

the Westsider

Fall 2021

PRESENTED BY THE

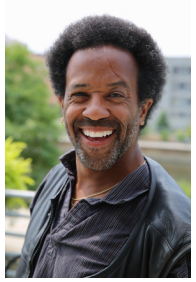
Westside Neighborhood Association



Welcome to the Westside!

Hi Neighbor,

Sometimes we can see something in the news and it will seem like it is a far-off event that has little impact on us as individuals. The end of summer tragedy struck in our neighborhood. A man who had recently lost his brother in a motorcycle incident had the unthinkable happen. In a matter of moments that must have seemed like an eternity an act of violence happened with such intensity and results that you would only think something like that could happen in a movie. Not in your neighborhood. Not on your block. Not on your street. Not next door.



In the aftermath of things, I had to visit a family who have only lived in the Westside Neighborhood for a year or so.

It was shared with me that they were home when the gunfire happened. They told their kids to get on the floor. They relayed like it sounded like it was in their yard, even though ‘the incident’ took place several houses down from them and across the street. Even though I was assured that they were indeed safe and doing okay, I asked if there was any help that I could offer. I knew the answer would be no, but I wasn’t willing to accept that.

In the weeks that have followed, it has been disappointing and disheartening that our most prominent leaders—elected or otherwise—haven’t raised havoc about this event as well as the others that have put Lansing on the map in the most negative way possible. I, among many of us, live in Lansing deliberately. It is a city as well as a region with great attributes and wonderful people. It is frustrating that it is being defined by a few that bring turmoil. We must do what we can to counter that. Many of you are. I applaud you.

There have been multiple prayer meetings, BBQ picnics, and other fundraisers to help uplift the family that has lost much during the summer of 2021. It goes to show what good neighbors we truly are. That warms my heart.

The man who has lost so much recently turned 50. He wasn’t able to have a party. He had plans to celebrate with his wife. Instead, at the time of writing of this letter, he’s been caretaker to four littles ranging in ages of 1 to 6 years old. They’ve been staying in one room at a hotel with two double beds. Along with most of their belongings stacked almost to eye level. Securing permanent housing has been delayed.

I did not know this man a few weeks ago. Now I call on him every few days. I offer what I can. A few dollars. A gift card to a local restaurant. Passes to a play space for the kids. Even it is just a meme of Tupac with the words, “keep ya head up”. We’ve even shared a tear. I don’t share this for praise. I share this to illustrate just how important a friendly hello can be to your neighbor. You may have no idea what may be troubling someone next door.

Go with love,

~Metro Melik

President - Westside Neighborhood Association



Election Day November 2

Lansing voters will be heading to the polls on November 2. The Westside Neighborhood Association hosted a candidates' night before the primary. If you want to hear from the city's candidates, visit WNALansing.com/2021-Candidates-Night.

More information is available from City Clerk Chris Swope on page 4, and don't forget to make your voice heard!

Annual Meeting to be Held January 12

The 2022 Westside Neighborhood Association Annual Meeting will be held on January 12, 2022 from 6-8 p.m.

Plan to join us to hear about our accomplishments in 2021, plans for 2022 and activities going on in the city! Spread the word that all neighbors are invited.



We will wait until the winter to determine whether this meeting will be held in-person or via Zoom, as we did for the 2021 Annual Meeting.

For event details, visit WNALansing.com/Annual-Meeting or visit the WNA Facebook group at Facebook.com/groups/WestsideNeighborhoodAssociation.

We'd Love Your Feedback!

The Board has created a survey (available at WNALansing.com/AboutWNA) and we welcome feedback on aspects you like about the neighborhood, as well as those you'd like to see improved. Any feedback is appreciated, even if you only want to weigh in on a few questions. Also, remember that Board meetings are held via Zoom on the fourth Wednesday of each month. If you'd like to attend (virtually!) please check out the Events section of the Westside Neighborhood Association Facebook group or email board@wnalansing.com.

2021 WNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Melik Brown

Vice President: Mitzi Allen

Treasurer: Laura Hall

Secretary: Jenny McInerney

Matt Black | Heath Lowry | Maya Lowry | Heidi Clancy | Natalie Riddle

Layout and design of *The Westsider* by Eric Hall

On the cover: Lansing's iconic Eckert Plant stacks, as seen from the Westside Neighborhood just south of Interstate 496. Photo courtesy of Metro Melik.

City General Election Information for 2021

By: Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope



We have city elections scheduled this year with the General Election on Nov. 2 for Mayor, City Clerk, two At-Large City Council Members, and our 4th Ward City Council Member. You can always preview your ballot at LansingVotes.com.

I encourage every voter to take advantage of the opportunity to vote from home or come to the Clerk's office and vote early, also known as absentee voting. You may return your absentee ballot at any City of Lansing election drop box. We have one in our Westside Neighborhood, at Letts Community Center.

Forty days before every election, I open the South Washington Election Unit during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.), as well as extended evening and weekend

hours, to allow one-stop in-person voting until 4 p.m. on the Monday before the election. Located at 2500 S. Washington Sq., the Election Unit offers free parking.

City of Lansing voters may also come to the City Clerk's Office on the 9th floor of City Hall during regular business hours to complete the absentee voter application, ballot, and register to vote.

Clerk's Office is Open by Appointment

We have made changes to ensure the safety of our citizens and staff by using an appointment system to provide adequate social distancing for any face-to-face transaction.

If you need to apply for a U.S. Passport, you need to make an appointment through our website www.lansingmi.gov/clerk or call (517) 483-4131.

We also provide notary services for Lansing City residents at \$5 per document by appointment too.

Bradly and I are proud to have been part of the Westside Neighborhood for over 20 years and I have been proud to be your clerk for 15 years. If the Lansing City Clerk's Office can ever be of service, please contact us by email at city.clerk@lansingmi.gov, phone (517) 483-4131 or through Facebook [@lansingclerkswope](https://www.facebook.com/lansingclerkswope).

WNA Welcomes New Board Member

Westside Neighborhood Association is pleased to welcome Natalie J Riddle to the WNA Board. She and her family are longstanding members of the Westside neighborhood, and she brings great historical perspective.

Board members volunteer their time and energy to directly impact our community and our organization. The 9-member rotating Board aims for both diversity of perspective and depth of expertise, and a strength is that with our staggered terms, the Board is always changing.

Serving on the Board is a volunteer position with no pay and no huge incentive, other than a desire to continue to make sure that this community is a great place to live. Our Board is always looking for interested people to serve. If you think you would be interested in joining the Board, please contact board@wnalansing.com.

The Board is especially looking for someone south of St. Joseph St. to serve on the Board.



Natalie J Riddle



WNA Board members Laura Hall (left) and Mitzi Allen welcome students on the first day at Sexton High School.

The WNA used a grant from the city to print banners to give a bright and cheerful welcome on the first day of school, Monday, Aug. 30. We were also joined by the Riddle family at Riddle Elementary School.

Thanks to all who joined as we welcome and support our students!

Photos courtesy of the Lansing State Journal

Westside Welcomes Back Students!

Lansing students are back for the 2021-2022 school year, and the Westside Neighborhood Association is proud to welcome them back!



The Riddle family poses in front of Riddle Elementary School on the first day of school.

Safely Celebrate Halloween

With some extra safety steps, the little ghouls and goblins of the Westside should be able to safely trick-or-treat in 2021!

Trick-or-treating hours are from 6-8 p.m. on Halloween night, October 31!

For a safe holiday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends giving treats outdoors if possible, wearing masks over the nose and mouth, and washing hands before handing out treats.

In addition to COVID-19 safety tips, remember to wear bright or reflective clothing to improve visibility, carry flashlights, and keep all decorations and costumes away from open flames.

Have a safe and scary Halloween!



Old Oakland/Westside Neighborhood Kickball Showdown



Westiders (in blue) pose with competitors from the Old Oakland neighborhood during the July 31 kickball exhibition.

through seven innings of play. Unfortunately, our team fell short of overcoming Old Oakland's quick hitting offense.

There were many laughs and cheers throughout the afternoon as neighbors from both sides of the street shared in this wonderful experience. The event ended with treats for all involved and a gathering at the Westside staple, Harry's Place. There are plans to continue the series, so be sure to check out the Westside Neighborhood Association Facebook group for updates.

On the sunny afternoon of July 31, friends and neighbors gathered for the first iteration of the Old Oakland/Westside Neighborhood kickball exhibition.

Played on the Old Oakland's Rudolph and Dorothy Wilson Park, the competition was fierce but friendly. Donned in blue, Westiders fought valiantly



Pet Spotlight: Nattie Bitely

National Bohemian Brunhilda Bitely, also known as Nattie Boh, is a beagle - dachshund mix living on the Westside with her people, Andrea and Adam Bitely. A southern dog by birth, Nattie spent her early years in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC. Nattie moved north with her family in the winter of 2015, but has never fallen in love with the snow or cold.



Nattie Bitely: Dog of Adventure

Washington Nationals baseball games, traveled to the Outer Banks of North Carolina where she likes to bark at the Atlantic Ocean, has stayed on the beach at Lakes Michigan, Huron, Superior and



Bravely facing a day at the beach.

Nattie works hard to protect her family and the entire neighborhood from rogue delivery people, walnut-throwing squirrels and the creature living under her neighbor's garage. Nattie is a big fan of travel and loves to attend events. She's been to



Nattie conducting a routine foundation inspection.

Erie - Nattie doesn't like to swim. Nattie's absolute favorite activities are sleeping on her stack of beds under a blanket, eating snacks, and walking around her favorite neighborhood.

Honoring the Westside's History

Many thanks to all who voted on the street sign topper design, and to those who have worked to make it a reality. One of the toppers now displayed around the neighborhood—depicting the Durant Four coupe—is shown at right. The design was selected by neighbors in a month-long vote on the *WNLansing.com* site over several other fantastic designs.



Installation of the sign toppers has begun around the neighborhood.

DURANT FOUR
for VALUE

DURANT 4-PASSENGER COUPE, \$1160
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PRICES
J. O. K. Lansing, Mich.
Touring \$ 830
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With the new flexible motor, and the heavy, convertible, steel-bone body, Durant cars offer unsurpassed value per dollar of price.

Note these prices, then see the Durant line.

DURANT MOTORS, Inc., NEW YORK, N. Y.

It's a delight to drive a Durant

Billy Durant, better known as the founder of GM, also founded Durant Motors in January of 1921. In the Lansing factory on Verlinden Avenue (across the street from Harry's Place) the “Star” car and “Durant Four” automobiles were manufactured for about 10 years. In fact, Harry’s was operated as the Star Cafe until 1934 in recognition of the famous car. After Durant Motor Works closed in 1931, the plant remained closed until General Motors purchased it in 1935 and operated it as the Fisher Body Plant. After several operational and name changes, the plant closed for good on May 5, 2005.

We are proud to display a distinctive representation of the Westside’s automotive past!

Neighborhood Cleanup

Thanks to the city’s Department of Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement, Granger Waste Services, and our amazing partners on the Lets Community Center Board for a very successful bulk trash pickup held October 2!

Two Granger trucks covered all of the houses south of Michigan Avenue and many neighbors showed up to dispose of trash at Lets.

Thanks for everyone’s help in making the Westside the best (and cleanest!) side!



Eagle Scout Plants 14 Trees

By Joshua Russell

Better late than never! FINALLY, we were able to plant 14 trees for my Eagle Project around the neighborhood. Mid July we received 11 trees from the Board of Water and bought three extra trees from River City Farms in Grand Ledge who gave us a great deal. The trees from the BWL were surprisingly bigger than we expected. It was a tough day for three scouts from my Scout Troop 111, my mom and another scout and her mother from East Lansing Troop 2 to get all the trees planted.



Josh Russell (far right) with Scouts and volunteers who helped plant 14 trees in the Westside as part of an Eagle Scout project!

We began at eight in the morning and finally finished our last tree about six in the evening. We were grateful for that one tree recipient (a former Boy Scout he told us) who planted his own tree after we delivered it.

I would like to thank anyone one who contributed to my project and for those who gave monetary donations. The money we received after the trees were planted will go to my troop

to support a scout who may be in need of a scholarship to continue in scouting or go to camp.

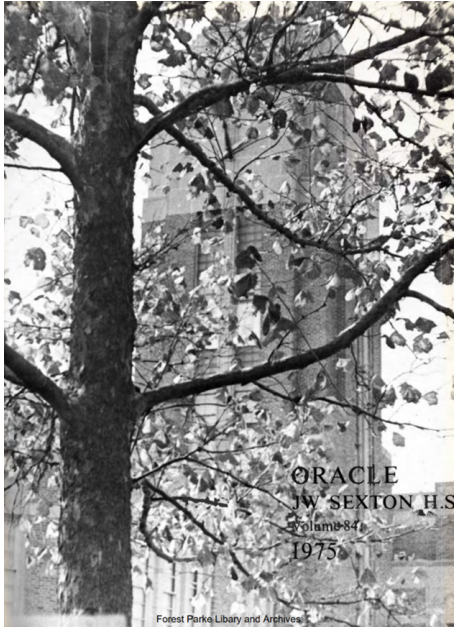
Although the middle of the summer is not the ideal time to plant a tree and we had to do it on short notice, we got it done!

Thanks for the support and if you got a tree, don't forget to water it!



Neighborhood Roots

By Heidi Clancy



One of the sycamores featured on the cover of a 1975 issue of the Sexton Oracle.

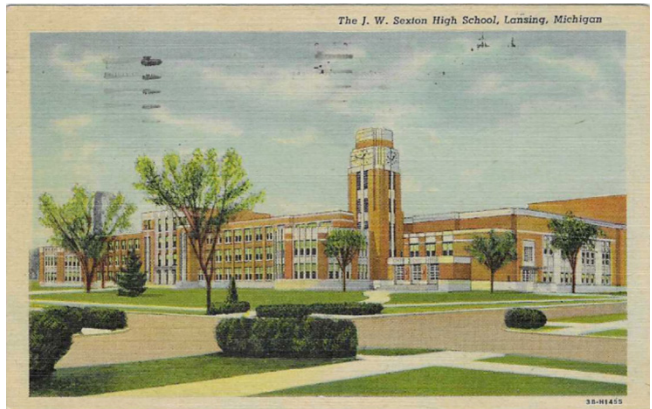
the form of the reigning king of urban street trees, the American Elm, had dotted the landscape that opening day.

Eventually, the Lansing School District did attend to the landscaping—thankfully, post detection of Dutch Elm Disease, a deadly fungus believed to have been introduced in 1930 in Ohio. Rather than replicate the order and tranquility of a perfectly placed monoculture with elms, the design wisely opted for a procession of American Sycamore, believed to be planted around 1950. Of the 16 planted sycamore, 15 remain today and have been the

Some of J.W. Sexton’s longest standing residents welcome students back for another year!

Following a 2020 school year like no other, fall of 2021 marks the return of students to the halls of J. W. Sexton High School.

Noted for its remarkable art deco influenced design and ornate fixtures throughout the interior, the building—touted as “one of the most modern schools in the United States” (undated postcard)—was the pride of the Lansing School District upon opening its doors on February 1, 1943. Eager to welcome students after 2 years of construction, Principal Roosenraad remarked ‘there had been no time for landscaping of the grounds.’ Early photographs and renditions of the school including a photo from the Sexton Oracle dated 1944, show



Construction for the high school began in 1941.

background for countless coming of age photos—first days, graduations, homecomings—observing the good and bad behaviors for decades with a silent oath to never narc on a student cutting class (indeed, the best friend one could have!). Through the years, the



The school—and its sycamores—were ready for students in 1943.

Oracle has featured these trees as the background to Spirit Week hijinks, snowy scenes and students awaiting a ride.

After over 70 years attending Sexton, this class of sorority sycamores range in accomplishment from 16" to 37" in diameter (average 24.4"). They've lost their distinctive pyramid shape of youth and matured into a fuller canopy. While we've lost our elms and ashes to unwanted forest pathogens and pests, let's hope Sexton's sycamore clique will sustain school spirit for incoming students for many years to come. On the heels of a lonely 2020, these trees are surely glad to welcome the liveliness of young students into their daily schedule.



Today, these approximately 80-year-old sycamores line McPherson Avenue in front of Sexton High School.

Public Service Update on Streets & Sidewalks

Submitted by City of Lansing Public Service Department

Why are Lansing's streets in such bad condition?

Lansing's street network has been underfunded for years, which in short answers the question. The effect of the long-term lack of funding is why our system is in such poor condition. In order to address the current condition of the streets, annual funding needs to be over \$25 million. Actual funding has ranged from \$7 million to \$12 million per year. As the lack of funding for our streets continues, the cost to fix our street network continues to increase rapidly; growing from \$100 million in 2006 to \$211 million in 2016.

Are there plans to resurface streets, especially in my neighborhood?

A list of construction projects for the remainder of the year, as well as a few into following years, can be found at lansingmi.gov/construction. This list is continually updated as projects are completed or moved around on the calendar.

What do I do if my sidewalk is uneven?

The property owner adjacent to the sidewalk is generally responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalk and there is cost sharing between the property owner and City if a section of the sidewalk needs to be replaced. Report a trip hazard to the Public Service Department by calling (517) 483-4455. An inspector will visit the site and, if appropriate, the City will install an asphalt wedge or overlay to address the issue until a permanent fix can be put in place. The cost for this temporary fix is not charged to the property owner.

What is the process for sidewalk replacement?

To address entire areas, the City manages one or more sidewalk repair projects each year. The projects consist of repairing a very poor quality sidewalk in an area (which can include intersection ramps). Sidewalk replacement costs are generally split in half between the City and the property owner.

Areas that are not assessed to the property owner include:

- Intersection ramp installation
- Intersection ramp upgrades and repairs
- Sidewalk that has been damaged by city trees (those that are in the public right-of-way)

The City currently has funding to replace approximately one mile of sidewalk per year.

What do the colored markings on the sidewalks mean?

The City uses standard colors to mark utilities. Yellow is used to mark natural gas. Green is typically used for sewers, but in the case of sidewalks is used to show an issue that has been inspected and identified for further action (cutting, wedging, or replacement). More utility color markings can be found online at Global-gpr.com/Assets/PDF/Utility-Color-Chart.pdf.

How do I report an issue?

As with many other issues, including street lighting, the removal of dead animals on streets and in parks, and downed wires, streets and sidewalks in need of repair can be reported on the Lansing Connect App (a free application available on cell phones) or you can enter a request at LansingMI.gov/697/Report-an-Issue. You can also view reported issues in your area on the same site.

The screenshot shows the 'Create a Request' screen of the Lansing Connect app. On the left, there is a green sidebar with the Lansing Connect logo and the text 'Submit a service request in 5 steps:'. The steps are: 1. Choose the report type, 2. Mark the geographical location of the concern, 3. Tell us a few details about the problem, 4. Add a photo, video or audio, and 5. Submit your request. Below the steps, it says 'After submitting, track your request for follow up information.' The main content area is white and contains a close button (X), the title 'Create a Request', and five numbered steps: 1. Select a Report Type: (with a dropdown arrow), 2. Where is the problem? (with a map showing the State Capitol building), 3. Tell us more details, 4. Add photos, videos, or audio (with a camera icon), and 5. Mark as sensitive? (with an unchecked checkbox). At the bottom, there is a grey bar with a '5' icon and the word 'SUBMIT'.

The Lansing Connect app is available at no charge on Android and iOS mobile devices.

Neighbors Talk Crime and Safety



Westsidiers hear an update from Interim Police Chief Ellery Sosebee during the Crime and Safety Committee meeting held September 28 at Riddle Elementary School. Thanks to all who joined and our speakers, including Interim Chief Sosobee, Community Police Officer Anthony VandeVoorde, and at-large Lansing City Councilwoman Carol Wood!

For the schedule of upcoming meetings, visit WNA Lansing.com/Events1 or visit the WNA Facebook group at Facebook.com/groups/WestsideNeighborhoodAssociation.

EagleMonk Pub and Brewery

EagleMonk Pub and Brewery, located on Lansing's west side makes craft beer, wine, hard cider, mead and hard seltzer. Our food menu includes appetizers, pizza, paninis, salads and desserts. We have a large shaded beer garden that is dog friendly and a great place to enjoy dinner with friends.

At EagleMonk Pub and Brewery we created a friendly neighborhood pub where people could gather and enjoy being together. We offer live music on Wednesday evenings, Books and Brews monthly book club facilitated by the Delta Township Library, a monthly Knitting and Crocheting group, and most weeks a Bingo or Trivia night.



EagleMonk Pub and Brewery
4906 W. Mt. Hope Hwy.
Lansing, MI 48917

Open:
Tuesday - Friday 3-10 p.m.
Saturday 12-10 p.m.
Sunday 12-9 p.m.

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Chris Swope

Lansing City Clerk

Proud Resident and Advocate of
The Westside Neighborhood!

Services of the Clerk's Office include:

- Voter Registration
- Absentee Ballots
- Notary Public Services
- Business Licensing
- City Council Agendas & Minutes
- Passport Services by appointment



www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope
www.lansingmi.gov/clerk

Office Phone: (517) 483-4131



Eagle Monk
Pub and Brewery

Located at
4906 W. Mt. Hope Hwy.
Lansing, MI 48917

Hours:

Tuesday-Friday
3-10 p.m.

Saturday
12-10 p.m.

Sunday
12-9 p.m.

Craft Beer, Wine,
Soda and Pizza
made on premises!

Oktoberfest and
Pumpkin Rye
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the **Westsider**

The Westside Neighborhood Association
c/o Letts Community Center
1220 W. Kalamazoo
Lansing, MI 48915

