



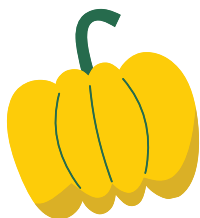
Heritage Herald

Sept/Oct 2025

The Newsletter of Heritage Hill

Volume MMXXV, No.5

Fall Our Way!



**Don't get lost in the
wind this fall!**

**Come help strengthen and care for
our one-of-a-kind neighborhood!**

Join our Board to weigh in on all issues
affecting Heritage Hill.

Join a Committee to work on areas
such as environmental sustainability,
health & safety, community-building,
Home & Garden Tours, and
neighborhood improvements!

AND - Now is the Time to Give
so we can be strong and act for YOU
in the coming year.

See pages 6 & 7 for more info!

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
Carly Durham-Bruins, Public Safety Community Organizer
Maria Zache Starkey, Office Manager

Board of Directors:

*Liz Bracken (Treasurer), Union Ave SE
*Denise Cook (Fundraising Chair; 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
*Michelle Hoexum, Morris Ave SE
*Kim Lucas (Home Tour Co-Chair), Paris Ave SE
*Jim McClurg, College Ave SE
*Jennifer Meeks (Board Minutes), College Ave SE
**Wayne Norlin, Morris 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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Halloween Trick or Treat in

Pleasant Park! On October 31, come to Pleasant Park at 5:30 for trick or treating, organized by South Hill Neighborhood with candy from HHA.

Looking for a Few Lovely Gardens

As the colors of summer change to the hues of autumn, please consider sharing the beauty of your garden with friendly visitors during next summer's 2026 Heritage Hill Garden Tour, Saturday, June 20th from 9am to 3pm. A fun gathering of garden hosts occurs the night before, with personal tours and yummy food and drink. Ask anyone who has been a part of Garden Tour and they will tell you how enjoyable and gratifying it is. Your garden does not need to be perfect, just well-loved. Visitors enjoy seeing these living art pieces-in-progress. Help us get an early start on planning by emailing or calling the HHA office, or contact Garden Tour fearless leader Kate Diedrich at (616) 451-9211 or katediedrich@gmail.com. Bloom on!

Window Workshop

Contact Rhonda Baker (rbaker@grcity.us / 616-456-3451) at Historic

This and That

by Laska Nygaard, Executive Director &
Maria Zache Starkey, Office Manager

Preservation if you are interested in taking this immensely popular hands-on workshop with Midtown Craftsmen. Registration is \$200, with a single competitive scholarship available. Dates and times are Friday, Nov. 14, 5:30-8:00pm and Saturday, Nov. 15 8:00am-4:00pm. Pizza provided on Friday night!

Here's a way Heritage Hill neighbors can help pay it forward: Bring us your clean plastic grocery bags!

Several forces came together to help a little boy waiting for a new prosthetic leg. Thanks to Heritage Hill neighbor Annamarie Buller, who amplified a Go Fund Me plea and made important introductions between key players; a Community Organizer in Creston who kept the ball rolling; and an existing relationship between SpartanNash,



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Home Repair Services and Trex that usually builds ramps for veterans, a boy and his family were gifted a ramp for their home. This meant the boy could move much more freely and get out to play with his friends this summer.

Trex recycles plastic grocery bags into the planking for each ramp. 157,500 bags go into each ramp, facilitated by SpartanNash's "Bags to Boards" program. Heritage Hill Association would like to help pay it forward by being a drop-off site for bags at our office. So, bring us your clean plastic grocery bags and help a veteran or perhaps even another little boy. As neighbor Annamarie said, quoting James Baldwin: "...the world is held together by the love and passion of very few people..."

You can Google WOOD TV's June 17 news story to watch a report on building of the boy's ramp, and go to www.spartannash.com and search "Bags to Boards" to learn more.

National Night Out Thanks!

Thanks to volunteers and neighbors who made this year's National Night Out in Pleasant Park a huge success. Jeff Martin Realty **Coldwell Banker AJS Schmidt** refreshed neighbors with frozen treats, 2nd Ward Commissioner **Milinda Ysasi** quenched their thirst with cool water, and sponsor **A Pleasant Dog** joined to talk about their dog training. From GRPD to GRFD, City Commissioners Ysasi, Knight and Kilgore to Rhonda Baker from Historic Preservation, Healthy Homes West Michigan to GRPL, the Boys & Girls Club to GRPL, we connected with so many who generously gave their time and who

(cont'd on page 4)



The Heritage Hill Association publishes available apartments.

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(cont'd from page 3)

mean so much to Heritage Hill and our city. A big shout out to neighbors **Josh Sikkenga, Joyce Van Haitsma and Tony Davis** for the years of providing hot dogs, with all the fixins, to attendees. And applause to artists Esther Solis and Lulu Nygaard Tap for over two straight hours of face-painting on untold numbers of happy children. We love to see this event growing year upon year, with more kids playing with the yard games and more grown-ups meeting and starting new friendships. You make the neighborhood special, and it's a pleasure to serve you. Can't wait to see



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you for next year's NNO on the first Tuesday in August!

Square Dancing the Night Away!

On August 21, neighbors gathered at Child Discovery Center for HHA's first square dancing get together with the Grand River Squares providing music and fun! We heard nothing but good about this event and asks for more. So, look for our next square dance night, coming in January!



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We're looking for a few a whole lot of good neighbors – like you!

This fall, come join us at HHA! Here's how you can get involved and support us.

- **Join Our Board!** Board elections will take place at our Annual Party and Membership Meeting at 6:00pm on Tuesday, December 2, 2025. (Location TBD and will be published in the Nov/Dec 2025 Herald.) We have several seats with terms about to expire.

For information on the responsibilities and many benefits of Board Membership, email heritage@heritagehillweb.org or call 616-459-8950. **To be nominated**, we need to receive your/their (1) name, (2) street address and other contact information, and (3) a

statement of up to 100 words on why you/they wish to serve. If provided in-person or via snail mail, the nomination must be received in our office by 3:00pm on Thursday, October 30. If using email, we must receive the nomination at heritage@heritagehillweb.org by 11:59pm on Sunday, November 2, 2025. We will get in touch after receiving your nomination.

- **Join A Committee!** The facing page summarizes all that HHA does for the neighborhood. We would love to have your talents work for our neighborhood on Community Engagement, Home and Garden Tours, Land Use, Community Health & Safety (including environmental work), Technology, Fundraising, or Finance Committees and/or Special Committees covering concerns such as Voigt House preservation and public art. Email or call us at heritage@heritagehillweb.org or 616-459-8950 to learn more.

- **SUPPORT U\$ with an invaluable END-OF-YEAR DONATION!** Especially in these times of grant funds drying up, more than ever we need your financial support so that we can work to keep Heritage Hill the safe, beautiful, thriving, one-of-a-kind neighborhood that has been built by the contributions of neighbors just like you. We can't do it without you. With you – we can do it all!

TO DONATE!



Access our PayPal donation page via this QR code



Go to heritagehillweb.org/support/ and click on 'DONATE'.



Call us (616-459-8950) or email us (heritage@heritagehillweb.org).



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Why We Are Here: You & Us

What our Board, Staff, Committees and Volunteers work on

Engaging neighbors via major events, block club support, website, social media, email and Herald communications

Community Engagement



Our major fundraisers demonstrate the value of historic preservation and community action for improving the quality of urban life

Garden & Home Tours



Protecting the quality and safety of Heritage Hill's built and physical environment:

- Parking & streets
- Development proposals
- Historic Preservation
- Parks, and more

Land Use



Informs and acts on crime prevention, environmental and climate issues, lead and other health & safety issues

Community Health & Safety



**We Need
You to**



**Support Our
Work!**



Tech & Media

Tech solutions enabling all aspects of HHA work, from computers and tech equipment, to software choice, to website-building and upkeep



Finance

Procedures and oversight of prudent use of funds to maximize programs, strategic goals, and meet community needs



Fundraising

Along with Home and Garden Tours, carrying out initiatives to raise funds for HHA programs and seek grant opportunities



Special

Targeting special projects & concerns:

- HHA office search
- Voigt House care
- Park & art projects
- Density & Master Plan

Neighborhood Potpourri

RODENT & TERMITE PREVENTION

To continue to keep our Heritage Hill homes safe and pest free, Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan reminds us to take measures to keep out common pests that have been problematic in past years, in our neighborhood. Rodents and termites both can cause extensive

damage to homes if left unchecked. The following tips can help keep your home free from pest damage.

Rodents. To prevent rodent activity, The National Center for Healthy Housing recommends:

- Seal holes and cracks in building

foundations, utility openings and joints between materials. Use corrosion-proof materials such as copper or stainless steel mesh. Rodents can chew through many other materials and squeeze through tiny openings.

- Add rodent barriers to foundation walls to make it more difficult for them to enter a building.
- Seal passages through interior floors, walls, ceilings, and kick spaces. If possible, keep kick spaces open to limit places where rodents can hide.
- Keep bushes and trees at least three feet from homes. Bushes and trees near a home provide food, a living place and sheltered passage for rats and rodents.
- Ensure trash is stored in secure containers (covered garbage cans and dumpsters).
- Store food in rodent-proof containers

For more information see the Center for Disease Control website at <https://www.cdc.gov>

Termites. Termites can damage properties extremely quickly leading to financial and safety concerns in your historic home. Infestations can be costly to homeowners and often go unnoticed until extensive damage is done. Prevention is key to stopping these



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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.



expensive and potentially unsafe critters from targeting your home. Here are 10 tips from the National Pest Management Association to prevent termites:

1. Eliminate or reduce moisture in and around the home, which termites need to thrive.
 2. Repair leaking faucets, water pipes and exterior AC units.
 3. Repair fascia, soffits and rotted roof shingles.
 4. Replace weather stripping and loose mortar around basement foundation and windows.
 5. Divert water away from the house through properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks.
 6. Routinely inspect the foundation of a home for signs of mud tubes (used by termites to reach a food source), uneven or bubbling paint and wood that sounds hollow when tapped.
 7. Monitor all exterior areas of wood, including windows, doorframes and skirting boards for any noticeable changes.
 8. Maintain an 18-inch gap between soil and any wood portions of your home.
 9. Consider scheduling a professional inspection annually. Wood-boring insect damage is not covered by homeowners insurance policies.
 10. Store firewood at least 20 feet away from the house.
- Call a reputable pest company if you

suspect termites in your home. Visit <https://www.pestworld.org/> or <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/termites-how-identify-and-control-them> for more information.

REGISTER YOUR DOORBELL CAMERA WITH GRPD

Help solve car break-ins and other crime and safety issues in Heritage Hill by registering your outdoor cameras with GRPD. Once you register, if GRPD becomes aware of a crime in your area they may contact you to request review



of your video. Your cameras are not connected to GRPD. To access your videos, they must contact you to request access, and you must give permission and provide the video to them. Visit the City of Grand Rapids website or call to learn more: www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Register-a-Security-Camera-System or call 456-3363.

ARTPRIZE FIREWORKS

ArtPrize will once again have fireworks for the opening ceremony, downtown

(cont'd on page 10)

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Neighborhood Potpourri (cont'd from page 9)

near Gillette Bridge. This year the opening ceremony falls on September 19 and fireworks will begin around 9 pm. The event is open to the public and includes music, art and celebrations beginning at 6:30 at Rosa Parks Circle.

Fall Yard Cleanup

As fall comes, consider using fallen leaves as free mulch to nurture oil, plants and

wildlife. You don't have to leave the leaves and other plant debris exactly where they fall. You can rake them into garden beds, around trees, or make a yard compost bin or pile to let them turn in to nutrient-rich compost. Too many leaves can kill grass, but in soil can suppress weeds, retain moisture, insulate perennials, slow erosion, and

boost nutrition. Leaving leaves in garden beds and done wonders for our Executive Director's soil by leaving. You can also help wildlife. Hollow spaces in stems give small critters and pollinators places to hibernate. Turtles, toads, salamanders, moths and butterflies all spend winter tucked under leaves. In spring, hold off on clipping dead plant stems and removing debris until 50-degree days return, so as not to destroy all the life you've worked to protect.

For yard waste that you must dispose of, Grand Rapids offers collection and drop-off services.

For these services, yard waste includes: grass clippings, leaves, brush, twigs (less than two inches in diameter), and garden plants. It does not include: sod, dirt, stones, broken concrete, trees, tree limbs, logs, railroad ties, stumps, animal feces or dead animals.

2001 Butterworth SW is the site for free, year-round yard waste drop, for Grand Rapids residents. Normal hours are:

- April thru mid-December: Monday - Saturday 7:30 to 4:30
- Winter hours: Monday - Friday 7:30 to 4:30
- **Holiday Closures:** New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day

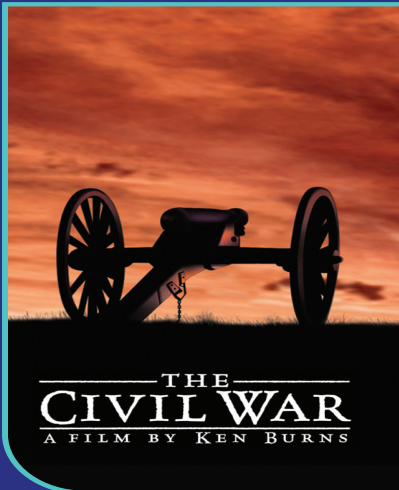
City options for paid curbside collection:

- **Yard Waste Cart:** \$30 to order. You tip your cart, attach a yellow Yard Waste Tag to the cart. Each tag is \$6.50. Your yard waste collection is the same day as your regular waste collection.
- **Yard Waste Paper Bag.** Bags are \$2.75 each. Items in the yard waste paper bag can't weigh more than 30 pounds.
- **Yard Waste Bulk Tag.** You can use a purple Yard Waste bulk tag for bundles of larger twigs or branches. You may also attach this tag to a non-City paper yard waste bag. These tags cost \$2.75 each. Bundled branches and twigs shouldn't be more than 4 feet long or 2 inches in diameter.

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Public-Works-Department/Trash-Recycling-Yard-and-Other-Waste/Yard-Waste-Services>

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Board Notes

Discussion at the April, 2025 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:

Public Comment: C. Hamman shared that Central Reformed Church was looking forward to accommodation for Home Tour and mentioned assistance with providing an information table.

President's Report:

a. Hand-in-five volunteers: B. Cody asked Board members about their outreach to potential sponsors for Home Tour. Most shared that securing timely responses had been difficult. All were encouraged to continue to follow up.

b. Contacting potential sponsors: B. Cody asked each Board Member to reach out to at least five contacts seeking their potential sponsorship of Home Tour. He will share additional information through email on possible sponsors for outreach.

c. VOTE: B. Cody reminded the Board that there would be no meeting in May due to Home Tour. The Board unanimously voted not to meet in July, following precedent that this month is summer break for HHA staff and board members.

d. B. Cody shared information from his discussion with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network and will share resources with the Board via email.

Treasurer's Report: L. Bracken noted financial statements included notes from the Finance Committee meeting the day before and there was nothing additional to add unless someone has questions. At present, the Finance Committee is awaiting the results of Home Tour before making any other decisions.

Home Tour: L. Nygaard shared that they still needed chairs and tables for the food trucks and asked for volunteers to coordinate with the office on items to share. S. De Haan thanked the Board for signing up as guides and urged that everyone continue to ask more volunteers. M. and A. Askoul stepped up to oversee the food trucks for Tour at Mooney Park. J. and R. Martin offered their backyard to store the tables Saturday evening. C. Durham-Bruins is providing most of the tables. There

will be a food truck at the tour home on College NE. A food truck (ice cream and water) will be located at Central Reformed Church. Meyer May House, Central Reformed Church, and Stonecastle Dentistry will have restrooms for Home Tour patrons to use. J. Czubko will be at the home at College NE to assist with ticket sales

and oversee any ticket purchasing issues.

The Host and House Captain Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 24 at the Visitor's Center at the Meyer May House. This is a time when Home Tour Hosts meet their captains and the procedures and expectations for

(cont'd on page 12)



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Board Notes

Tour will be presented. Monday, May 13, will be the meeting time for guides to visit their assigned homes. Home Tour Hosts will be present along with the House Captains. House Captains will run the meeting, reviewing the route(s) guests will follow and guide specific will be shown their station.

Land Use: On April 29th, L. Nygaard, J. Fowler, and J. Phillips attended a meeting with representatives from Mobile GR and the City Street Engineering Department to discuss changes to Cherry Street scheduled to begin that same afternoon. During the meeting, HHA was informed that the city was proceeding with its plan to eliminate parking on the north side of Cherry Street. Mobile GR also acknowledged that they had not reengaged with us prior to making this decision. During conversation, HHA requested that the city consider offering free parking permits on State Street for Cherry Street residents affected by this change. They indicated they would look into this request. The free merit parking pass would be a short-term (six-year approx.) implementation within the broader long-term bicycle infrastructure strategy for Grand Rapids. The Committee is currently awaiting a final decision regarding the permit request.

Community Engagement: A. Larimer informed the Board that she is stepping down from the position of chair. L. Nygaard mentioned that M. Azkoul and A. Azkoul would assume the role of chair(s). The Board thanked Abi for her dedicated leadership of the Committee over the past couple of years. L. Nygaard reported that Community Engagement is preparing for Shakespeare in the Park in July.

Fundraising: D. Cook shared that the Committee is actively brainstorming new and exciting ideas for upcoming fundraisers to engage the community and support HHA. Specifically, the committee is exploring activities that encourage participation and foster a sense of camaraderie. T-shirts are still being sold with various sizes still available.

(cont'd on page 14)



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Board Notes (cont'd from page 13)

Office Relocation: L. Nygaard reported that the office continues to be in contact with Trinity Health about whether there may be an opportunity to have a month-to-month lease for a period of time after the current lease expires on July 31; and about whether Mary Free Bed may have any

non-profit-rate space for us, which Trinity offered to check for us. In the meantime, given that CDBG grant funds continue to be a target of the current administration, planning is being done for going remote as of August 1.

Technology: J. Czubko shared that migration of phone system will occur after Home Tour. The committee is waiting on requirements to select a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Public Safety: C. Ervine shared that the Committee had a series of meetings over the last month to discuss the next steps for a renewed focus on Community Health, including a fortuitous meeting with Joann Hoganson, Community Wellness Division Director at the Kent County Health Department. Proposals for an HHA Lead Dust Hazard Abatement Tool-Share program are forthcoming.

Spring Litter Cleanup: L. Nygaard reported that C. Durham-Bruins is organizing this year's Spring Litter Cleanup. L. Nygaard reminded Board Members to sign up on Eventbrite to clean a block or more.

If you would like an item placed on the Board agenda, please call the HHA office at 616-459-8950 before

4:00 p.m. of the second WEDNESDAY of the month. If you would like to address the Board regarding an agenda item, public comment is taken at the beginning of each meeting. For non-agenda items, public comment is taken at the end of each meeting. Typically, Board meetings run from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

If you would like to receive monthly Board agendas via email, please email us your request.



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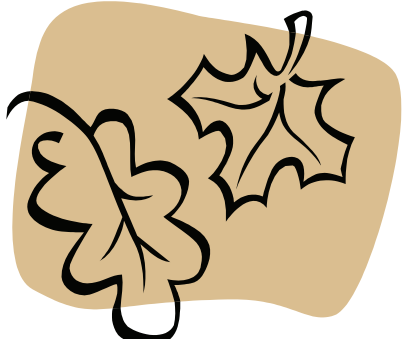
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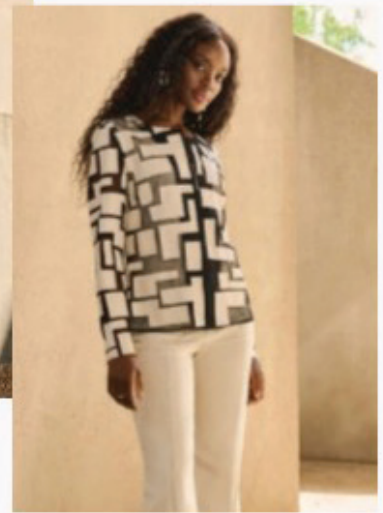
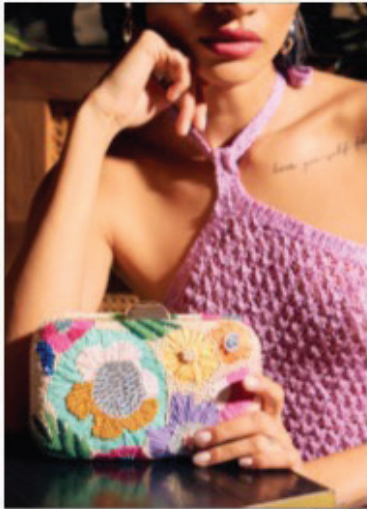
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2025 DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, September 3,
October 1, November 5 &
December 3, 2025, 5-7pm

Heritage Hill First Wednesdays
 Happy Hours

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

Sept. 8, 17, 22, 24; Oct. 13; Dec. 1 & 3

**Heritage Hill Walking Tours
 with Caroline Cook**

Fulton St. Graveyard / Hauntings / South
 Hill Victorian Christmas / NEW! North Hill
 Victorian Christmas

*Search Heritage Hill Association on
 Eventbrite or visit our website
 and Facebook.*

Wednesday, Sept. 17, October 15,
November 19, 2025 @ 7pm

HHA Board Meeting
 Community Education Conference Room
 Hauenstein Center, 220 Cherry St. SE
 (Location can change. Contact
 us to confirm.)

Deadline: Thursday, October 30, 3:00pm

For hardcopy Board candidacy to be
 received in the HHA office.
Details p. 6

Deadline: Sunday, November 2, 11:59pm

For e-mailed Board candidacy to be
 received at heritage@heritagehillweb.org
Details p. 6

Monday, November 10

*Herald content & ads deadline –
 November / December issue*

ANNUAL DATES

Sat., September 6, 2025, 8am – 12pm

Dumpster Day
 Central Reformed Church Parking Lot
 10 College Ave. NE

Friday, October 31 @ 5:30pm

Halloween for the kids in Pleasant Park

November 2025

1st Annual Holiday Decoration Contest!
 Date and location TBD

Tuesday, December 2, 2025 @ 6PM

Annual Membership Meeting /
 Holiday Gathering - Location TBD

December 2025

Caroling & Cocoa with neighbors
 Date and location TBD

Sat. May 16 & Sun. May 17 2026

Annual Weekend Tour of Homes

Saturday, June 20, 2026

Annual Garden Tour

Heritage Hill Association

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 are in part funded by the City of Grand Rapids'
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