



### Tree Nursery in Transition

The Village Tree Nursery site has gone through several changes over the past few decades and is slated now for yet another. Located on a patch of ground in the green space directly behind homes on Jeanne, Pittsfield, and Fernwood, it has served as grassy play area, sandy volleyball court, and most recently as a growing space for saplings and young trees.

When several years ago the volleyball sand was turned over and enriched with leaf mulch, peat moss, and other soil amendments, there were high expectations of creating a low-cost renewable source of greenery for transplanting throughout the Village. Regrettably, this process did not go according to plan. Apart from nearly twenty trees being transplanted throughout the Village, over the years, the site has proved largely unsuitable for growing healthy specimens, and in recent years given rise to complaints by some neighbors that it had become an unsightly blot on an otherwise attractive landscape.

In the face of this reality, the Board has approved a proposal from the Landscape Committee to “decommission” the Tree Nursery and put it to a new and better use as a shady grove in the midst of a field of green. Toward this end, over the next months most of the trees on the site will be removed. Six to eight small healthy conifers will be transplanted to locations around the Village, and 4 larger trees at the corners, spaced far enough apart to reach maturity, will remain. All of the other twenty or so trees have failed to thrive in the poor soil at the site and will be removed as unsuitable for transplanting elsewhere.

Standing at the corners of this small island of rare Village shade will be a healthy Oak, a Norway Spruce, a Red Maple, and a White Pine—our Michigan state tree.



Ground cover is yet to be determined, but the Landscape Committee have recommended a return to lawn as the most practical and lowest maintenance option.

A couple of park benches could be added to complete the transformation into an inviting space for reading, contemplation, or conversation among neighbors and friends.

Now that cold has set in and the ground is hard, we can expect to see crews from Superior as early as mid December busy at the site and elsewhere in the Village carrying out this work, renewing and improving the ever evolving treasure that is our landscape.

—David Brassfield

## Getting to Know the “Village People”

By Barb De Longchamp



This month, being full of holidays, we have the unique opportunity of hearing from a professional holiday celebrity, our Village Mascot, THE NUTCRACKER!

Hi there! I have no name and have been shuffled around from one place to another but I know I'm loved here on Jeanne Street. I'm 20 years old, in the prime of my life! I sure could use a little paint or a spit polish on my boots. Are you listening, Barb?

Over the years I have taken on many personalities, referred to as the “Dressings”. My humble servant Barb doesn't seem to care how humiliating my wardrobe has become. Ah, let me think. What have I been over the years? The scarecrow wanted a brain, and so do I, but I have a little wooden heart for all the little children in The Village. I've been dressed as: Uncle Sam, a fairy, a sunflower, a daffodil, a snowman, a chef, a graduate of U of M (but I have no degree), a flamingo for Kat, a Red Hat Lady, a pilgrim, a Native American, St. Patrick with a snake, the Easter Bunny, Queen of Hearts, Father Time, Cupid, a beach bum, Halloween ghoul, a witch, a Gay Pride Advocate, and a Judge for Ground Hog Day holding the ground hog. So much fun has been had! Barb is always looking for new ideas.

Standing on this porch for over 15 years I haven't missed much. Fire trucks, ambulances, dog walkers (thank goodness the dogs don't visit me), and so many little kids. The best was when the Christmas Fairy visited one Christmas Eve years ago. She put 36 luminaries around the roundabout. It was beautiful and all for the love and joy for our little Village.

As for fun, I'm a 6' tall working Nutcracker. Pull my handle in the back and my jaw and beard move. Barb's grandkids have hidden underneath my robes once or twice. Oh I've had so much fun in the Village. I'm loved by all including the tree frog that makes a home on my crown or the fairy that lives behind me in her Fairy Door.

Being the Christmas Season I can regain my dignity and become The Nutcracker, as intended. From my little wooden heart I say thank you for all the love, attention, photos and care. It is truly a time to believe. I wish everyone a very Happy Holiday Season and truly, peace on earth to all people of good will.

We thank the Nutcracker for this magnificent interview. It was fun Getting to Know You!



Pittsfield Village

## Family Craft Night

**Monday, December 18**

**5:30 to 7:00 pm**

Pittsfield Community Building

**Let's get Creative!**

We will be making ornaments & Holiday  
Greeting Cards...or *whatever your little  
inventive heart desires*

### SEASONAL MAINTENANCE REMINDERS

- It's getting dark earlier now so please check your porch lights. If they do not come on automatically, please let us know and we'll fix the light or change the bulb.
- This is the time of year to change your smoke detector batteries and furnace filters. While you're at it, make sure your thermostat battery is working condition.
- Garden hoses should be disconnected and put away for the season. If you need assistance with this, call the office.
- There is a bin outside the maintenance garage for the return of Garden Markers. Please return them ASAP.

[office@pittsfieldvillage.com](mailto:office@pittsfieldvillage.com)

**734-971-0233**



Reminder that **exterior holiday lights** must plug into an outside outlet, not plugged into an interior outlet with cords running through windows or under doors.

Thank you!



## **Board Beat: Busy Days of Autumn**

**Submitted by David Brassfield, Member of the Board**

Most of the work our five Board members shoulder takes place outside the monthly meetings I've been chronicling in recent issues of this Newsletter. In fact, our Board held no meeting in November (Thanksgiving takes precedence), but away from the large Community Room table around which we normally convene, most members continued right along, hard at work on behalf of the Association they were elected to serve. Here is a sampling from mid-October to the present.

### ***Community Outreach***

On behalf of the Association, members of our Board frequently attend meetings and events held by outside organizations and groups whose missions and activities intersect with our own.

- *The Annual Environmental Excellence Awards Gathering.* In late October two of our Board members accompanied Office Admin Tracy Vincent to this event sponsored by the County Water Resources Commission. This was an opportunity to hear presentations by organizations such as Community Partners for Clean Streams, Waste Knot, and the Master Rain Gardener Program as well as to network with other groups like our own who are seeking to observe environmental best practices. We found kindred spirits to compare notes with, most notably a couple representing the University Commons condominium association just up the street from us. We expect to be back in touch with them so that, moving forward, each of us can benefit from the experience of the other. Of course, this event was not entirely about "work." There were, after all, plentiful platters of some of the best "heavy" hors d'oeuvres served up anywhere this side of Paris by the kitchens of Weber's Inn, our host for the evening.
- *Ann Arbor Planning Services: Proposed Rezoning Informational Meeting.* This meeting took place in mid-November at the Pittsfield School, and residents of the Village were invited to attend along with people from nearby neighborhoods. Three of our Board Members went and were joined by a couple of other residents. The subject was a proposal to create a new zoning district along the section of Washtenaw Avenue stretching from Platt Road on the west to US-23 on the east. The purpose of this zoning, to be known as TC-1 (for "transit corridor 1") is to allow and encourage future development that more resembles the walkable streetscapes of an urban core than, as at present, a series of strip mall stores strung along a busy highway. Taller buildings will be encouraged, parking will be moved to the rear, and pedestrians must be able to walk around buildings. Developments will be expected to include a mix of retail, service, office, and residential space. The hope is that with greater density and walkability, road traffic will decrease and give way to increased use of public transportation. Planning is in the very early stages, the exact boundaries are not set, and

public comment is very much welcomed. In the past few years other sections of the City have received this new zoning designation, but as yet no new development taking advantage of its provisions has occurred.

- *A2 Zero Public Meeting.* At the behest of Village resident Linda Ross and others, the folks from A2 Zero paid a visit to us at the end of November. Three members of our Board attended along with a couple of dozen fellow residents. This public meeting at the school was a follow-up to a shorter Zoom meeting that several Board members attended in September. The presentation was very well done, much information was provided, and we learned a bit about A2 Zero's many initiatives focused on moving the City to carbon neutrality, including transitioning to a greater use of electricity to replace the burning of fossil fuels; improving the energy efficiency of home appliances, furnaces, and air conditioning; eco-friendly landscaping; and so on. There was discussion of perhaps making the Village the next target for a community-wide "decarbonization" program, similar to what is currently going on in the Bryant Neighborhood to our south. Plans are afoot to bring back the A2 Zero folks for further talks focused on such specific initiatives and others that might be of benefit to the Village.

### ***Committee Work***

Much of the behind-the-scenes work of the Association takes place in our two standing committees: Landscaping, and Maintenance and Modification. We have another Board-created committee also operating at the moment, our so-called Go-Doc Committee. These committees are made up of dedicated Village volunteers, and at least one Board member sits on each in a liaison capacity. Here are highlights of their work during the past couple of months.

- *Landscape Committee.* Much of this committee's work centers on reviewing resident requests, generally for permission to add or remove plantings to their foundation beds or to have the Association add new trees to their lawns. At this time of year the volume of such requests slows to a trickle. In their place, the Committee turned its attention to learning more about adding rain gardens to our grounds in places where periodic flooding and water pooling is a problem. So a meeting was set up with a representative of the County Water Resources Commissioner's office to take a look at one of our existing rain gardens and to advise on installing others.
- *M & M Committee.* In the past couple of months, activity has also slowed for this committee. Routine requests for permission to replace windows, remodel a bathroom, and add insulation to exterior walls came from various residents and received approval subject to their compliance with Association specifications. A request to remodel a kitchen and to remove a structurally significant wall were sent back for re-engineering, and a request to grant a waiver for an oversized outdoor storage shed was tabled pending a reconsideration by the Committee of our requirements relating to size and placement of outdoor storage structures.

An overhaul of our specification is planned for the coming winter, with a goal of putting it into effect by the coming of spring.



- *Go-Doc Committee.* This group, which includes three Board members as well as stalwart resident volunteers is charged with overhauling our governing documents to bring them into compliance with changes in the law, evolving recommended best practices, and a wish list of things that many Village Residents have pushed to have changed, such as the allowance of clotheslines and simplification of our fee structure. Included in this overhaul are our Articles of Incorporation, Master Deed, and Bylaws. Quite a bit must be done, but under the leadership of our President, Ellen Johnson, it is trotting methodically along.

### ***December 6 Board Meeting***

This meeting ran quite long: 3 full hours. Here are some highlights:

- *Road, Sewer, and Water Mains Overhaul.* As reported in our November Newsletter (see: “A2 Build Back Better” Comes to the Village’), the City is planning a major overhaul of our stormwater sewer system, our sanitary sewer lines, our water mains, and where necessary our roadways. Under the umbrella heading “Pittsfield Village Improvements Project” a contract has been awarded to OHM Advisors to plan out the necessary work and prepare bid documents for the project, with a target start date in spring of 2025.

City Engineer Igor Kotlyar and OHM Senior Project Manager Cresson Slotten came before us to provide a broad overview of what to expect and to explain what OHM will be doing on our streets in the coming month or so. They emphasized that other than the larger goals of modernizing our infrastructure, no concrete plans have yet been finalized. OHM is currently in the investigative stage of planning: mapping and measuring lines, curb drains, catch basins, access manholes, and so on. Villager will already be aware of the stakes with pink streamers and the pink paint marking locations all along our streets. In the coming weeks crews will be returning for the painstaking process of taking measurements. They will be pounding our pavement and our sidewalks, opening manholes, sometimes descending into them.

Because many access points are on the street or at the curbs in the very places residents are used to parking, OHM will be seeking cooperation so that they can get in where they need to.

They will be working during the day, when our streets are less crowded, but still there will be cars that may be asked to move for brief periods of time. When work is scheduled for a particular block, hang tags will be left on doors to alert residents and seek their help.

OHM and the City expect to hold a number of open forums to explain and discuss their progress, evolving designs, and plans with Village residents in the coming months. These will all be widely publicized and everyone will be welcome to attend.

For complete text of the OHM planning contract follow this link (project narrative begins on page 76): <https://a2gov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12313279&GUID=AFD73CC3-8DBC-4138-A0A0-0D156F8DA713>

- *Proposal to Establish a “Sustainability” Advisory Committee.* The group who volunteered to consider this question—Jessica Lehr, David Brassfield, Su Hansen, and Lisa Lemble—submitted an interim progress report to the Board. Before making a formal proposal, however, they feel they need time for further discussion and expect to return with something fairly final at the January Board meeting.
- *Other Business.* The Board ratified an earlier decision made by email to “decommission” the Tree Nursery (see the article on page 1 of this Newsletter), and another contract for urgent foundation repair work was approved. An email decision to add a building to this year’s scheduled roof replacement contract with Citi Roofing was also ratified and the work is already underway. We are now nearing the end of this multi-year replacement project: only 6 buildings remain to reroof, and that work should be completed by the end of next year!



Complete minutes of the December meeting will become available on the Village website once they have been approved at the next Board of Directors meeting.

Next scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, January 17, 6:00 pm, in person at the Village Office or remotely online. Login information will be provided on the calendar page of January’s Newsletter. All Village residents are welcome to attend.



# So Long Ron!



Nine years ago, Ron Beutner joined our Village Maintenance crew and ever since, he's been a familiar face wherever fixes and replacements have called his name. Now he's decided the time has come to hang up his tool belt here and sample what a well-deserved retirement has to offer.

The Village held a farewell lunch in Ron's honor at the end of November in the Community Room. On the menu were a variety of wraps and salads from one of his favorite eateries—Pita King over by Trader Joe's. There to celebrate his service and to wish him well in retirement were his fellow staff members, Kendra, Tracy, Ryan, and Dave (Wanda regrettably couldn't make it), and Board members, Ellen, John, and David. Ron's wife Dorothy was also in attendance.

Many words of appreciation and well wishes were shared around, and then in came a surprise visitor to join the festivities and offer up dessert. Yes, you guessed it! Barb De Longchamp, the Empress of Pie herself, trundling along with her rollator, with a freshly baked cherry pie just for Ron sitting in the basket! The honoree was gracious enough to share with others, and the pie was a great success.

Ron is an ardent woodworker, so among other tokens of our appreciation, the Board and Village staff bestowed upon him a gift card to a specialty tool maker that we hope will assist him in many projects yet to come. We wish Ron every happiness in his coming retirement.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024

**Ellen Johnson, President** ellen.johnson@pittsfieldvillage.com

**John Sprentall** john.sprentall@pittsfieldvillage.com

**Jessica Lehr** jessica.lehr@pittsfieldvillage.com

**Joy Knoblauch** joy.knoblauch@pittsfieldvillage.com

**David Brassfield** david.brassfield@pittsfieldvillage.com

## Pittsfield Village Office Staff

Office: 734-971-0233 Fax: 734-971-3421

Email: [office@pittsfieldvillage.com](mailto:office@pittsfieldvillage.com) / [www.pittsfieldvillage.com](http://www.pittsfieldvillage.com)

Kendra Zunich, Manager: [kzunich@kramertriad.com](mailto:kzunich@kramertriad.com)

Wanda Buster, Bookkeeper: [wbuster@kramertriad.com](mailto:wbuster@kramertriad.com)

Tracy Vincent, Admin: [tvincent@kramertriad.com](mailto:tvincent@kramertriad.com)

Maintenance/General: [office@pittsfieldvillage.com](mailto:office@pittsfieldvillage.com)



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[irenehayes03@yahoo.com](mailto:irenehayes03@yahoo.com)



# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 office closes at 11:30am	2
3	4	5 M&M committee meeting 6:00	6 BOARD MEETING 6:00 open forum	7	8	9
10 Sustainability Workspace 1:30	11	12 Landscape committee meeting 6:00	13	14	15	16
17	18 Craft Night 5:30 to 7:00	19	20	21	22	23
24 / 31	25 OFFICE CLOSED 	26	27	28	29	30