

# Northville Matters

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

## City manager retires, transition in process

For 16 years, Pat Sullivan has made strides for Northville as city manager. He was instrumental in the development of two master plans for Downtown Northville. Now, he's moving on to his own master plan: retirement as of Jan. 6.



Mark Wollenweber interim city manager. Photo by Liz Cezat

He leaves big shoes to fill, which is why City Council has retained a search firm to find the next city manager. In the meantime, former St. Clair Shores City Manager Mark Wollenweber is bridging the transition. "I plan to fill in with the great staff that the city has, and be an interface between them, City Council and the community," he said.

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## Downs preliminary PUD site plan advances

The Downs preliminary PUD site plan, which covers 48 acres of the Downs and neighboring properties, was approved unanimously by City Council on Nov. 21 with conditions aligned with those set by the Planning Commission. Council also approved the adoption of an ordinance to rezone the property to PUD.

Several key actions need to be performed by the city/DDA to move the project forward. Among them, the Northville Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and Council must approve a brownfield plan and financing plan. A tax abatement proposal must be approved for the apartment building.

After the brownfield plan is approved, the DDA needs to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the BRA to allow the developer to capture TIF revenue that would normally have been collected by the DDA.



The Downs PUD contains public gathering space, such as this corner restaurant and promenade. Sketch from HPN.

Additionally, the DDA must approve the tax increment revenue plan, as well as expansion of the DDA boundary to encompass the river park and daylighted river. The DDA has retained a consultant to assist in the boundary modification. Council also needs to review and approve a PUD agreement for the project concurrently with the final site plan being submitted to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

## Reimagining downtown streets

Designers and engineers are proposing new ways to improve the appearance, function, and safety of the closed downtown streets at Main and Center in two distinctive reports from Grissim, Metz and Andriese (GMA) and Fleis & Vandenbrink (F&V), respectively. The consultants have sought community input via public meetings, a walking tour of downtown streets, and surveys. The Mobility Network, which conducted an extensive study of street crossings, is also providing input.

GMA has a conceptual plan to transform the closed streets into a vibrant "third place" with interactive zones that draw people to shops, restaurants and new seating areas. Their plan is to have the streets support linear bands of activity, keeping the center 24 feet as a promenade, with 16 feet of that space for emergency access; using the sidewalk as an inner pedestrian walkway; and combining the parallel parking area and wider sidewalks for merchant space and outdoor dining, designated by decking.

The structures owned by restaurants and retailers, and pods and stands owned by the DDA play a big

role in hospitality, comfort, and festivity. Their style and materials are being reviewed by the Historic District Commission to ensure a good fit with the historic buildings and street.

The concept plan calls for varied seating, from high-tops to bistro tables and lounge sectionals – for rest, conversation and people-watching. Programmed activities and entertainment will be balanced by creative ways that residents and visitors end up using the space, such as for table games, yoga, tea parties and impromptu gatherings.

The GMA team showed concepts to members of the walking tour on Dec. 7 and at several DDA Advisory Committee meetings, with the final report to be presented to the DDA Board.

F&V, with subcontractor MKSK, is looking at the downtown street closures and surrounding streets as it impacts walkability, new vehicle traffic patterns, safe crosswalks and more. They will evaluate pedestrian safety improvements to be made within a 1,200-foot radius of Center and Main; and recommend ways to improve traffic flow around the closed streets by



GMA presented this concept gateway entrance at Main & Center. Sketch from GMA conceptual presentation.

conducting a neighborhood traffic management plan for the non-arterial roads between 7 Mile and 8 Mile and between Rogers and S. Main/Northville Road. They will integrate their report with GMA's street design.

F&V has an interactive web page that presents a map of the area being reviewed and allows people to mark areas of concern and leave comments. See the city website for the link. The design and engineering reports will be presented to City Council when complete. At that point, associated costs and scheduling will be considered.

# NOTICES

## Upcoming tax and assessing deadlines

View your tax, assessing, utility and permit property information on the city website (Online Property Information and Payments). You can sign up for automatic payment of taxes and utilities, request to receive your utility bill via email, make payments by credit card or e-check, and view your payment status.

### General property tax dates

**Feb. 14** – Last day to pay winter 2022 taxes without penalty or interest. On Feb. 15, a 3% penalty will apply.

**Feb. 28** – Last day to pay summer and winter 2022 property taxes at the city. On March 1, delinquent amounts will be turned over to the county for collection.

**March 1** – Assessment notices are mailed in mid-February. If you have not received a notice by March 1, please contact the tax department at 248-449-9901.

**March** – Board of Review public hearings and deliberations. Dates appear on the assessment notice.

### Business owners

**January** – Personal property statements were mailed the first week in January. If you filed a Small Business Affidavit in 2020, 2021 or 2022 on time and it was accepted, you will not receive a personal property statement due to recent changes in property tax laws. Any changes in business status or personal property values need to be reported to the assessor.

**Feb. 21** – Personal property statements or exemption affidavits are due to the city assessor.

## Dog licenses up for renewal in February

Annual dog licenses expire on Feb. 28, 2023. All dogs four months and older must be licensed. The annual license fee is \$13 (\$10 with documented spay/neuter). On March 1, a \$5 late fee will be applied to the license fee. A current rabies vaccination certificate is required with the application – this helps keep dogs safe as well as those they come in contact with. Renewal applications have been mailed to current license holders. Applications also can be downloaded from the city website (Services/City Clerk/Permits and Licenses). Completed applications can be mailed, placed in the City Hall drop box, or renewed in person at City Hall.

## Keeping streets clear of snow and ice

When it snows, you'll find snow plows and trucks out to clear local streets. Major streets such as Center, Main and Taft are plowed first, followed by streets with steep hills and sharp curves.

Wayne County plows snow on Griswold, 7 Mile, Northville Road, and 8 Mile, east of Taft, while Oakland County clears snow on 8 Mile, west of Taft, and Novi Road. Neighborhood streets, parking lots, alleys and cemetery roads are plowed by the city after main streets are completed. Please keep vehicles off the streets until the snow has been cleared.

The ordinance states that property owners (residents and businesses) must clear sidewalks within 24 hours of a snow or ice event. It is against the law to blow or shovel snow into any roadway.

The DPW clears sidewalks only on city-owned or operated properties. If you see a neighbor who needs assistance keeping their sidewalk clear, please offer to help.

Prompt removal of snow reduces the need for salt. That means less salt travels to storm drains, which discharge into the Middle Rouge River. The city uses salt sparingly but applies it where needed to help prevent accidents.



## Year-round brush pickup

Residents can rely on brush pickup throughout winter. Place twigs and branches on your property by the curb on your regular trash day. GFL does brush chipping offsite and composts it for reuse.

## Report water main breaks

Each year the city of Northville has between 10 and 20 water main breaks. If you see water bubbling out of the ground on city property, contact the Public Works Department at 248-449-9930 or 248-349-1234 after hours and report its location.



*Teen at rest, pondering what lies ahead.* Photo by Pixabay.

## Help youth overcome obstacles to mental wellness

Northville Youth Network is offering Youth Mental Health First Aid training as a free public service on Feb. 25 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Northville Township Hall. Adults who regularly interact with youth (parents, school personnel, coaches, youth group leaders, caring citizens, etc.) will learn how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

This training provides the skills to reach out and provide initial support to adolescents (ages 12-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

The course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder. Participants do not learn to diagnose, nor how to provide therapy or counseling, but rather learn how to support a youth developing signs of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis by applying the five-step ALGEE action plan.

**Assess** for risk of suicide or harm

**Listen** non-judgmentally

**Give** reassurance and information

**Encourage** appropriate professional help

**Encourage** self-help and other support strategies.

Participation is limited and registration is required. Visit [northvilleyouthnetwork.org](http://northvilleyouthnetwork.org) for more information and to register.





## City manager...continued from page 1

"I'll be involved with current projects and any new ones that come up."

Here's a look back at the events that occurred on Sullivan's watch.

When Sullivan took the helm of City Hall administration, the 2006 Downtown Strategic Plan prompted the building of a new streetscape on Main Street, and a revitalized Town Square. He oversaw the project's successful completion, which was led by DDA Director Lori Ward.

The Master Plan of 2014 (with three sub areas updated in 2021) got the ball rolling on new development. The former Foundry Flask industrial site will become home to a three-story building with apartments, commercial space and a grocery store. The Downs development – once details are finalized – will transform the southeast side of town into new residences, retail, and parks, including a daylighted river. In total, these projects are expected to bring approximately 800 to 1,000 new residents to town. This population increase over three to four years will bring an infusion of vitality to Downtown Northville shops and restaurants; as well as a larger tax base.

A restructured financial plan, orchestrated in 2018 by Sullivan and Finance Director Sandi Wiktorowski along with consultants, eased legacy costs for health care and retirement by paying down that debt.

Another aspect of the plan developed a means to reconstruct city streets. Sullivan and then Mayor Ken Roth rigorously promoted the need for a street millage, which was approved by voters in 2018. This led to new

city streets, larger water lines and the replacement of sanitary sewer lines.

### Heading a team that puts city needs first

He is proud to have recruited and hired excellent staff and department heads. "It's the best team that I've ever assembled in 38 years of being a city manager," he said. Some of those outstanding professionals were here when he came on board.

Having the right team in place is an "enormous part of his job," he noted. "They are competent, professional, ethical people. A city our size has to rely on consultants and we have highly skilled professionals helping our team on a regular basis and for special projects."

His style of management is to follow the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. "You have to be honest," he said. "People often get told what they want to hear. I give them the facts."

When he hired professionals, he recognized that people had different ways of managing.

"You hire the best people you can and let them do their job. I hired their skill set and respect their abilities. I allow them to make the best decision they can make, and support that – unless it's something that I can't live with."

He was once told that his best trait was being decisive. "When things get to my level, someone needs to make a decision. For the organization to go forward, you've got to make that call. I try to keep the train moving."

Sullivan's role was to carry out the policies set by council, led by Mayor Brian Turnbull. He notes that



Pat Sullivan has retired after 16 years as city manager. Photo by Liz Cezat

City Council brings the perspective of the community, and it's an essential and valued component of running a city. Beyond council, all of the city's boards and commissions provide an even broader perspective and also have valued skill sets to tackle and resolve big issues.

He and his late wife, Amy, both served as city managers and they often bounced problems and solutions off one another. Part of his network was being a 32-year member of the Michigan Municipal League and serving as president-elect and president of its counterpart, the Michigan Municipal Executives, in 2017-18.

What he liked most about being a city manager was the people that he worked with. This includes residents, business owners, community members, and other people in government, among others. If you see Pat, wish him well as he steps back from an intense role that was a major part of his life for decades.

## Farmers' Market property under contract

The city manager signed a purchase agreement with Main-Seven, LLC on Dec. 8 to buy the former McDonald Ford site, on 7 Mile west of S. Main, for \$1 million to house the future Farmers' Market. The Farmers' Market Task Force determined that the only feasible/available site to meet stakeholder requirements and keep the market in the city was that property.

The city will conduct due diligence of the desirable property that abuts Hines Park as part of the nonrefundable deposit of \$50,000 through April 30, 2023. At that time, the city may renew the due-diligence portion for an additional six months for \$50,000. This action explores whether there are any potential environmental hazards on the site or other impediments to building.

## Recruitment incentive aims to boost hiring

Police recruitment has become more challenging in recent years since there are more job openings in Southeastern Michigan – and around the nation – than they are candidates to fill them.

The City of Northville Police Department has two open positions. To boost recruitment, the city negotiated with the Northville Police Officers Association (NPOA) to increase new officer's pay by counting their prior years of police service. Previously, new officers with experience would start at the bottom of the pay scale. To equalize pay rates, city of Northville police officers whose pay is not at the top of their pay scale will be paid more after a new officer with experience is hired and employed for 30 days.

There are three current police officers who are eligible for this new agreement. The temporary measure lasts until the NPOA contract expires on Dec. 31, 2024.

A three-story building at 156 N. Center is taking shape as the newest building in the Historic District in more than 15 years. Developer Rafi Kuredjian is constructing a mixed-use building with six residential units and a first-floor restaurant. Photo by Liz Cezat.



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## 2022 Highlights

**January** – The state calls for the return to in-person meetings on Jan. 1, yet the city opts to also continue Zoom meetings of City Council and key commissions to ensure the public can safely attend during an uptick in Covid (Omicron variant). // River Restoration Task Force members present their framework report to council.

**February** – To plan for and manage public benefits of the pending Downs redevelopment project, City Council establishes the Downs Project Advisory Committee (DPAC). // Farmers' Market Task Force presents report to City Council, proposing a new market location on the former McDonald Ford site.

**March** – Strategic planning begins to assess task force priorities. City Council and the city manager hold an open meeting with a consultant to determine top priorities. // GFL Environmental USA, Inc. is awarded a five-year contract with the city for garbage collection, recycling, yard waste collection and other services.

**April** – Nagel Construction is awarded a contract to reconstruct nearly three miles of streets and replace water mains and storm sewers on five streets.

**May** – The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority approved the city's first brownfield to expedite and offset the costs of environmental clean-up at 456 Cady (the Foundry) on the former Foundry Flask site.

**June** – The three top projects selected by City Council and administration, with input from task forces and a public survey, are to find and acquire land for the Farmers' Market; create a riverwalk at the Downs (after river is daylighted); and develop a master plan for Ford Field with a new play structure, public restrooms, and ADA-compliant entrance at Hutton.

**July** – The City of Northville Police Department receives accreditation by the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police (MACP).

**August** – City Council votes to make downtown street closures (sections of Main and Center) permanent. // A sub-recipient agreement between Wayne County and the city of Northville will provide \$2.5 million in grants toward daylighting the river, based on efforts of the Rouge Restoration Task Force.

**September** – City Council held the first reading of the Downs preliminary PUD site plan to redevelop 48 acres of land (zoned racetrack and other uses) into a mixed-use development.

**October** – Social district is expanded along W. Main, up to The Garage, and along portions of Wing and S. Center, allowing six restaurants/bars to apply for a special liquor license prior to joining the Twist social district. // City Manager Pat Sullivan announces plans to retire on Jan. 6.

**November** – Downs preliminary PUD site plan is approved, with 10 conditions, giving Hunter Pasteur Northville the green light to finalize plans for the "city within a city." // Council hires an interim city manager as a search firm is contracted to recruit a new city manager.

**December** – The city signs a purchase agreement to buy the former McDonald Ford site for a future Farmers' Market, pending due diligence findings.

## 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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