

Let's Get Cozy, Eastown!

By Brigid Avery, ECA Board Member

We can't wait to celebrate Eastown together at home this November 30th from 7-9 pm at the **Eastown Cozy Streetfair**. This online event will showcase performances from local musicians: Desmond Jones, Patty Pershayla & the Mayhops, Asamu Johnson & the Associates of the Blues, JRob x BEDROCK, and more. Additionally, we will feature online holiday shopping specials and handmade wares from local artisans. As this interactive fundraising event for the Eastown Community Association happens on **Giving Tuesday**, neighbors and community members will have the opportunity to support the ECA at several different levels while scoring some pretty cool

swag along the way. We especially want to thank our sponsors for their support in making this event a reality.

So grab your cup of hot cocoa (or your Moscow Mule!) and cozy up for this live streamed event on Facebook, Instagram or Youtube. You won't want to miss all your favorite local bands, artists, and ways to support the ECA - and maybe even get your holiday shopping out of the way - all while supporting local!

As we plan for the future and look forward to another exciting year, please consider making a contribution towards ECA's Annual Appeal. You will find a prepaid envelope enclosed in this issue of the Access. Checks can be made payable to: Eastown Community

Association, 415 Ethel Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506 and are fully tax deductible.

You can also contribute to the ECA through this Giving Tuesday event by making a donation online at www.eastown.org.

Support local artisans and musicians by checking out their music and wares at the **Eastown Cozy Streetfair**.

Stay tuned for more information on how to get cozy with the ECA! <https://www.eastown.org/events/cozy-streetfair> or follow us on facebook! ♦




Presented by  **GIVING TUESDAY**

Featuring performances by
Desmond Jones
Asamu Johnson & the Association of the Blues
Patty Pershayla & the Mayhops
JRob x BEDROCK & more!!

Thank You To our Sponsors



★ November 30, 2021 7-9 PM ★
Livestream @    ★

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Fostering a safe, diverse, and walkable Eastown neighborhood by creating opportunities for neighbors and friends to engage and connect.

**415 Ethel SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616.451.3025
info@eastown.org
www.eastown.org**

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- Brigid Avery
- Michael Bopp
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- Andrew Fisher
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- Christian Verley

Executive Director

Stay Tuned...

The Eastown Community Association board of directors meets on the second Monday of every month at 6p.m. Eastown residents and business owners are encouraged to attend. For more information visit our website at eastown.org

Facebook: eastowngr
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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thank you, Emma!

Transition of ECA’s Executive Director and Our Next Steps

The Eastown Community Association wished Emma Heemskerck the best as she transitioned out of her role as Executive Director earlier this Fall. Emma was the executive Director of the ECA from July 2020 to October 2021.

Emma led the ECA through the COVID-19 pandemic and worked to keep neighbors informed through a tumultuous year. With new and creative ways, she worked with the Board of Directors to achieve our organizational goals while keeping our neighborhood safe. Emma was instrumental in pivoting some of our biggest events and fundraisers – such as Biz-Baz and Annual Breakfast – onto virtual platforms or into smaller, safer forms.

Emma focused much of her work on the sustainability and sophistication of the ECA’s governance efforts. She created a new board member orientation process, onboarding packet for new members, and documented historical information for future ECA staff and Board use. In addition to supporting the board, Emma also uplifted resident voice and advocated for residents during multiple proposed developments in Eastown. She helped

residents stay informed of the latest happenings through the publication of our Eastown Access newsletter and special alerts relating to public health.

The ECA is deeply grateful for Emma’s many contributions over the past year, and we wish her the best in her next adventure.

One thing that has been made very clear to the current Board is how big and important the position of Executive Director is to our community and our organization. The ECA only has one staff person to oversee our neighbor engagement, organizational administrative duties, event planning and much more. Although the Board and our many volunteers are instrumental to all of these tasks, it has been critical having a point person for neighbors to refer to. The ECA posted the position for our next Executive Director in September and has been reviewing applications since. We are hoping to find the right candidate for the job by the end of November. We will work to keep residents engaged in the process as we seek our next Executive Director. ♦

EASTOWN ACCESS

As the newsletter of the Eastown Community Association, the *Access* is published six times a year.

Contributors

Amanda Sterling, Brigid Avery, Christine Gilman, Dakota Riehl-Davis, Dana Kroll, Jay Hoekstra, Lee Hardy, Peter Lewandoski

The views and opinions expressed in Access are not necessarily those of the ECA Board.

The Access reserves the right to accept, reject or edit any material submitted for publication.

Supported by CDBG funds via the City of Grand Rapids.

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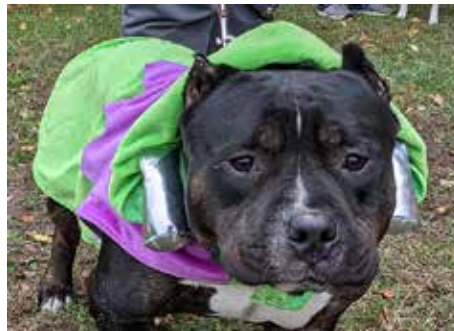
Access is also available online at eastown.org. Send all inquiries & advertising files to: info@eastown.org.

HAPPY HOWL-OWEEN!

Eastown 2nd Annual Howl-Oween Pawty

By Amanda Sterling, Access Contributor

Thank you to everyone who came out to Wilcox Park on October 16 to “pawty” with our little furry friends to support the ECA! We’re so grateful for the support from our presenting sponsors: Cheryl Grant Real Estate, Uptown GR, Harmony Brewing, Rebel, and Brewery Vivant and to all the hard-working volunteers who made the event a smashing success. And, of course, a huge shout-out to all of the neighbors who entered their fur babies in the costume contest and a million thanks to the generous donors who provided the fantastic prizes. Happy, happy Howl-oween, Eastown!



Photos by Amanda Sterling

URBAN PERCH

Going Solar in Eastown: 2nd Edition

By Jay Hoekstra, Access Contributor

In 2017 I wrote an article in the Eastown Access about the ins and outs, pros and cons of having solar electric panels on your house. I asked: “Are you anxious and frustrated about climate change, but feel unable to do much about it?” After four years I feel even more anxious and frustrated, and perhaps you do too. But you can do something that is very effective about climate change and save money!

Our household had solar panels installed this summer and so did neighbors down the block. Was it difficult? No! All I had to do was: 1) call a reputable contractor, 2) sign two checks, and 3) let the electricians into the house. Our household will likely pay close to zero for electricity from now on and produce much less CO₂.

Here are the financial specifics: The more electricity you use, the more you will save and the quicker the payback. You can get a good estimate for your specific building by going to www.sunroof.withgoogle.com or www.energysage.com/solar/calculator (you will not be required to sign up with any company). You fill in your address and the amount of your average monthly electric bill. Your roof is examined from air photos. The website will tell you if you have good sun exposure, how big your system should be, how much it would cost, the number of years until costs were covered, the 20-year benefits, and total 20-year savings. You save money.

More importantly the websites estimate how many tons of CO₂ you would avoid producing, or the number of trees you would have to plant to save the equivalent amount of CO₂. For example, if my bill was \$100 per month I'd have to plant 200 trees to match a solar array on my house. You can plant trees anyway. Another example: on my house, if my electric bill was \$50 per month, my upfront cost after tax credits would be \$9000, 20-year benefits would be \$11,000, pay back would be 16 years, savings \$3000. The Energy

Sage website estimated a lower cost, 9-year payback, and a 3% or more increase in property value based on recent studies. With the move toward more electric cars, I would think many people would look for a house with solar power. Otherwise, your electric car might be using electricity produced with gas or coal.

Tax credits: If you have your system installed before the end of 2022 you could get a 26% credit. That is not a tax deduction—it is subtracted directly from the tax you owe. Of course, you would only benefit if you owed taxes over the years that you can use the credit. However, you might be able to shift your finances to use all of the credit. For example, take a large, taxable withdrawal from a Roth retirement account. If you cannot use the whole credit the first year, you can carry it over to the next year. The tax benefit goes down to 22% after 2022. Still a sizable tax benefit. One possibility for financing

would be to take out a home equity loan and make loan payments instead of electric utility payments.

To get serious, obtain proposals and cost quotes from reliable contractors. You wouldn't be obligated to move forward. Contractors are listed on the energysage.com website. You could also call the contractors that my neighbor and I used. There are a few listed at the end of this article.

You are best off having a contractor who does everything: gives you a complete proposal with a list of equipment with brand and model, obtains building permits including inspections, makes arrangements with the electric utility, connects the system to the internet if possible and sets up the equipment and starts it operating. Making arrangements with the electric company and getting building permits would be real challenge for most homeowners, so it is an important part

Continued on Page 13



Installation of the solar panels in progress at the author's house

Photo by Jay Hoekstra

EBA NOTES

The Holiday Shop Hop is On Its Way

By Dana Kroll, Uptown Grand Rapids, Inc.

Shop Hop is again around the corner, and Uptown planning is well underway. As we did last year, Uptown will market towards a full season's worth of shopping and merriment in our district, from **November 16 to December 24**. The highlighted event date for special fun and festivities will be Thursday, **December 2**, beginning at 3 pm. Stay tuned at uptowngr.com.

Meanwhile, in response to the ongoing retail staffing challenges being experienced across the country and including right here in Uptown, the

Uptown organization recently executed a week-long marketing campaign to draw excitement and attention to the many amazing employment opportunities that can be found right here in our district. The campaign included a full week's worth of social media content that directly engaged our followers with the businesses seeking candidates, a wonderful segment on the Fox 17 Morning Mix program, and more. Reception from both the public and from our

businesses was unprecedented, with overwhelming responses of gratitude and appreciation for the support.

Uptown consists of four business districts: Eastown, East Fulton, Wealthy Street, and East Hills. In all climates, Uptown celebrates its people, partnerships, and possibilities. Its mission is to sustain a strong and vibrant urban district through planning, coordinating, and communicating with and between all sectors of the Uptown community and beyond. ♦



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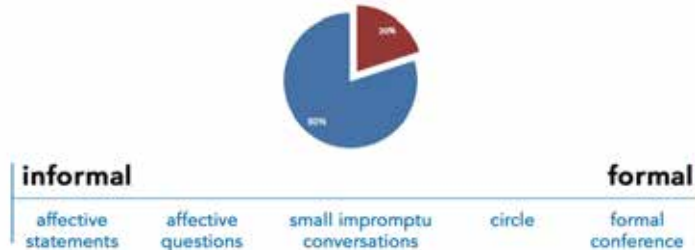
NEIGHBOR NOTES

Using Restorative Practice to Build Community

By Christine Gilman, Dispute Resolution Center of West Michigan

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

80% Proactive & 20% Responsive



Restorative Practice is a social science of improving, strengthening, repairing, and restoring relationships. The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and restoring relationships. One of the terms that comes up frequently when describing healthy relationships is connectedness. People who have a sense of connectedness are likely to feel a greater sense of happiness.

The fundamental hypothesis of restorative practice is that human beings are happier, more cooperative, productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them. So that sense of connectedness is not only important within our communities, but also important for our community leaders to exercise when interacting with community members.

The Dispute Resolution Center of Western Michigan uses restorative practices to build and strengthen our communities. We do this in the community, in schools, in business, in organizations, and within the criminal justice system.

What does this look like? There is a continuum of restorative practices. On the informal side, there are processes which that take less time, involve fewer people, are less formal, and involve less preparation. On the formal side, the processes take more time, involve more people, are more formal, and involve more preparation.

On the informal side, we work with community members and within systems to teach people how to incorporate affective statements and affective questions into their language to build and strengthen relationships. Many community members choose to outwardly say everything is fine, while they boil beneath the surface. By switching to greater communications

with others about how you are affected by their actions, and vice versa, you can focus on more productive behaviors.

Most of us, as well as the systems and organizations we operate in, look at wrongdoing through a punitive lens. Someone does something wrong; we see what rule was broken and punishment is administered. No one checks to see how the person or people affected by the action are doing; no one asks the individual who broke the rule to take any action to repair the harm.

When we look at the same event restoratively, we ask:

- What happened?
- Who was affected and how?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- What needs to happen to make things right?

The circle process allows those affected by harm to process the harms and work toward repair by processing these questions to examine the past and present and create a plan for the future.

Let's look at an example from school. One student picked up and threw a smaller student to the ground and was suspended for 10 days. Those students were referred for a restorative circle. After interviews with the involved students, it was determined that the student who caused the harm was willing to take responsibility for her actions and participate in a restorative

circle. The student who was harmed was also willing to participate.

During the restorative circle the student who caused the harm burst out with an apology for hurting her friend. She explained what happened, including how she was having a horrible day in general when the other student spilled a container of milk on her and then, adding insult to injury, joined the entire table in laughing about it. She expressed how awful she felt about hurting her friend, and how the suspension made it even harder for her to apologize. In addition, she grew more and more worried that her school peers thought she was mean and a bully. She also considered the other student a friend and missed her companionship.

But what about the student who was thrown to the ground? She apologized for laughing about spilling the milk. She also expressed that she was afraid and dreading the other student's return to school. She was worried that the other student thought it was her fault she got suspended, and that she might hurt her again for revenge. She also expressed that, despite what had happened, she missed her friend. The girls agreed to meet weekly in a circle to continue to rebuild their relationship. They remained good friends thereafter and were seen walking arm and arm in the hallways.

To learn more about how to become a restorative practices facilitator with the DRCWM email info@drcwm.org ♦

ECA Shop!



WWW.EASTOWN.ORG/SHOP



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7am - 4pm Everyday



NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Build it and They Will Come - Upcoming Developments

By Dakota Riehl-Davis, ECA Board President

The City of Grand Rapids is rapidly growing, and Eastown has not been immune to those changes. As more and more neighbors seek unique, walkable, and diverse places to live, Eastown is frequently becoming an area of interest. In the last year, our community has seen several new development proposals to address the need for new housing. We have summarized updates for those proposed and planned developments below.

If you have not already, we encourage you to like our Facebook page and join the Facebook group “Eastown Residents” as this is where the ECA regularly updates neighbors on community news, such as proposed developments. Neighbors are also welcome to join the ECA at our monthly meetings which occur every second Monday of the Month at 6:00pm. Neighbors can reach out to us at info@eastown.org for a zoom link to the meeting. For neighbors who are specifically interested in urban planning related issues such as private development projects,

changes to zoning regulations, mobility, infrastructure, and parks improvements related to land-use and quality-of-life are encouraged to join the Bricks and Mortar Committee. This ECA committee meets on the first Tuesday of each quarter at 5:30pm. Email info@eastown.org for more information.

Before sharing the project updates, we wanted to point out some critical terms and explain what they mean for the community engagement process. In our descriptions, we use the terms Permitted by Right and Special Land Use. These are zoning terms used to identify if the proposed use of a parcel of land is allowable in the zone district based on the Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance or if it needs to request special permission to proceed. When a project is Permitted by Right or commonly refer to as only By Right, that means that the proposed use is allowable per the zoning ordinance. They still must go through the permitting process with the City to confirm they are building to code but they do not need to go in front of

the Planning Commission. This often means there is limited community engagement opportunities and neighbors do not have the opportunity to share their position on the project with City officials.

When a project needs to request a Special Land Use permit, that means that the proposed use is not allowable by-right in the zone district and must request special allowance from the Grand Rapids Planning Commission. Developers are required to seek community feedback and neighbors can share their thoughts on the development with City Officials. This often means more time for engagement and more opportunities for neighbors to give feedback.

For more information regarding Grand Rapids zoning and planning processes, we encourage you to visit the Planning Department’s website at www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Planning and watch the videos listed under the heading “Zoning Ordinance”. ♦



Rendering Courtesy of Wheeler Development

Robinson Flats is a planned "Permitted by Right" development which will be located at 1407 Robinson, 1409 Robinson, and 1417 Robinson. The buildings that currently sit on the sites will be demolished for the project and the site will be cleared of environmental hazards that currently exist. The current plan for Robinson Flats includes 36 units of market rate housing and 5,400 square feet of retail with 53 parking spaces behind the building.

The development, which will be constructed by Wheeler Development, has requested Brownfield Development funds to support the necessary clean-up of the site. When asked for a project update, Wheeler Development shared that they are finalizing their architectural plans for the development and estimate another 4-6 months before they can break ground for construction.



EASTPOINTE COMMONS



Photo Courtesy of Hope Network

Eastpointe Commons is a planned “Permitted by Right”, affordable housing development which will be located at 1450 Fulton St SE, also known as Fulton Manor. Hope Network, the developer for this project, will be converting the previous historic elderly care facility into 118 units of housing. Other amenities within the development include community space, property management & supportive services offices, meeting rooms, lounge area, children’s play area, exercise room, elevators,

and exterior courtyards. Forty-two apartments will be reserved for persons who are or are at risk of experiencing houselessness. Hope Network applied for federal funding in February and was awarded the necessary funding for the \$39.9 million project in July. Recently, they purchased the Fulton Manor site from Holland Home and are working to finalize all plans before beginning construction. When asked for an update, Hope Network reported that they are planning to begin construction in the Summer of 2022.



EASTTOWN PLACE



Photo Courtesy of Fulton Group

Although an older proposal, the ECA wanted to remind neighbors of the proposed development at 1225 & 1237 Lake Drive. In the December of 2020, Fulton Group requested a Special Land Use to convert the existing, historic structures located at 1225 and 1237 Lake Drive from office buildings into multi-family residential housing. Their proposal included 23 new, market rate apartments – 14 in 1225 Lake Drive, 6 in 1237 Lake Drive, and 3 in the carriage house behind 1225 Lake Drive. After months of communication and community engagement, the ECA wrote a letter of support for the proposal because the

renovation of the building maintained the architectural integrity, which is sympathetic to the aesthetic of Easttown. It also added much-needed housing density to the neighborhood. The Planning Commission voted to approve the Special Land Use request and the project was permitted to move forward. The original proposal had the Fulton Group starting construction in the summer of 2021 with 12 months of construction. Construction has not started on the project site and, when asked for an update, Fulton Group did not respond.

Coldbrook Creek Corner

By Peter Lewandoski, Coldbrook Creek Community

Data about Coldbrook Creek has been, and continues to be, collected by volunteers, educators, students, and city employees. Gathering reliable data will allow us to define current creek characteristics, track any changes that occur, and inform future actions to strengthen creek quality. Plus, it's fun to get your hands wet and handle the scientific equipment. The hope is to someday make all the data about the creek accessible from one central online location.

Coldbrook Creek originates in the wetlands around Reeds Lake in EGR and from there flows into the Grand River in downtown GR. The mission of the Coldbrook Creek Community is to promote education, protect the environment and provide enjoyment of this watershed. To become involved or for more information please visit www.lgrow.org/coldbrook-creek, or search for us on Facebook. ♦



Eileen Boekenstein, from LGROW (Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds), instructs a group of volunteers from the Coldbrook Creek Community on water testing. Left to right: Lee Hardy, Mary Lewandoski, Laura Hoekstra, Dawn Plescher, and Eileen Boekenstein.

Photo by Peter Lewandoski



Coldbrook Creek goes underground at the west end of the Aquinas College campus and re-emerges at Highland Park, below the makeshift sign

Photo by Lee Hardy

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The Arts @ AQ

By Brigid Avery & Marissa Sura, Access Contributors

While the weather becomes a little cooler and the skies a bit gray, Aquinas College welcomes our neighbors to enjoy art, music, and theatre...all within walking distance! Events below are open to the public and will be sure to lift your spirits.

Aquinas College Music Department Concerts & Events

Friday, Nov. 5, at 7:30 p.m.

Organ Meditations with Guest Organist: Dr. Brandon Spence

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel

Friday, Nov. 12, at 7:30 p.m.

Fall Jazz Night

Wege Ballroom

Sunday, Nov. 14, at 3 p.m.

College Band and Chamber Strings Concert

Wege Ballroom

Monday, Nov. 22, at 1:45 p.m.

Hymn Sing

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel

Friday, Dec. 3, at 7:30 p.m.

A Service of Lessons and Carols

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel

Sunday, Dec. 5, at 3 p.m.

Christmas Collage Concert

Performing Arts Center

Aquinas College Art Gallery Exhibitions

Tuesday, Oct. 5 - Friday, Nov. 5

Shilin Hora

Wednesday, Dec. 1 - Friday,

Dec. 8

New Forms Class Exhibit | Student Installation Projects

Opening Reception: Wednesday, Dec. 1, Noon-2 p.m.

Aquinas College Theatre Student Directed One-Act Festival

Our second performance slot will feature four one-act plays, all directed by Aquinas College students who have excelled in the Directing I and II courses offered by our program last year. Each production performs twice, and will share a set created by our professional design team. The four plays being featured are:

"He and She" by John Monteleone, Directed by Fatima Bawah

"Honk, Squawk, Love" by Paige Scott, Directed by Breanne Blackwell

"Belonging Without Strings" by Elijah Vanquez, Directed by Kaeleb Cogswell

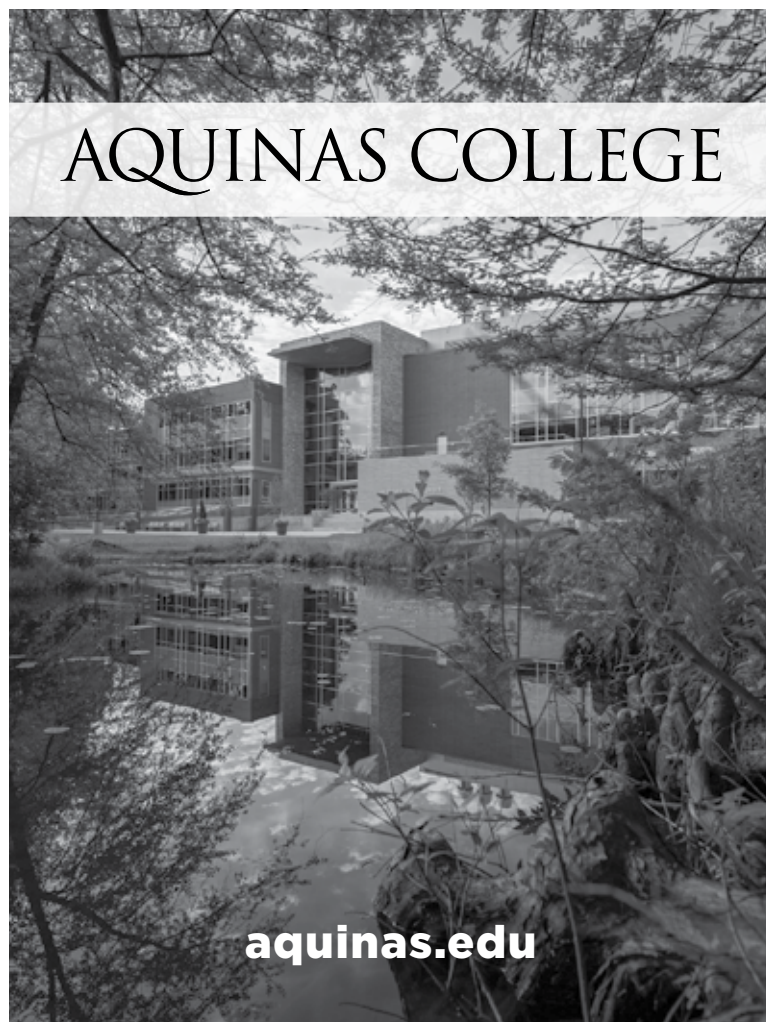
"The Arkansaw Bear" by Aurand Harris, Directed by Josie Gonzalez

Performances are at the following times in the Aquinas College Performing Arts Center:

Nov. 18-20, 2021, at 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 21, 2021, at 2:30 p.m.

For more information, please see <https://www.aquinas.edu/calendar>





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Going Solar, cont.

of the deal.

After the contractor is finished, the solar system will operate on its own. You will be able to ignore it from then on, although you may be able to go to a website and, with satisfaction, watch on a graph your own personal watts pouring in.

It looks like we are on the brink of destroying much of our planet. I wish that were hyperbole, but I think it is not. It is even more important now to seriously consider installing solar. You could make a significant contribution to avoiding that catastrophe.

I found out from www.sunroof.withgoogle.com, that 58% of the buildings in our ZIP code are solar viable. If all those roofs were used for solar electric panels, the carbon saved would be equivalent to 14,400 cars off the road for a year. It appears that there were only 2 solar installations in Eastown. With my neighbor and I there are now four. Wouldn't it be great if in a few years there would be

40 more roofs with solar in our area?! Some of us can do that—worry less about climate change and do more to stop it. ♦

Solar Companies

You can ask the Green Home Institute from Grand Rapids for a recommendation
<https://greenhomeinstitute.org/about>

Sierra Club recommends and I used Solar Winds Power Company
<https://www.thesolarwinds.com>

My neighbor used The Green Panel, Inc.
<https://www.thegreenpanel.com>



An Inverter (converting DC current to AC) is installed in the basement next to the electrical panel
Photo by Jay Hoekstra

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Jim been has a resident of Easttown for nearly 40 years and is a Member of the 6th and 7th US Courts of Appeal

Jim is also a member of the State Bar of Michigan and a member of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee and Real Estate and Business Law Sections

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Aquinas College, Engagement Katharina Hausler-Gross	632-2112
Grand Rapids Public Schools	819-2000
City of GR Code Compliance	456-3053
Kent County Animal Shelter	632-7300
Dispute Resolution Center of W. MI	774-0121
Eastown Community Association	451-3025

WEBSITES/EMAILS

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Mayor of Grand Rapids Rosalynn Bliss: mayor@grcity.us
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Who You Work With Defines Your Experience

"I recently became an empty nester and wanted to find a smaller house in a walkable neighborhood. Eastown fit the bill perfectly, but I knew it would be a challenge to find the perfect house in this market. Thanks to Becky Dickinson, of the Cheryl Grant Team, I was able to find my "forever house". She helped make the process less stressful. I really feel that her extensive knowledge of city neighborhoods, social media, and real estate in general gave me the edge that got me into my home."

*-Your Neighbor,
Allyson Cole-Strauss
Laboratory Manager
MSU, Dept. of Translational Neuroscience*



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