

Hamtramck Beautification Commission

Annual Report: 2023

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

- ❖ The Hamtramck Beautification Commission exists to promote the beautification of the city including but not limited to beautification of streets, alleys, parks, playgrounds, yards, lots and buildings.
- ❖ In addition, the organization is in charge of recommendations relating to health & cleanliness.
- ❖ Sponsor an annual Clean-Up Event.

The City Beautification Commission Purpose and Mission in outline in the Hamtramck Code of Ordinances, 32.120 – 32.122.

COMMISSIONERS

The City Beautification Commission shall consist of seven members (32.121).

MEMBERSHIP:

1. Rumana Rahman (Chair)
2. Gary Saganski
3. Alatheia Reese
4. Julie Sailus
5. Glafira Gordon

The commission needs two additional members in order to be truly active. The commission cannot meet, act or vote without quorum.

(If more than one commissioner is traveling or ill, the meeting is cancelled.)

ADVISORY MEMBERS:

1. Jessi Kwek, Center for Health Disparities Innovations and Studies (CHDIS), Eastern Michigan University
2. Dean Simionescu, Amanita Tree Service

2023 ACTIVITIES

- ❖ **Spring & Summer Trash Cleanup** The commission and Community and Economic Development (CED) hosted cleanups in the Spring, including the Earth Day Cleanup on April 22, 2023, and additional monthly clean-ups for the spring and summer. These cleanups consisted of volunteers and CED staff member Max Gilginas.
- ❖ **Urban Forest Tree Canopy Grant Application** The commission partnered with the city's grant coordinator and CED staff to apply for an Urban and Community Forestry grant. The city received an award notice in September 2023. The goal of this project is to restore the urban tree canopy, with a focus on stormwater capture. The project will provide for the installation of residential trees on city streets and will establish an Urban Forestry Program Coordinator to oversee the program. This person will work closely with CED and DPS, as well as the Beautification Commission.
- ❖ **Helping Seniors** Mutual Aid, Hamtramck Community Initiative and the City's CED Department sponsor and run a program called the "Every Neighbor Program" where volunteers are paired with seniors and residents with disabilities to assist with yard work when they have nowhere else to turn.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024 & BEYOND

COMMUNITY FORESTRY

The Beautification Commission will be partnering with CED to implement the USDA Forest Service and Community Forestry Grant. The grant requires community involvement, feedback and volunteerism. Partners will include the Beautification Commission, Hamtramck Community Initiative, Hamtramck Arts and Culture, and local non-profits.

- ➔ Community meetings on trees, tree maintenance and tree plantings will likely be held twice per year and will be organized by the future Urban Forestry Program Coordinator (once the grant kicks off in the summer of 2024).

KEY IMPROVMENTS NEEDED: BEAUTIFICATION, GREENSPACE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Beautification Commission will be partnering with the Center for Health Disparities Innovations and Studies (CHDIS) and CED to publish a report on beautification, greenspace and public health recommendations for the City of Hamtramck. This report will include commission and community feedback; the final report will be used to apply for grants. CHDIS is leading this initiative and will be gathering feedback in partnership with the commission.

2024 EARTH DAY CLEANUP: SATURDAY APRIL 20, 2024

CED and the Beautification Commission will host a community-wide cleanup on Saturday, April 20, 2024.

Staff began looking at the possibility of partnering with the national Keep America Beautiful organization for funding (garbage bags, gloves and food) and partnerships.

Note: Hamtramck does not have a local Keep America Beautiful chapter. This could be considered down the road.

CONCLUSION

In summary, many programs, partnerships and grant opportunities are available for beautification.

BIG IDEA: Urban planning consultants Spalding DeDecker and Progressive AE suggested shared trash receptacles in the downtown alley, just west of Joseph Campau. This would help mitigate the number of dumpsters in the alley and the trash that escapes from many open dumpsters. Seattle and Dearborn have piloted successful programs in their downtowns.

The city needs more active participation in this commission, whether as commissioners or as volunteers. This will ensure success as CED and the Beautification Commission co-applies for grants, seeks to start new projects, and completes ongoing projects.