to adapt to everything as quickly as possible. We completely rebuilt our website, and ever since then we kept rolling with the punches. It was the key to staying relevant."

Pear-aphernalia used the sidewalk space to create a welcoming environment that enticed customers to come inside. Things really took off

in July and continued in the fall and winter. They are still doing well today, after moving in January to a smaller retail space at 111 Main.

In winter, the DDA and business community made the decision to purchase heated, open-air stands for food vendors and companion pods for outdoor diners. First dibs went to local restaurants, such as Browndog, North Center Brewery and Tuscan Café, which put together hot food and drinks, and snack items. Most of them did a brisk business even on cold, snowy weekends.

Browndog had a more robust business this winter than it had last winter – before the pandemic struck. "The Social District and outdoor dining really saved us," Gabriel said. "It has brought people to town. It used to be in January and February, people would bunker inside and not go out. This year, they were looking for things to do. It was great!"

All three business leaders interviewed for this article expressed their thanks to the community for their support during these trying times. On a reflective note, Gabriel said, "Covid changed the world and a lot of bad came out of it but a lot of good did too."

Parks & Recreation...continued from page 1

combine beauty and function at the creek bed. In 2020, an agreement was made for the city and township to share costs on capital improvements to the park, which straddles both municipalities.

"Northville City and Township are working together on the Parks and Recreation Commission to create more trails, open green space and greater recreational opportunities," Mayor Brian Turnbull said. "Our plans and progress at Fish Hatchery Park and in other areas serve as a great example of shared services working toward the benefit of all citizens in the community."

The commission doesn't get into programming or facility management, they leave it to the director and staff to run operations. However, they did recommend that the department rent sports fields as a source of revenue and better use of the space. Various local sports clubs, teams and leagues are expected to rent the fields for practices or games.

COVID-19 dramatically impacted operations since mid-March 2020, especially for indoor activities with the closing of the Community Center and indoor programs. Outdoor sports and programs resumed in mid-June to high demand. The department began fall activities, including soccer, but had to end many of them early when renewed restrictions by the state went into effect in November. Tennis was hugely popular, with 1,000+ participants registering for



Photo by Vaughn Gurganian.

the summer/fall sessions. The Parks & Recreation team also successfully ran the summer day camp at Maybury with small groups, following state guidelines.

"Because we serve 36,000 in the city and township plus others in area communities, (who pay a higher fee for services) it positions the department well when we work with community partners, such as the Northville Chamber, Maybury Park and Maybury Farm," Gasche noted.

The next big thing is to enhance Ford Field with plans to improve access along Griswold, install a new play structure to replace the aging Fort Griswold, and add amenities to encourage the park's use as a gathering place in addition to being a sports field. The Parks & Recreation Department is working closely with the Ford Field Task Force to accomplish a new vision for the park.

Master Plan comments received, writing begins

With the wrap-up of survey #2 and results reported at the Planning Commission's March 3 meeting, work begins on drafting a Master Plan subarea update that combines public input with industry expertise as well as strategic planning by the Planning Commission and City Council. The resulting update aims to portray a cohesive vision for future development at the Racetrack, and along S. Center and E. Cady streets.

Approximately 515 people responded to the second survey, which helped clarify results of the first survey that drew 1,000 respondents. The surveys were the last phase of a formal public input process that began in February 2020 with informational videos on Planning and Zoning Basics, and Financial Information; Demographics and Schools; Traffic, Walkability/Mobility, and Parking; and Future Land Use – all posted on the City website. Virtual open houses were held in September, allowing participants to work in small groups to design a land-use vision for the subareas.

Common themes include diverse housing; green space; daylighting the river; a thriving commercial and entertainment section; safe streets and pathways for pedestrians, traffic and bicyclists; and landmarks and parks that foster placemaking and a character that "fits" Northville.

News and updates on the Master Plan will be posted to the website and appear in City News, and social media (Twitter and Facebook).

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Council member steps down

Sam Ekong officially left City Council on March 25 after serving nearly two terms. A replacement will be named to his seat, which expires on Nov. 8, 2021. An engineer, Sam served as the council liaison to the Housing Commission during both terms and previously served on the Senior Advisory Council and Economic Development Commission.

Of his tenure, he said, "I'm glad that the city residents afforded me the opportunity to serve on council and I was happy to do it. I learned a lot. I think we have a good team: the mayor, council, Pat (city manager) and the rest of the team."

He has sold his Northville home and will live in Commerce Township for now as he digs into a vast bucket list of ideas to explore. We wish Sam well and thank him for his service.



City Directory

Allen Terrace.....	248-349-8030
Assessor.....	248-305-2704
Building Department.....	248-449-9902
Cemetery.....	248-305-2702
City Manager.....	248-449-9905
City Clerk.....	248-349-1300
Communications (print, online).....	248-305-2703
Community Center.....	248-349-4140
DDA.....	248-349-0345
Finance Department.....	248-449-9907
Fire Department.....	248-449-9920
Parks and Recreation.....	248-349-0203
Police Dispatch (non-emergency).....	248-349-1234
Police.....	248-349-5100
Public Works.....	248-449-9930
Tax Department/Treasurer.....	248-449-9901
Youth Assistance.....	248-344-1618

Frequently Called Numbers

Art House.....	248-344-0497
Chamber of Commerce.....	248-349-7640
Civic Concern.....	248-344-1033
Historical Society.....	248-348-1845
Library.....	248-349-3020
Mill Race Village.....	248-348-1845
Post Office.....	248-349-2062
Waste Management.....	800-796-9696

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City News

of Northville

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<https://tinyurl.com/tld3opr>

Council reviews redrawn boundary for Historic District

City Council discussed an amendment to the Historic Preservation Ordinance on March 15 that returns Ford Field and four lots along Main Street between Hutton and 341 E. Main Street back into the Historic District Boundary, and adds in the parcel that houses the play structure (Fort Griswold) and parking lot. The boundary change is detailed in the modified Historic District Study Report. The actions taken were part of the first reading; the second reading occurs at council's April 19 meeting.

The amendment was influenced by a local historian's presentation to City Council (11/16/20) on the significance of the park, first owned by Henry Ford, who encouraged the city to use it for recreation. The property was later deeded by Ford Motor Co. to the city. The park has also served as a gathering space with many memorable events for more than 60 years.

Events

Visit sponsor website for details.

Farmers Market

Sponsored by the Northville Chamber of Commerce
Opening Day: Thursday, May 6
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Corner of Sheldon and 7 Mile

Arts and Acts

Sponsored by the Northville Art House
June 18 - 20
New location: Will be in socially spaced booths in the parking lots at and around the Art House.

Flower Sale

Sponsored by the Northville Chamber of Commerce
Friday, May 28
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturday, May 29
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Corner of Sheldon and 7 Mile

There will be no Memorial Day parade due to COVID-19.