



## East side

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ping Center) are the biggest inhabitants of Michigan Avenue by volume, but when you're looking at the everyday interaction with the community, (the 2000 block) is the most important block on the street," Kibbey said. "There used to be the Lindemann's meat market here, and Emil's had lines out the door. This block served as the community center. Over the years that sort of went away, but what we're seeing is a re-densifying."

Kibbey also praised Gillespie's eagerness to seek out public opinion, a sentiment echoed by Joan Nelson, director of the nearby Allen Neighborhood Center.

"There are pockets of strength popping up all over, and the areas that require attention are shrinking," Nelson said. "Over the next five years, I think those trends will continue, and with projects like (Elliott's brewpub) and Scott's plans, you're going to see Michigan Avenue grow even healthier. It took a while, but good things are starting to happen again."

## East Lansing sex ed flap

### Advisory committee not meeting state requirements

The East Lansing Public Schools sex education programming — already the subject of scrutiny over its abstinence only contract program SMART — may be in violation of Michigan's laws and district policy dictating how public schools deliver sex education.

At issue is whether the Sex Education Advisory Committee has delivered bi-annual reports which evaluate and measure the impact of the district's sex education programming on teen pregnancy rates, sexually transmitted infections and other real life sexual health issues. Those reports are required by state law. They are supposed to be readily available for parents and others as well.

By preparing such reports and providing them to the community, the district is expected to demonstrate that sex education is helping reduce teen pregnancies and other sexual health issues. It allows parents, as

well as the district, to evaluate the efficacy of the program offerings.

Rabbi Amy Bigman and Breeann Anderson, two district sex education advisory committee members who have served for at least two years, said they have never participated in writing or approving such reports, and the district was unable to locate and provide the reports last week.

"They should be available," said Tammy Baumann, director of curriculum for the district. "But they are not as readily available as they should be." Baumann said she expects to place the reports on the district's website by the end of the day Monday, after City Pulse and district parents sought copies of the reports last week. (The reports were not readily apparent on the website on Tuesday.)

Not providing or completing the reports could result in a fine of 1 percent of the school's annual school aid allowance payment, said an official with the Michigan Department of Education. The school aid allowance is a per student payment made by the state to support public schools. This last year, East Lansing received \$8,099 per student. A 1 percent fine would be about \$89 per student registered in the district.

District officials stopped short of confirming they were in violation of state law. They said substantial change at the district has led to the school system losing track of the sex education components.

Board of Education President Nell Kuhnmuench wrote in an email:

"As you may know, East Lansing Schools has experienced a great deal of change during the past three years, including the resignation of a long-time Superintendent; the hiring of an Interim Superintendent during a year when an elementary school was closed, the middle school was reconfigured and reconstructed to achieve significant changes in size and programming; then a new Superintendent was hired and put in the role of running the district while assuring a continuing focus on our students while transitioning them to new schools in many instances and moving administrators and teachers."

Kuhnmuench said the district was reviewing sex education delivery and legal requirements.

"This process includes making every effort to determine what has been done in the past and how the district got to this position in order to move forward thoughtfully and deliberately yet with all appropriate speed," Kuhnmuench wrote. "The East Lansing Board of Education is working to assure it is in compliance with its policy, consistent with state and federal standards and requirements. This process includes making every effort to determine what has been done in the past and how the district got to this position in order to move forward thoughtfully and deliberately yet with all appropriate speed."

That chaos outlined by Kuhnmuench was on display last week when the Sex Education Advisory Committee met for the first

time in a year. Michigan law requires that the school board appoint the co-chairmen of the committee, establish the size and make-up of the committee and the general processes by which the committee recruits and appoints additional members.

But Susan Wheeler, who acted as the interim chairwoman of the committee, spent over 40 minutes during the committee meeting working with committee members to address those very issues. Kuhnmuench sat in the back of the library at Pinecrest Elementary School.

Michigan Department of Education officials acknowledged that sometimes school boards will leave the decisions related to leadership and make-up of the committee to the committee itself. Such actions are usually done by resolution of the school board. East Lansing officials were unable to produce any resolution abdicating that responsibility to the committee.

Without evidence of transfer of authority by the Board of Education, the committee and school board are in violation of Michigan law and board policies. Violating this law could also result in a 1 percent fine of the district's school aid allowance.

In an email to City Pulse, Wheeler said she had been recruited to get the committee operational by Robyn Thompson, the district superintendent. Wheeler said she was hired in 2014 as a consultant for the district as director of sex education. In that role, she worked with the sex education committee to review and approve sex education programming for grades 5 and 6.

"In the fall, my services were not requested. During the first week of April I was asked to resume my role and oversee the review of the high school curriculum. I was not available at that time and declined the district's offer," Wheeler said. "Following the 'high school incident' I was again asked to help get the committee refocused and engaged with the review of curriculum and completion of the mandated tasks and responsibilities that are so important to our district and community."

The high school incident Wheeler references happened when parent, activist and author Alice Dreger live tweeted the abstinence-only lessons from her son's classroom. Those tweets garnered national and international press reporting for the district because they raised questions about the information being presented to the students. That program was offered by SMART, a program offered by Crisis Pregnancy Centers of Lansing, a religious organization that works to stop women from getting abortions.

East Lansing Public Schools has paid the agency for 21 years to offer the program. However, district officials could not identify how much was paid to the outside contractor.

— Todd Heywood



### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS EAST LANSING ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearings to be held by the East Lansing Zoning Board of Appeals on **Wednesday, July 1, 2015**, beginning at 7:00 p.m., in the 54 B District Court, Courtroom 1, 101 Linden Street, East Lansing:

1. A public hearing will be held to consider a variance request from Eric Muska for the property at 353 Division, in the R-2, Medium Density District, from the following requirement of Chapter 50 - Zoning Code of the City of East Lansing:

**Article IV. Section 50-301, to permit 59% ground coverage where 40% is allowed.**

The applicant would like to replace existing sidewalks with stone pavers, install an egress window and widen an existing driveway.

2. A public hearing will be held to consider a variance request from Hagan Realty, Inc. for the property at 1140 Beech Street, in the R3, Single and Two-Family District, from the following requirement of Chapter 50 - Zoning Code of the City of East Lansing:

**Article IV. Section 50-301, to permit a 3' building setback where 5' is required.**

It is an existing building and the setback must receive a variance to allow the property to be licensed as a rental property.

3. A public hearing will be held to consider a variance request from Benjamin Van Dyke for the property at 238 Oxford Road, in the R-2, Medium Density Single-Family Residential District, from the following requirements of Chapter 50 - Zoning Code of the City of East Lansing:

**Article IV. Section 50-301, to permit an accessory structure to be 16'-8" where 15' is allowed.**

The applicant is proposing to build a detached garage with an art studio above.

Call (517) 319-6930, the Department of Planning, Building and Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, for additional information. All persons interested in these appeals will be given an opportunity to be heard.

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon request received by the City seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring aids or services should write or call the Department of Planning, Building and Development, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823. Phone: (517) 319-6930. TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777.

Marie E. Wicks  
City Clerk

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