

The Heritage Hill Association's 2022 Report to Neighbors

"The purpose of the Heritage Hill Association is 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."

WHO WE ARE:

The **Heritage Hill Association (HHA)** is the neighborhood organization of the Heritage Hill Historic District. Our boundaries are the northern rear property lines of Crescent Street to the southern rear property lines of Pleasant Street (including the 600 block of Union SE); the eastern property lines of Union Avenue to the western property lines of Lafayette Avenue; also included is a jog down State Street to Jefferson Avenue to Fulton Street. **Everyone who lives within these boundaries is a member of the Heritage Hill Association.** Non-residents can also be members by contributing annual membership dues. **Resident neighbors and businesses are encouraged to support the work of HHA through its annual pledge drive.**

THE ASSOCIATION AND NEIGHBORS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022:

Neighborhood Improvement and FUN!

- Upgrades to Heritage Hill Park at Logan and Paris started in the fall thanks to a millage
- HHA worked with stakeholders along State Street on improvements proposed by the city. Free on-street parking was negotiated and will remain, while new brick pavers will be installed, redstone curbs will be recycled/re-used and replaced, sidewalk improvements, and lighting improvements.
- HHA wrote a letter to the city supporting the Mayor's opposition to short term rental legislation being considered at the state level that removes control from localities. The legislation was scheduled for further consideration by state legislators in 2023.
- HHA worked with the City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation to correct the boundary plaque located on State Street at the Calkins Law Office / Lincoln Place Park. For years, it has faced the wrong way: welcoming visitors to the neighborhood as they are leaving it; and bidding farewell to visitors as they enter our historic neighborhood. The pretty green/gold/silver plaque now does its job with pride and accuracy!
- HHA continued hosting several walking tours of the neighborhood and nearby sites of interest with the help of local tour guide, Caroline Cook of GR Running Tours. Ticket holders enjoyed our neighborhood during all seasons by "getting their spook on" in days leading up to Halloween and seeing our beautiful homes lit up during the holidays.
- It was great to have Home Tour back after its 2-yr COVID hiatus. Thanks to the Home Tour Steering Committee for a very successful tour! We sold 1,600 tickets in total; many more were given away as part of sponsor packages. Home Tour income (tickets and sponsors) totaled \$52,000 and after expenses our net proceeds were \$43,900.
- With a grant from the city's Office of Special Events, we were able to support a Halloween trunk treat event at Pleasant Park hosted by neighbors adjacent to the park. A separate grant supported our first-in-recent-memory holiday caroling evening.

- We were thrilled to bring the Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company to Pleasant Park for a performance of “Shakespeare 101” in partnership with the city’s Community Development Block Grant & the Office of Special Events.
- Also a huge thanks to our Community Engagement Committee for expanding our programmatic offerings. One of the most popular efforts includes the addition of very successful monthly neighborhood happy hours at The Commons
- Beyond HHA’s events, neighbors gathered for backyard movie nights, participated in the HH Gardening Club, and HH Dinners for 8.
- We look forward to taking the feedback we received from the neighborhood survey conducted in the fall to bring more and relevant programming to neighbors in 2023. This information will help feed our long range plans. We are thankful to GVSU’s Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy for providing support to make it happen.

Looking ahead to 2023, with help from YOU:

- Home Tour steering committee has the homes for the 2023 Annual Tour of Homes May 20-21. We are thrilled to have the support of Steelcase whose Meyer May House will be one of the featured homes!
- HHA hopes to bring more community-building activities to neighbors. Staff is working with the South Hill neighborhood to bring a MOVIE NIGHT to Pleasant Park in June. HHA looks to continue its support for HALLOWEEN at Pleasant Park and bringing more LOCAL ARTS GROUPS to perform in some of our pocket parks. But we need more neighbor engagement to make these happen!
- HHA will be looking to upgrade its WEBSITE to allow users to find things more easily and provide user-friendly info. Look for a new logo, too!
- HHA is exploring a grant to refurbish some of the tired and worn historic BOUNDARY PLAQUES at the edges of the neighborhood. Look for improvements in 2023.
- One immediate observation from the community survey was interest in reviving or creating more social opportunities for neighbors including BLOCK CLUBS or promoting current opportunities like, DINNERS FOR 8, GARDEN CLUB, etc. We’ll work with a group of interested neighbors to look more closely at those survey answers to build programming for 2023 and beyond.
- Staff and board are thrilled by the work of GR Parks & Rec to make some improvements to Heritage Hill Park at Logan and Paris SE.
- Our social media presence via Instagram and Facebook continues to grow and is a regular medium for promoting neighborhood events and stories.
- Compiled and produced 6 issues of the **Heritage Herald** that were distributed to 4,500 neighbors and friends.
- Produced and updated the apartment listings on a weekly basis to advertise local rentals available.

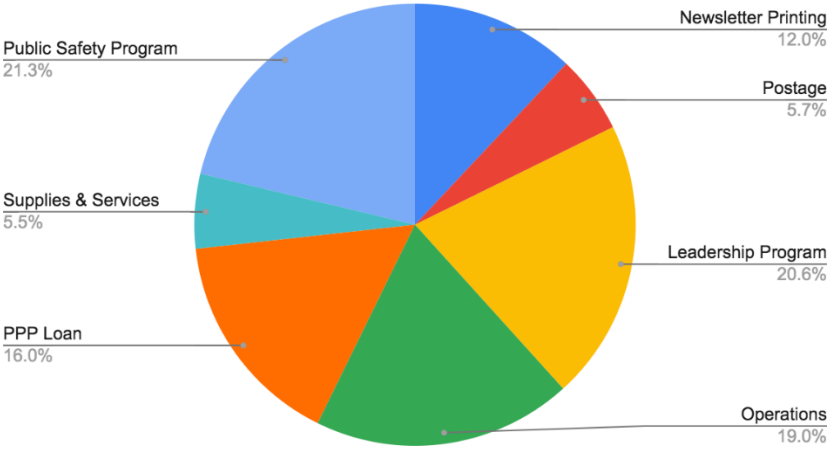
Public Safety 2022:

Thank you to every resident of and professional who works in Heritage Hill. It takes a village – or a neighborhood – and, together, we make a safer, healthier and more vibrant community. There will be much more to come in 2023, and you will continue to be a big part of it. Here's what we worked on in 2022:

- **Art Project.** 2022 saw the ongoing beautification of traffic control cabinets at key intersections in HH that was begun in 2021. Spurred by vandalism on these utility cabinets, HHA successfully received a small grant to facilitate local artists' work. While not all of the art has been immune from vandalism, it has greatly deterred it. One of the cabinets is being repainted after the City needed to replace the existing cabinet structure. The cabinet at Madison and Wealthy was painted with echinacea, a MI wildflower, in early summer. Work on the cabinet at Madison and Cherry, being done by Kate Diedrich, has paused for winter. Even incomplete, Kate's depiction of our four seasons is awe-inspiring.
- **Human's Best Friends.** The Neighborhood, and particularly Pleasant Park, have continued to experience lost dogs and other dogs wandering free. Foster Park on State St. has had a particular problem with dog waste left on the ground. Owners and handlers are reminded to be neighborly by picking up after their pets and dogs in public areas and keeping all dogs on leash in public areas regardless of breed, temperament, age, etc.
- **Micromobility.** In June, the City Commission ended a pilot program with Mobile Gr by making e-scooter and e-bike services permanent in a 12-mile area that includes Heritage Hill. City staff reported that Lime was chosen over other vendors for their Lime's quality and durable micromobility vehicles, experience working in and with disadvantaged communities (Lime offers reduced fees to low-income applicants), their approaches to service pricing, customer service, marketing and education/outreach. Mobile GR also reported as effective a Lime incentive for users to return scooters and bikes to designated parking zones.
- **Speeding.** Speeding continues to be an issue on Heritage Hill streets. In September, speeding was believed to be a factor in a crash that took the lives of two motorcyclists. HHA staff continue to field complaints on this issue and raise them with GRPD, however current GRPD staffing shortages continue to hamper enforcement. Our efforts will be ongoing in 2023.
- **Unwelcome guests.** A recurring theme this year has been unknown visitors appearing on neighbors' porches, knocking on neighbors' doors, appearing on their property and, in one case, just opening the front door and walking in. No injuries were reported in these incidents, but we are all advised to keep doors locked and our eyes open for strangers in neighbors' yards.
- **Carjacking.** Though unusual, there was a carjacking in our neighborhood. It was pre-planned by the perpetrators who targeted a delivery business, called in an order to an address in the neighborhood, and then stole the vehicle and cash when the delivery person arrived. HHA continues to liaise with management, owners and residents in the area on-site, in person, and via correspondence, to address security issues.
- **Vehicle thefts and break-ins.** Vehicles have been a major target since the pandemic. Car thefts, particularly of certain makes, have remained high in the city. Spats of break-ins, resulting in stolen valuables, continue. HHA has sent out repeated emails to residents to remind that valuables not be kept in automobiles, that doors be kept locked, and that drivers keep alert when approached and exiting their vehicles.

- **Annual picnic.** HHA hosted the annual National Night Out picnic in August at Pleasant Park. With support from a Community Development Block Grant from the City of GR, it is a great way to engage with representatives of the GR fire, police, parks, and other departments while getting to know your neighbors over frozen goodies and picnic items.
- **Fireworks.** Informational fireworks signs were posted around the neighborhood at key national holidays in order to reduce the number of illegal fireworks in or near our neighborhood. HHA has a working group looking into possibilities of making some regulatory progress to provide fireworks safety and nuisance relief to residents.
- **Waste & Recycling.** HHA held its annual, free Dumpster Day in September, graciously hosted by the Central Reformed Church with assistance from the City of GR. Over the course of the year, HHA has engaged with the City and other Neighborhood Associations in a review of GR's current trash program in an effort to tackle problems related to illegal dumping.
- **Ongoing Opportunities.** HHA offers free "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)" surveys for businesses and residential outdoor areas in the neighborhood, and free Home Security Assessments for owners and residents. In the HHA office, we have free sliding door pins available to residents.
- **HH Survey.** In partnership with the Dorothy A. Johnson Center at GVSU, HHA conducted a neighborhood survey to learn more about neighbor needs and how HHA can engage with neighbors to help meet them. Unsurprisingly, public safety emerged as one of the primary concerns of neighbors. The HHA Board and Staff are working to clarify targets and goals and move forward with planning with input from dozens of neighbors.
- **New and Looking ahead in 2023.** HHA's new Community Organizer, Laska Nygaard, joined in October 2022. While onboarding with HHA staff on neighborhood and Public Safety work, she is training with the City's Crime Prevention unit on topics from Public Safety Organizing 101 to Fire Safety to Home Security to Dispute Resolution. Along with the HHA Board and other HHA staff, Laska will be developing a Public Safety Strategic Plan for the HH area, which will take into account neighbor responses from the HH neighborhood survey and ongoing public safety data from the City. HHA daily assists neighbors with the above and other issues touching on public safety, and urges neighbors to get in touch with any concerns. Her work is supported in large part by a Community Development Block Grant from the City of GR.

2021 HHA Expenses \$116,691



2021 HHA Income \$152,448

