

JACKSON

SPRING 2019

ENJOY NEW FEATURES AT JACKSON PARKS THIS SPRING!

Now that spring has sprung, families across Jackson are excited to finally get outside and enjoy all that our community has to offer.

Over the past year, the City of Jackson has been working hard to improve its recreational opportunities and provide more access to our beautiful parks.

The playground at Kiwanis Park off Elm Street received a big rejuvenation this past fall when the Parks and Recreation Department worked with the Kiwanis Club of Jackson to install new playground equipment.

All of your playground favorites are there like slides and swings, but there are new features like a climbing wall.

The new equipment also meets current safety standards and is more accessible for people with disabilities.

It's the strong partnership with the Kiwanis Club that brought Jackson another improvement to a local park.

In the fall, the City of Jackson Disc Golf Course started providing fun for the whole family.

The new 18-hole course is located on the west side of Ella Sharp Park off Hickory Avenue.

It takes disc golfers through a beautiful section of the park with large trees and rolling hills.

With this burgeoning sport firmly planted in Jackson, a disc golf tournament is planned at the course later this spring.

Along with providing more for residents to do in our parks, the City of Jackson has also redesigned how you access them.

Last year, new traffic roundabouts were added at the entrances to both Ella Sharp and Cascades parks.

The roundabouts were put in place to make these areas a safer place to enjoy.

They slow down traffic, provide better traffic flow, and create easier access to the parks for drivers and pedestrians.

New sidewalks and trails surrounding the roundabouts also provide more connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods.

While you are out and about this spring, you should also check out two new art pieces.



In the center of the new Kibby Road roundabout near the Cascades is a 25 foot tall sculpture.

A work by local artist Mark Muhich, the sculpture adds a focal point for the roundabout and adds gravitas to the park's entrance.

Another new sculpture was also installed at the eastern gateway to Downtown Jackson at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Cooper Street.

Funded through the Jackson Public Arts Commission, the new work by local artist Edward "Steampunk Eddie" Thayer is a giant rose that rotates in the wind and beautifully catches light through

sparkling red glass.

Efforts to add new features and improve the safety of our parks continue.

Two lighting projects were recently approved by the Jackson City Council to install new LED lighting around the playgrounds at both Exchange and Loomis parks.

There is so much more the City of Jackson will be offering throughout the year, especially with spring and summer recreation programs quickly approaching.

Be sure to visit the Parks and Recreation page of cityofjackson.org to keep updated on upcoming programs.

ROAD REPAIR MILLAGES GOING ON BALLOT

Fixing Jackson's streets has been a big topic of discussion in recent years.

In an upcoming election this year, City of Jackson residents will get to have their say in the matter, considering two millage proposals to fix Jackson's streets.

In January, the Jackson City Council voted to put two road repair proposals before voters in the November election.

Both plans call for fixing every road in the city by raising more than \$160 million over 20 years in taxes, but have different funding methods.

Proposal 1 intends to raise money through a millage rate increase of 5



mills.

The millage rate increase in Proposal 1 is just one part of a comprehensive 20 year plan to fix roads.

Voters will only decide Proposal 1's millage rate increase in the upcoming election, with the rest of

the plan left for future consideration.

At 13.5 mills, Proposal 2 has a higher millage rate, but eliminates new special assessments for roads.

The City Council decided to put both proposals on the ballot to give voters more

than one option.

How much the proposals will cost your family depends on a variety of factors.

Go to the homepage of cityofjackson.org to learn more about the two proposals.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION SEASON STARTS WITH WEST SIDE STREET RESURFACING

The City of Jackson is getting an early start on road construction season, resurfacing three streets on Jackson's west side.

Crews will first focus their attention on Thompson Street between Carlton Boulevard and the south cul-de-sac, Durand Street between Carlton Boulevard and Morrell Street, and Higby Street between Carlton Boulevard and the south cul-de-sac.

As crews work on resurfacing these three streets, they will also complete work on Grinnell Street from W. Michigan Avenue to Gettysburg Avenue.

Last fall, crews completed resurfacing on this stretch

of Grinnell Street.

This spring, they will return to Grinnell Street to repair green space and adjust manhole covers.

For Thompson, Durand and Higby, crews will start with repairing curbs and replacing sidewalk ramps to make them more accessible for people with disabilities.

The road surface will then be milled to remove broken pavement and patching.

A single layer of new asphalt will be laid over the surface.

Once resurfacing is completed, manhole covers will also be adjusted to the new pavement height and green space along the streets will

be repaired.

Work in this portion of the neighborhood is expected to wrap up later this summer.

Crews then will turn their attention to resurfacing Thompson, Durand, and Higby from Wildwood Avenue to W. Michigan Avenue.

Resurfacing on these three streets from W. Michigan Avenue to Carlton Boulevard is set to take place during the 2020 construction season.

The total cost of this project is \$980,051.

The majority of the funding is coming from special property tax assessments and the rest from City of Jackson street funds.

The water main replacement and full reconstruction of Franklin Street through this neighborhood has been postponed until 2020.

The City of Jackson is asking residents in this neighborhood to please refrain from parking on the street when construction is underway.

Residents are also asked to prepare for some inconveniences during construction, such as noise and dirt, construction equipment in the street, and temporarily blocked driveways.

The City will be sending out regular notices to residents to update them on construction progress.



MAYOR

Derek Dobies

COUNCIL

(Ward)

Arlene Robinson	1
Freddie Dancy	2
Jeremy Alexander	3
Craig Pappin	4
Kelsey Heck	5
Colleen Sullivan	6

CITY MANAGER

Patrick Burch

MEETINGS/IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, April 19

City Hall Closed

April 23 • 6: 30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

May 14 • 6: 30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

Monday, May 27

City Hall Closed

May 28 • 6: 30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

June 11 • 6: 30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

June 25 • 6: 30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

NEW DEVELOPMENTS COMING TO DOWNTOWN JACKSON



The skyline of Downtown Jackson is set to undergo a dramatic transformation over the next year.

Several mixed-use developments are set to start construction this spring and summer, adding more than 200 new apartments to the downtown area.

The 200 (pictured above) is a four story building that will rise up on Jackson Street between Pearl Street and Louis Glick Highway.

It will feature 86 market-rate apartments with retail space on the first floor.

Further down Jackson Street, a developer plans to construct 73 low-to-moderate income apartments at the site of the former Jackson Citizen Patriot building.

The existing building will be re-purposed for the development, and a large addition will be added.

Local senior citizens can also take

advantage of this downtown living boom with the Francis Senior Lofts.

The four story, 45 unit senior housing development will take shape on MLK Drive (formerly Francis Street) between Wesley Street and Franklin Street.

Another apartment development for low-to-moderate income tenants is in the initial planning stages on W. Michigan Avenue near Blackstone Street.

Plans call for building a four story, 53 unit building on the site.

It still requires approval from various state agencies before moving forward.

Other proposed developments like the Hayes Hotel and Commonwealth Associates headquarters are still in the planning stages.

We will continue to update residents on exciting new developments downtown!

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NEW ACCOUNT!



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NEW ACCOUNT!

FRANCIS STREET RENAMED MLK DRIVE

A major street in Jackson now has a new name.

At a special City Council meeting in February, the Jackson City Council unanimously approved a resolution to rename Francis Street, from Cooper Street to South Street, in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

The street is now known as Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

The portion of the street between Cooper Street and W. Michigan Avenue will be referred to as North Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

South of W. Michigan Avenue will be known as South Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

A portion of Francis Street was already named in honor of King, but the Council made the name official for the entirety of the street in the city limits.

Francis Street in Summit Township is not impacted

by this name change.

Records show that Francis Street was named for a son of Horace Blackman, who founded the settlement that later became the City of Jackson.

The Engineering Division says the name change will require the City to replace 36 street signs at an estimated cost of \$4,500.

With a unanimous vote, every councilmember spoke positively about the name change at the meeting.

First Ward Councilmember Arlene Robinson says local African American leaders have been fighting for this change for decades.

She hopes the name change will spur further investment along the new MLK Drive in the First Ward, which is a predominantly African American neighborhood.

“Hopefully it will bring



some pride into our neighborhood. We have something that we fought for. It's the beginning of the change that I am looking for," Robinson said.

Street signs were replaced in early April.

City Engineer Jon Dowling says the City is sending letters to residents and businesses along MLK Drive to make them aware that their street has a new name, and they will want to change their address in

personal accounts to reflect the new name.

“The City has already notified emergency responders of the name change. We have also made utilities aware so services are not impacted,” Dowling said.

He says the U.S. Postal Service is also prepared for the change, so residents and businesses don't need to worry about doing a change of address with the Post Office.

Latest from the Jackson City Council

2019 has already proved to be a busy year for the Jackson City Council, with the Council moving forward with several big initiatives and projects.

January saw the Council voting to put two road repair proposals on the ballot for voters to decide in a future election (learn more on Page 2).

The Council had three meetings in February.

At the Feb. 12 meeting, councilmembers allocated \$1.2 million from



Community Development Block Grants.

Those federal funds will now be put to use in Jackson on things like special assessment relief, recreation programs, demolitions, and road

construction.

The next meeting saw the Council approving the Displaced Tenants Ordinance.

Under the new ordinance, landlords now have to provide relocation

assistance for tenants who have been vacated by city inspectors due to unsafe living conditions.

This makes Jackson the first city in Michigan to adopt an ordinance like this.

The last meeting in February concerned the Francis Street renaming (see above article).

Meetings in March focused on moving forward with several new developments taking shape in Jackson.

HOME MAKEOVER: FAMILY'S HOUSE REHABBED BY CITY PROGRAM

The Bentley family has lived in a two story house on Merriman Street in Jackson for 12 years.

While it is a familiar setting, they're now seeing it with new eyes following a big makeover.

"It's like a whole new house," said homeowner Tara Bentley.

In late February, Tara Bentley and her family saw their house for the first time after it was rehabilitated by the City of Jackson.

"The work is fantastic. We're very lucky and blessed," Bentley said.

Tara and her husband, Ken, bought the house in 2007.

Over the years, health problems got in the way of home repairs and their safe haven quickly turned into a dangerous place to live.

Realizing they had lead paint throughout the house, Bentley contacted the City of Jackson to see what could be done.

She soon learned there was help to take care of the lead and much more.

"I was stunned. I didn't know there was help available from the City," Bentley said.

Starting last fall, the City used federal funds earmarked for home rehabilitation to hire contractors to do a full remodel of the house.

After months of repairs and getting everything up to code, the house is finally ready for Tara, Ken, and their two daughters to move back in.

"This program is important because I know we're not the only ones that have problems trying to maintain their homes like elderly or disabled people or those who just don't have enough money," Bentley said.

Jennifer Morris, Director of the City of Jackson Neighborhood and Economic Operations Department, says this is just one of dozens of home rehabs the City has funded over the years through the Home Rehabilitation Program.



Morris says residents who are interested in getting similar assistance should contact Neighborhood and Economic Operations at Jackson City Hall.

"We have very specific program parameters such as income. They have to be of a low-to-moderate income level. Our office will work with them to determine if they meet that criteria. Then we start working with them to verify an income source and then do an evaluation of their home to figure out what kind of work needs to be done," Morris said.

Bentley says she wants to get the word out about the program.

"Everyone has been so gracious and kind to us. It takes a while so you have to have patience, but I would encourage people to apply, because this saved our house," Bentley said.

Saving just one house is set to have a big impact in this neighborhood.

"Rehabs like this can positively impact property values. It can potentially have an impact on crime reduction, because it is securing properties. It is making sure that a family is able to stay in their home. I think it has a multi-pronged impact on the community as a whole," Morris said.

The Bentleys are now ready to make some new memories in this fresh family home.

"It's going to help make Jackson better. So it's important that we let everyone know that this is here to help us keep our roots where we're at and grow into a better city," Bentley said.

The Neighborhood and Economic Operations Department can be reached at **517-778-4060**.

City of Jackson
161 W. Michigan Ave.
Jackson, MI 49201

CITY NEWSLETTER

WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING IN JACKSON, MICHIGAN