



Heritage Herald

January/February 2026

The Newsletter of Heritage Hill

Volume MMXXVI, No. 1

NEW YEAR!

NEW HOME TOUR!

**THIS YEAR, ALL HOME TOUR
VOLUNTEERS WILL ENJOY A
POST-TOUR APPRECIATION PARTY!**



The Heritage Herald newsletter of
Heritage Hill Association
252 State St SE, Ste 101
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-459-8950

Email: heritage@heritagehillweb.org
Website: heritagehillweb.org

Facebook:  @heritagehill

Instagram:  @heritagehillassociation

Hours: 9am-5pm, Mon-Thurs

Contact us to be added to our email alerts on public safety, community engagement, and all things HHA.

HHA's purpose:

- To promote communication, cooperation, and friendship among neighbors
- To help maintain and improve neighborhood property and the physical appearance of our community
- To provide neighbors a way of collectively building a healthy, historically preserved community in which people can live and work in a secure and stable environment
- To identify neighborhood problems and social needs, and to develop and implement solutions
- To initiate neighborhood programs to improve the quality of life
- To develop a spirit of pride and individual obligation to the neighborhood
- To promote and develop a successful multi-racial, and multi-ethnic neighborhood

Heritage Hill Association Staff:
Laska Nygaard, Executive Director

Board of Directors:

*Kris Alderman, Paris Ave SE
*Cathy Bosscher (Treasurer, Finance Chair), Morris SE
**Denise Cook (Home Tour Co-Chair), College Ave SE
**Jeremy Czubko (Vice President), Morris Ave SE
*Delores Deen, Morris Ave SE
*Chris Ervine (Community Health & Safety Co-Chair), Morris Ave SE
*Julia Hawkins, Prospect Ave SE
*Katie Heneveld (Secretary), Lafayette NE
*Michelle Hoexum, Morris Ave SE
*Kim Lucas (President, Home Tour Co-Chair), Paris Ave SE
*Jim McClurg (Vice President), College Ave SE
*Jennifer Meeks, College Ave SE
*Jeff Phillips (Home Tour Co-Chair), Paris Ave SE

*1st term
**2nd term

The HHA Board of Directors meets at 7pm on the third Wednesday of most months, in the Community Education Room of the Hauenstein Center, Trinity Health, 200 Jefferson Ave SE. Contact us to confirm meeting details and location in any given month.

HHA provides information and encourages neighbor participation to keep Heritage Hill safe and vital, including working on community issues as they arise. As an association of neighbors, we have a strong voice but no regulatory authority.

The Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) regulates all exterior work and repairs to buildings in Heritage Hill and approval is required before any work begins. HPC: 616-456-3451; rbaker@grcity.org.

Heritage Herald - Circulation @4,000

The *Heritage Herald* is published by the HHA Board of Directors six times a year (bi-monthly). The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors. We reserve the right to edit. Address correspondence to the address above.

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This and That

by HHA Staff

A Wonderful Annual Membership Meeting

Thanks to all who came out on a chilly December evening to celebrate our community, bring delicious food to share, hear about the 2026 Home Tour, and vote in HHA's 2026 Board of Directors. The GR Public Museum High School was a perfect potluck venue and we hope to return next year.

We welcome Kris Alderman, Cathy Bosscher, Julia Hawkins and Katie Heneveld as new Board Members, and Denise Cook (one of our Home Tour Co-Chairs) into her second term. Congratulations to them! Learn more about Cathy, Julia and Katie in our

Spotlights in this issue.

After several years' hiatus, our Board awarded HHA **Distinguished Service Awards** at this year's Annual Meeting. Neighbors Tom Sinas and Mary Kenyon received **Crime Prevention Awards** for their work to address amplified noise by health care facilities, not only in Heritage Hill but city-wide. And Kate Diedrich received the **Neighborhood-At-Large Award** for her decades of remarkable service to HHA and the neighborhood, from Garden Tour, to the Voigt Gardens, to Home Tour and beyond!



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Board President Jeremy Czubko shared inspiring comments about Heritage Hill as a community. We excerpt part of his comments below and the full text can be found at www.heritagehillweb.org/mission-and-history/:

Every year, Heritage Hill rolls out the welcome mat and invites anyone and everyone into our homes. It's not just about showing off architecture, woodwork, or stained glass — it's about opening our doors, sharing our stories, and reminding people that this neighborhood thrives because of community.

But here's the challenge: if we let the financial and political challenges of today create division, we risk turning the Association into a shadow of what it stood for instead of a platform for shared progress. We risk losing sight of the very values that saved Heritage Hill in the first place.

So let's return to the basics: respect, transparency, and cooperation. Let's make Heritage Hill known not just for its homes, but for the way its people live together with integrity.

Here's my call to action:

- Find value in others different from you. A voice of dissent is a voice that still cares enough to try to make a difference.
- While we respect the historic homes and the stories that come with them, let's treat our porches, driveways, and sidewalks as places of hospitality rather than private domain
- Let's ensure the Home Tour isn't just an event, but a symbol of openness and belonging.

Heritage Hill is historic, yes. But it's also living, breathing, and welcoming. Let's never change that. Let's honor the activists who fought for this neighborhood by fighting for each other — not against each other.

If we do that, then ten, twenty, fifty years from now, people won't just admire the houses. They'll admire the community that kept them alive.

Thank you.

(cont'd on page 4)



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This and That (cont'd from page 3)

And thanks to **Johanna VanHoutum**, of **Exterior Expression**, who works in the neighborhood at Trinity and who donated beautiful table decorations for the event. You can look up Exterior Expression on Facebook and at vanhoutumj2@gmail.com. Thanks, Johanna!

Home Tour – Volunteer Appreciation Party This Year!

BIG Home Tour news revealed at the meeting was that the beloved Voigt House (on the cover) will be on tour this year! Also new will be an appreciation party after Home Tour for all volunteers! Contact us to volunteer on planning, working with the wonderful Hosts who share their homes, promoting the tour, working on signs, volunteering in a home – or let us know how you want to help! Fill out the form on our website here at www.heritagehillweb.org/volunteer/,

or email our Home Tour Co-Chairs at HHAHomeTour@heritagehillweb.org. You can also email or call our office.

We can't wait to see you at the volunteer after-party!

Join Us in Nurturing This One-of-a-Kind Neighborhood!

As this year begins, we are welcoming you to join our Board Committees! Neighbors who join our Committees make deep connections with one another and the issues and improvements that face our unique neighborhood. Our current Committees seeking members include:

- ☐ **Community Engagement** – Events and communications
- ☐ **Community Health & Safety** – Crime prevention, sustainability, lead, preparedness
- ☐ **Fundraising** – Help plan and create short and long-term fundraisers
- ☐ **Garden Tour** – Find neighbor gardens and help share their beauty to support HHA

☐ **Governance** – A new committee, which this year will work to review and update HHA's Bylaws. Changes must be approved by vote of all neighbors at a Membership Meeting. This may occur at the Annual Membership Meeting in December, or one may be called earlier in the year.

☐ **Home Tour** – Join the FUN of carrying out this neighborhood tradition!

☐ **Technology** – Help choose the most appropriate tech for our work, and keep it tip-top

☐ **Voigt House Preservation** – Join up to help us work with GRPM, the City and others to bring Voigt House back to its glory and share it with the public

Please email us at laska@heritagehillweb.org with interest in or questions about our Committees. Committees are forming now – but you can also contact us about them anytime during the year!

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GR Historic Preservation Award Nominations Open

Nominations are open through February 28, 2026 for the Historic Preservation Awards of the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission. The awards honor projects and individuals that, through their efforts, have had a positive physical, social and/or economic impact on their neighborhoods and consequently on the City as a whole. To nominate your neighbors and projects that you have admired in Heritage Hill, contact Historic Preservation Specialist Rhonda Baker at 616-456-3451 / rbaker@grcity.us by February 28.

Get Ready for the Coming Zoning Ordinance Update with HHA Zoning 101 Meetings in March

Heritage Hill neighbors stepped up to weigh in at every stage of the Community Master Plan process for Grand Rapids. Now that the Plan is done, the next step is for the City's zoning ordinance to be amended to reflect that Plan.

To prepare neighbors with information to help you evaluate zoning changes, and to keep neighbors informed, HHA will be holding two **Zoning 101 community meetings, open to all neighbors, on March 18 and 24**. Full details will appear in the March-April Herald and the **Events section of heritagehillweb.org**. The meetings will include a presentation by and informational exercises from City's Planning Department, including on how zoning rules interact with our historic district.

Updating the ordinance will include writing the provisions, map creation, testing concepts with the public, and work sessions and briefings with the City and Planning Commission. The timeline for the updating is being revised, but this phase is expected to begin in spring and run through winter 2026.

The final phase of the process is adoption. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and recommend the revised ordinance to the City Commission, which the City Commission is expected to consider and adopt before summer 2027.

For more information on the City Zoning Ordinance updating process, and to **sign-up for updates from City Planning**, visit www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/Zoning-Ordinance-Update. For information about the Community Master Plan (CMP), and to review an online version of the CMP, visit www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/Community-Master-Plan.



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Garden Tour

Looking For A Few New Great Gardens

It's snowing, it's freezing - another lovely Michigan winter! At this time of year, nothing warms a gardener's heart like paging through seed catalogs by a cozy fire, dreaming of Spring and the garden to come.

You could bring joy to fellow garden lovers and support your neighborhood by sharing your garden with the **2026 Garden Tour**, to be held on **Saturday, June 20th**. You have invested so much time, effort and love into your little bit of heaven - just think of the enjoyment it will bring to others. Your only obligation is to prepare your garden (which you would be doing anyway) and to be present during the tour from **9:00am-3:00pm** on tour day to answer questions and to soak in all of the compliments. Its fun, rewarding and includes a wonderful party the night before.

To volunteer your beautiful garden or ask any questions, please contact Kate Diedrich at 616-780-3260 (phone or text) or at kateddiedrich@gmail.com.



... and, Looking For A Few Gardeners

The volunteer gardeners at the Voigt House are looking for a few recruits willing to help out one day a week for a three hour shift from spring to fall. Enjoy the outdoors and making our neighborhood even more beautiful.

We welcome youth volunteers, whose time spent will count toward volunteer hour requirements. If you are interested, please contact Kate Diedrich at 616-451-9211 or kateddiedrich@gmail.com.



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Heritage Hill Public Safety Survey January-February 2026

One of HHA's priorities is to help neighbors keep Heritage Hill a safe and healthy place to live and work. Our staff go through 40 hours of crime prevention and community safety training, and learn about these issues on an ongoing basis. To help us make sure that we're focusing our resources in the right areas, please complete this Public Safety Survey, which should take about 5 minutes, and return it to us. You can complete this version and mail it or bring it to our office. Alternatively, you can complete a version online at our website at www.heritagehillweb.org/events/.

THANK YOU! Confidential results be shared with neighbors at a later date.

1. How long have you lived in Heritage Hill?
ANSWER: _____

2. Do you rent or own your home?
☐ Rent
☐ Own

3. In 2025, Heritage Hill was moved to the Grand Rapids Police Department's Central Service Area, received a new captain, and also was assigned a Community Police Officer. Community policing involves officers working with the community to address the causes of crime in an effort to reduce problems. What would you like to see as a part of GRPD's community policing for Heritage Hill?
ANSWER: _____

4. How would you like HHA to support neighbors in developing relationships with law enforcement?
ANSWER
☐ In-person community meetings with our Captain and Community Officer
☐ Inviting our Captain or Community Officer to our public Board Meetings
☐ Taking questions from neighbors and asking GRPD for answers
☐ Hearing neighbor problems and bringing them to GRPD to response
☐ Other: _____

5. Have you experienced a public safety issue in Heritage Hill in the past 12 months?
☐ Yes
☐ No

6. Have you experienced a crime in Heritage Hill in the past 12 months?
☐ Yes
☐ No

7. Do you have a neighbor who you know experienced a crime in Heritage Hill in the past 12 months?
☐ Yes
☐ No
8. Have you contacted HHA for assistance on any crime or public safety issue in the last 12 months?
☐ Yes
☐ No

9. Over the past 12 months, have your feelings of safety in the community increased, decreased, or stayed the same?
☐ I feel safer
☐ I feel less safe
☐ I feel as safe as I did a year ago

10. Do you receive HHA's email alerts on crime and safety?
☐ Yes
☐ No

11. What crime and/or public safety information have you found helpful in our email alerts and in the *Heritage Herald* newsletter?
ANSWER: _____

12. Which three (3) of these issues do you think are the most problematic in Heritage Hill?
☐ Auto burglaries/thefts
☐ Home burglaries/thefts
☐ Disorderly conduct / public intoxication
☐ Noise violations
☐ Graffiti / vandalism
☐ Traffic safety problems / Speeding
☐ Parking issues
☐ Trash
☐ Assaults
☐ Issues involving or affected unhoused people
☐ Home maintenance
☐ Sidewalk safety
☐ Lead exposure
☐ Health and safety for Seniors
☐ Other: _____

13. The country is currently experiencing issues in connection with federal immigration enforcement. Are you concerned about this issue in our community?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Public Safety Survey *(cont'd from page 4)*

14. Would you like to hear from GRPD or other Grand Rapids officials about how they plan to handle issues associated with federal immigration enforcement?

☐ Yes
☐ No

15. Are you a part of a block club or block group, or interested in learning more about them?

☐ Yes, I have a block club/group
☐ No, I don't have a block club/group
☐ I am interested in learning more about a block club/group

16. Would you be interested in trainings / neighbor get-togethers regarding any of these?

☐ De-escalation tactics
☐ Conflict resolution
☐ Building neighbor connections
☐ Block clubs / block groups
☐ Emergency preparedness
☐ Other: _____

17. How can we support you in solving crime and public health and safety problems?

ANSWER: _____

18. HHA Staff are trained to do FREE home security assessments, which recommend changes to improve your home's security and safety. If you would be interested in a FREE assessment, please check here and provide your contact information at the bottom of this survey.

☐ Yes, I am interested in a FREE home security assessment and will provide my contact information at bottom.

19. Is there any message that you would like us to share with GRPD or other city officials regarding crime and/or public health and safety?

ANSWER: _____

20. Our neighbor-led Community Health and Safety Committee meets every two to three months. If you are interested in joining or getting more information, please check here and provide your contact information at the bottom of this survey.

☐ Yes, I am interested joining or learning more about the committee and am providing my contact info at bottom.

21. If you would like us to get in touch, please provide your contact information:

ANSWER: _____

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS – These are optional. Any responses will be kept confidential by Heritage Hill Association Staff and our Board of Directors.

- a. Are you:

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Prefer not to answer

(cont'd on next page)



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- b. Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- c. What is your race? (These choices come from the U.S. Census categories.)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- d. What is your age group?
- ☐ 17 or younger
- ☐ 18-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-69



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REMEMBER HERITAGE HILL PROPERTY OWNERS:

There is a City Preservation Ordinance that governs all exterior changes, repairs and/or additions to Heritage Hill properties. Call the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission at 456-3451 for information on approvals. You can access the application form at the City's website, www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us at the Planning Department section or at the Heritage Hill Association's www.heritagehillweb.org.

This ordinance applies to all exterior changes, repairs, and/or additions to your home and property. Items such as doors and windows including storms, yard structures, driveway and sidewalk approaches, and fences do need HPC approvals.



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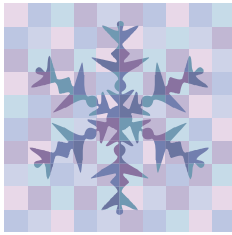
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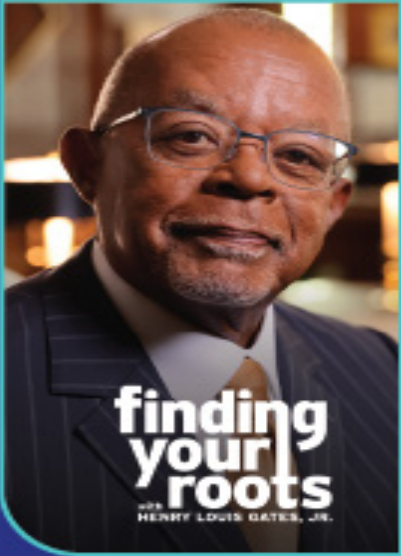
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Remembering Barbara Roelofs



Heritage Hill heroine Barbara Roelofs passed away in her home on the 200-block of College SE, on January 14, 2026. She was 94. HHA's deepest condolences go out to her dear family. Barbara was a remarkable woman whose spirit and dedication shaped our community. Her legacy will inspire generations to come. Born and raised in San Francisco, California, Barbara developed a deep appreciation for historic architecture, nurtured by her artistic family and her grandfather's passion for history. She dreamed of studying architecture at the University of California, but societal norms of her time led her on a different path. Choosing to pursue a degree in nursing, she graduated from the Calvin College School of Nursing in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Barbara's love for old buildings and her commitment to preserving history became evident when she moved into the Heritage Hill neighborhood. In February 1968, along with John Logie, Linda DeJong, and other passionate neighbors, she co-founded the Heritage Hill Foundation, later the Heritage Hill Association. At a time when urban renewal threatened to erase the character of Grand Rapids, Barbara's mission was clear: to designate the neighborhood as a national historic district, safeguarding it from the encroachment of development. Under her leadership, the Heritage Hill Association gained traction, playing a crucial role in urban preservation at a time when the National Preservation Act was just beginning to take shape.

For 47 years, Barbara was a steadfast advocate for historic preservation, serving as the chairperson of the Heritage Hill Foundation Board of Trustees. Her tireless efforts helped to protect more than 50 different architectural styles within one of the nation's largest historic districts, ensuring that future generations could appreciate the rich history and beauty of the buildings around them.

Barbara was more than just a community leader; she was a north star to our neighborhood. Her warm spirit, kind heart, and unwavering dedication to historic preservation continues to inspire us all. She touched countless lives not only through her advocacy but also through her family, friends, and

neighbors who knew her as someone who cared deeply for the fabric of her community.

As our community mourns her loss, we celebrate her extraordinary life and the indelible mark she left on us all. Barbara Roelofs will be dearly missed, and her legacy will forever live

on through the historic streets and homes she fought so passionately to preserve.

Barbara's obituary asked for contributions to our Association in lieu of flowers.

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Board Notes

Board Notes is taking a break for this issue and will return for our March-April issue.

Please call 616-459-8950 or email laska@heritagehillweb.org in any of the following cases:

- To place an item on the Board agenda, in which case you must contact us by 11:00am on the SECOND TUESDAY of the given month.
- To be added to the e-mail list to receive our Board Agenda in advance of our Board Meetings.
- To receive an email copy of full Board Minutes for any past Board Meeting.

The HHA Board meets at 7:00pm on the third Wednesday of most months at the Community Education Conference Room at Trinity Health / Hauenstein Center, 200 Jefferson Ave. SE. Meetings generally last until 8:30 or 9:00pm. All neighbors are welcome to attend. Board meetings generally do not take place in May (due to Home Tour) or in July (due to vacations).

If you would like to request that an item placed on the Board agenda, please call or email the HHA office by 11:00am on the SECOND TUESDAY of the given month. If you would like to address the Board regarding an agenda item, public comment is taken at the beginning and end of each meeting.



Square Dancing

On November 6, 2025, neighbors of all ages danced away the early winter chill, enjoying music and community at the Child Discovery Center. The Grand River Squares provided the music and fun. Both this and our August 2025 square dance event got great reviews. Let us know if you'd like another!



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Meet three of your new Board Members!

board SPOTLIGHT



Cathy Bosscher

Q: Tell us about yourself.

A: My name is Cathy Bosscher. I worked for 40 years in Supply Chain Management.

Q: How long have you lived in Heritage Hill?

A: My husband Mike and I have lived in Heritage Hill since 1983, raising our 4 kids here. Now our 7 grandchildren love to visit.

Q: What do you like most about living in HH?

A: I love our neighborhood, its people, and its many activities. One example is the Halloween parade. Garden club is so much fun, even though I'm not much of a gardener. I like the stories of the homes, both those of the original owners and of those who have maintained and restored them.

Q: What would make living in HH even better?

A: Continued promotion of what a special place this is. To make sure that our residents are informed and involved.

Q: What priorities do you bring to service on the HHA Board?

A: Home Tour!

board SPOTLIGHT



Julia Hawkins

Q: Tell us about yourself

A: I am a passionate advocate for knowing and loving your neighborhood, from the people to the buildings, plants and animals. I am a Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW) and work as a therapist in private practice serving West Michigan. My husband, Ed, and I have been married for about 13 years, and we currently have two dogs - Peter Barker (Beagle/Pitbull mix) and Bruce (Mastiff).

Q: How long have you lived in Heritage Hill?

A: We moved into our Prospect Ave home in November 2021. Before that, we lived in East Hills.

Q: What do you like most about living in HH?

A: I have always loved that there is something new to discover every time you go for a walk - a fun detail on a home you've never seen (*Was that tiny circular window always there?*) or a new gardening choice (*I didn't realize how much I like dahlias!*).

Q: What would make living in HH even better?

A: I would love more regular opportunities to connect with neighbors!

Q: What priorities do you bring to service on the HHA Board?

A: I hope to continue to grow our connections to one another as neighbors. Living in America in 2026 is hard, and no one should have to do it without the support of a strong community.

board SPOTLIGHT



Katie Heneveld

Q: Tell us about yourself

A: I live in NE Heritage Hill with my husband, Matt, and our golden retriever, Henry. My professional background spans project management, data analysis, and strategic operations in the logistics and technology industry. I love hosting family and friends, with cooking and tablescapes design as creative outlets. I enjoy traveling, meeting new people, nurturing my curiosity intellectually and with new experiences, and stewarding our historic home.

Q: How long have you lived in Heritage Hill?

A: 5 years.

Q: What do you like most about living in HH?

A: Our neighborhood has deep roots, where generations worked to protect its character and value its legacy. It offers a unique blend of neighborhood living within an urban setting—beautiful homes, walkability, proximity to downtown, and a community made up of neighbors with a wide range of experiences and perspectives—a distinctive and special combination that is hard to come by.

Q: What would make living in HH even better?

A: Our size and density present a great opportunity to build connections between residents across the entire neighborhood and to strengthen overall engagement within the community.

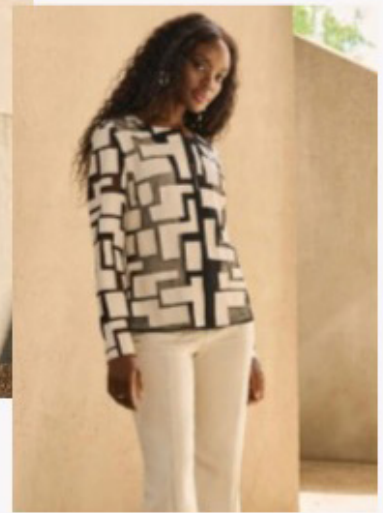
Q: What priorities do you bring to service on the HHA Board?

A: I hope to contribute to thoughtful, well-informed decisions that honor our bylaws and support the long-term needs of the neighborhood. I care about ensuring that Heritage Hill has the resources and resident engagement it needs to stay vibrant, welcoming, and true to the character we all love.



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2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Herald content & ads deadline –
March / April issue

Wednesdays, February 18,

March 18, April 15, 2026 @ 7pm

HHA Board Meeting - open to
Heritage Hill neighbors

Community Education Room

Hauenstein Center of Trinity Health –
200 Jefferson Ave. SE entrance

Wednesday, February 4, March 4,

April 1, 2026, 5-7pm

Heritage Hill First Wednesdays
Happy Hours

*The Commons, @ The Oakwood,
547 Cherry St. SE*

March 18 @ 1:00pm and

March 24 @ 6:30pm

“Zoning 101” with Rowan Brady, GR
City Planning Supervisor
Held at Central Reformed Church

Annual Dates

Saturday, April 18 – Sunday, April 26

Annual Neighborhood Spring Clean
Go to SignUpUenius.com and search
“Heritage Hill Spring Litter Clean
2026” to sign up and win prizes!

Saturday and Sunday,

May 16 & 17, 2026

The Heritage Hill Annual weekend
Tour of Homes

Saturday, June 20, 2026

Heritage Hill Garden Tour

Friday, May 15, 2026

First Annual Home Tour VIP Preview
Night

Saturday and Sunday,

May 16 & 17, 2026

Annual Heritage Hill Home Tour

May 2026

First Annual Home Tour Volunteers
Appreciation Event

Saturday, May 30, 2026

(May 31 rain date) time TBD

Movie in the Park in Pleasant Park

Heritage Hill Association

252 State St SE Ste 101
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PETE BRUINSMA
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are in part funded by the City of Grand Rapids'
Community Development Block Grant Programs.