

# MORNINGSIDER

The Official Newsletter of Morningside



4327 Three Mile Drive stands ready after being renovated by DLBA. Photo by Jim West

## New Land Bank Housing Coming To Morningside

By Sarah Gargaro | Detroit Land Bank Authority

Detroit — The Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) is excited to announce the launch of a new pilot program in Morningside called "Rehabbed and Ready to Renovate." This program is a little different from its companion program, Rehabbed and Ready, which completely renovates vacant houses using philanthropic dollars, then sells them on the traditional housing market.

With "Rehabbed and Ready to Renovate," vacant houses owned by the DLBA will be partially renovated with all major components completed, including roof, foundation, windows, siding, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, etc., but listed for sale before the finishings have been completed. We hope this will give buyers an opportunity to complete the project on their own timeline and at their budget. We have been working with several financial institutions to make sure that our buyers will have access to financing on these purchases. Story continued on page 4...

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(313) 236-3518

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**We Must Determine Our Neighborhood's Future**

By Jackie Grant | Morningside Community Organization



Participants in Summer in the City program painted a mural on the side of the laundromat at E. Warren and Three Mile – an example of streetscaping. Photo by Jim West

If you want to help shape what MorningSide will look like five years from now, I encourage you to come to the first of a series of public meetings between city officials and residents on Wednesday, December 11, from 6-8 p.m. at Ronald Brown Academy.

You've probably heard by now of the Strategic Neighborhoods Plan, which is allocating at least \$5 million to MorningSide, East English Village, and Cornerstone over the next few years for improvements in four areas: residential stabilization, commercial development, parks improvements, and streetscaping on the East Warren corridor. ("Streetscaping" is just a fancy way of saying "beautification" of a street through features like better sidewalks, murals, decorative lighting, trees and flowers, etc.)

The first \$5 million has been guaranteed by a grant from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan, and the first project will be the East Warren streetscaping. Of course, it's going to take more than \$5 million to bring our community back to where it should be, but it will at least jumpstart the redevelopment and hopefully attract more funding.

What happens too often is that when several communities receive a pie that isn't quite big enough, people start fighting over who's going to get the biggest piece. MorningSide Community Organization is committed to doing what we can to make sure that doesn't happen. It's essential for the leaders of all three communities to listen to each other and find out where we have common ground. To quote an East English Village resident, the borders between our neighborhoods are just streets, not moats! What happens in one neighborhood affects us all. Story continued on page 4...



## Community Advisory Council Can Give Residents a Greater Voice

By Scotty Boman | Morningside Resident

District 4, which includes MorningSide, is the second of Detroit's seven districts to establish a Community Advisory Council (CAC). I spent the summer knocking on doors in MorningSide, where I live, to collect the 1,570 resident signatures that established the District 4 CAC. Community Advisory Councils are seven-member non-partisan political bodies within the Detroit city government.

According to the Detroit City Charter (Article 9, Chapter 1), "The purpose of these CAC's is to improve citizen access to city government." This issue was important to me because people were coming to City Council meetings and complaining about issues only after they passed. I wanted to ensure people had a voice in this process and knew they had this voice. A diligent person could always follow the council closely and go to meetings and do the legwork, but most people don't have the time for that. This body will help them do so and help ensure the priorities of the community are being looked out for.

Five members of each CAC are elected from candidates on the district-wide non-partisan portion of the ballot, and two are appointed in a manner determined by the Detroit City Council. All CAC members must be residents of the district they represent. The City Council member representing a particular district - in our case Andre Spivey - must attend all official meetings of the Community Advisory Council.

Their core activity will be informing district residents of upcoming City Council votes affecting them and letting their district representative on the City Council know how residents feel about those issues. In the canvassing I did this summer, I found that this was one of its most popular provisions. While we can hope for more, there are specific minimum requirements regarding this communication; for example, the CAC must have a minimum of four meetings at locations around the district and annual meetings with the Mayor and full City Council.

Other duties include meeting with community groups, businesses and agencies to inform them of impending legislation that may affect them, and to provide feedback to the City Council. Members are also expected to inform community members on available services and to help them navigate city government. So in addition to their one dedicated representative on City Council, residents will have seven other people they can contact for help.

Another popular aspect of CAC's is their duty to assist groups, agencies, businesses and residents in community problem solving. In general, people are looking for more transparency and to have a voice in the decision-making process. Story continued on page 5...

## ZAB Cultural Collective is Latest Addition to Community's Arts Scene



Denise Moore, owner of ZAB Cultural Collective, at a recent art show in her gallery. Photo by James W. Ribbron

By Susan Newell | Morningside Community Organization

Something had been missing from Denise Moore's life, and she knew what it was. In her youth, art was her passion, and she created it by any means necessary. "As a child I didn't have art supplies, so I'd pick up pieces of paper off the ground to use as drawing paper," she recalls.

In her 20's Denise worked as an illustrator, but when husband and kids came along, she put art aside to help make a living for her family - as a real estate investor and as the owner/manager of a banquet hall on Whittier with her husband.

Thirty years later, with children grown, she says it's her time to pursue art again through the ZAB Cultural Collective, an art gallery and "co-working space" on East Warren. Her passion is clear when she talks about this evolving project. "I love the Detroit art scene," she says. "Detroit is more of a 'hustle' city. There are so many artists here who inspire me." Story continued on page 5...

## We Must Determine Our Neighborhoods's Future

Last but not least, we can express our opinions to each other all we want, but when it really counts is when we express them to the powers that be. So I hope to see you Wednesday, December 11 from 6-8 p.m. at Ronald Brown Academy, 11530 E. Outer Dr. And don't forget the MorningSide meeting and holiday party the night before – same time and same place. We'll have a brief business meeting from 6 to 6:30 p.m., with food, music, and giveaways to follow. It's a busy week because big things are happening!

-- Jackie Grant, President, Morningside Community Organization

## New Land Bank Housing Program Coming to Morningside

Both programs were designed to replace blight with occupancy, and to stabilize the housing markets in Detroit's neighborhoods. Our mission is to provide opportunity for new homeowners in the city, while creating value in the homes of long-time home owners.

Rehabbed and Ready has sold 67 properties in Detroit's neighborhoods. First-time homeowners make up 81% of our surveyed buyers, and 78% lived in Detroit before they purchased a home from us. Most of our buyers are families and make less than \$60,000 a year. We strive to be an accessible access point for home ownership in the city.

We have funding to complete thirteen properties between Chandler Park Drive and Mack, and between Outer Drive and Bedford. We have completed two properties, on the 4300 block of Three Mile and the 5900 block of Courville. We are currently working on another home on the 4300 block of Three Mile. Another house at 4327 Three Mile is currently listed for sale and open houses are held every Wednesday (3pm-7pm) and Sunday (12-4pm). All are welcome to come and see our rehabbed properties!

Finally, we are in the process of hiring new general contractors for our program. All of our bids are posted on BidSync. The bid numbers are #19TM3522 and #19TM3510. The information is also on our website, <https://www.buildingdetroit.org>.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions about our program or houses. I look forward to meeting you all in person at the December 10 meeting of MorningSide Community Organization. My phone number is (313) 989-4602 and my email is [sgargaro@detroitlandbank.org](mailto:sgargaro@detroitlandbank.org).

## Upcoming Events!

- Gleaners Food Distribution, Monday, December 9th, 10:30 AM, Craft Cafe at 15641 E. Warren
- Deadline to apply for Property Tax Exemption, December 9th, 9am-4pm at U-SNAP Bac, 14901 E. Warren
- Project Planning workshop, E. Warren Tool Library, 16006 E. Warren Ave, December 11th, 6-8 pm
- Strategic Neighborhood Fund meeting for the E. Warren/Cadieux Project. December 11th, 6-8pm. Location: Ronald Brown Academy
- Detroit City Council Taste of Detroit Holiday Celebration, Eastern Market Shed 3, Friday, December 13th, 5-8 pm
- State Rep. Tenisha Yancey, 5:30 -6:30 p.m. Monday December 16th, at FREC Eastside, 15491 Maddelein St.
- State Senator Stephanie Chang, Monday December 16th, 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., Avalon Cafe and Bakery, 1049 Woodward Ave.
- EEV and Bethany Christian Lutheran Church are co-sponsoring a Seniors Day Out Luncheon on December 18 at 12:30 p.m
- State Rep. Joe Tate, Saturday, December 21st, 9 to 10:30 a.m., Panera Bread, 17150 Kercheval, Grosse Pointe
- Alger Theatre Pop-Ups, through December 22nd, Thursday & Fridays 4-8pm, Saturdays, Noon-6pm, Sundays, Noon-4pm

## Community Advisory Council Can Give Residents a Greater Voice

Some residents I met while door-knocking were concerned that creating an organization with seven office holders would strain the city's limited budget at a time when many retirees continue to suffer from lost benefits in the wake of Detroit's bankruptcy. But the Charter says that "Community Advisory Councils shall receive no appropriations from city funds, but may accept donations or grants in accordance with state, federal, and local law."

Other residents saw the lack of financial support as a problem, citing the possibility of CAC's being beholden to larger donors. I see transparency as a remedy. It would be easy to identify bias as long as CAC's have to disclose the source of significant donations. Residents need to vote for people committed to transparency and direct interaction with community members.

Others worried that the CAC would replace their favorite community group. This isn't the case. They would simply be an additional avenue of communication, not a replacement for existing ones... another bridge, not another obstacle.

District 4 City Councilman Andre Spivey has expressed his support for CAC's. As he told The Advertiser Times in October, "This council will improve citizen access to city government beyond what is currently taking place with the meetings hosted by the council member of District 4 and the monthly meetings by various community groups."

To run for the District 4 CAC in November 2020, you must collect 200-400 signatures from District 4 residents. For updates please visit [D4CAC.org](http://D4CAC.org).

District 7 is currently the only district in Detroit to have a CAC, but almost nothing has been published about it. I am committed to making every resident aware of ours.

## Would You Like To Share Any News With Us?

Do you have something positive you'd like to say about our community or an experience you'd like to share? If so, we'd love to hear from you! Contact Jeffrey D. Lewis II at [jefflewis2@gmail.com](mailto:jefflewis2@gmail.com) or call him at (313) 522-1982.

## Free Snow Removal Available for Seniors and Disabled Residents

By Joshua Arntson | East Warren Tool Library

E. Warren Tool Library, Lawn Academy, and MECCA Development Corporation are dedicated to providing free snow and ice removal (6" of snow or more) for MorningSide's seniors and disabled residents this winter. Our youth & volunteer team is ready and equipped to ensure that your driveway and walkways are safe for you and your family and friends. Please call us at (313) 757-2670 or email: [e.warrentool@mccgroundscrow.org](mailto:e.warrentool@mccgroundscrow.org) to sign up for this service.



Youth from the Lawn Academy shoveled snow for MorningSide residents last winter. Photo by Jim West

## ZAB Cultural Collective is Latest Addition to Community's Arts Scene

Part of the mission of ZAB Cultural Collective is to display and promote the work of local artists and crafters. And by local, she means "hyperlocal." A 20-year resident of MorningSide, Denise wants to draw on the talents of residents of MorningSide, Cornerstone, and East English Village as much as possible. She has been pleasantly surprised to find artists of all kinds within our own community, she says.

ZAB Cultural Collective, located at 16927 E. Warren, is open Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM, and Saturday from 11 AM to 5 PM. For more information on ZAB, check out their social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and its website, [ZABCultural.com](http://ZABCultural.com), or call 1-800-679-2208. Please support ZAB's crowdfunding campaign with ioby under the slogan "Communities Can Create."



## Morningside's Finest: Blanca Medina-Valadez



Blanca Medina-Valadez and her nine-year-old son, Zahid.  
Photo by Susan Newell

It was the day of our big November snow, and my husband (and designated snow-shoveler), was out of town. I was trying to figure out how to get the sidewalk and driveway cleared when I heard a scrape-scraping sound on the front steps.

I opened the door and saw Blanca Medina-Valadez and her son Zahid, our neighbors across the street, clearing my front walk. What a surprise! They also created a path for me between the house and garage. When I offered to pay them, they refused. Blanca said it was a favor the "came from the heart."

Blanca, her husband Fernando, and their sons Zahid and Thiago moved to MorningSide through the Bridging Neighborhoods" program last April after they were displaced from their DelRay community by the new bridge construction . I'm sorry they were forced to leave their old community but am so happy they found ours!

- *By Susan Newell*



For the latest news taking place in MorningSide, please follow us on:



morningsidedet

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Contact The Morningside Community Organization at:  
(313) 355-2468

P.O. Box 24325, Detroit, MI 48224

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