

INVASIVE
CRAYFISH
FOUND IN
CASS
Outdoors, B6



SJ updates noise ordinance with limits

City responds to concerns regarding outdoor music

By LAUREN RICE
HP Staff Writer

ST. JOSEPH — After months of research and staff efforts, St. Joseph city commissioners passed a noise ordinance this week. It’s something the city has nev-

er had, but City Manager Emily Hackworth said the conversation started this summer when the Sandbar & Grille got permission for extended hours of live outdoor music. “At that time, we heard a lot of concerns from the neighbors who were unhappy with the sounds they heard coming from the Sandbar,” she said. “We talked at that time about the fact that there is a

lack of defined threshold that existed in a noise ordinance, which led to subjectivity and made it difficult at times to enforce the noise ordinance.” For the past several months, homeowners near the Sandbar & Grille have shown up to city commission meetings with complaints and concerns about noise levels disrupting their enjoyment of their homes, evenings and free time.

This summer, Hackworth and Public Safety Director Steve Neubecker spent Friday and Saturday evenings monitoring noise outside the Sandbar to understand the concerns, measure volume and feed their research while developing the ordinance. What staff came up with is a noise ordinance which distinguishes between three zones: commercial, residential and downtown.

“What we have done is broken out the decibel limits into three different categories, and we did that based on a ton of research on what other municipalities are doing in Michigan,” Hackworth said. “We are proposing one limit for the residential district, one for the commercial and waterfront district, and a different limit for

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Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Construction has been completed and residents are expected to start moving in soon to the Corner at Wall Street, located at 126 W. Wall St., in Benton Harbor.

Supportive housing

Corner at Wall Street prepares to open in Benton Harbor

By LOUISE WREGE
HP Staff Writer

BENTON HARBOR — The first residents will soon start moving into the Corner at Wall Street in Benton Harbor later this month, according to Steve Cook, regional manager with MHT Management. “We’re still working on approvals, paperwork and that kind of thing,” Cook said while touring the apartment complex at 126 W. Wall St. last week. The 46 one-bedroom apartment complex is the first supportive housing complex in Berrien County, Cook said, with each apartment having its own balcony and access to laundry, an exercise room and a community space on each floor. One



Exercise equipment is available for residents’ use at the Corner at Wall Street, located at 126 W. Wall St., in Benton Harbor.

of the spaces even has a pool table. “These apartments are furnished all the way down to beds and dishes,” Cook said. Cook said not everyone who qualifies for subsidized housing is eligi-

ble to live there through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority Project-Based Voucher Program. He said the qualification process starts with Emergency Shelter Ser-

vices in Benton Harbor. Reshella Hawkins, executive director and manager for ESS, said people must be disabled, living in a shelter or be verified as homeless by PATH Services before her agency can refer them to MSHDA for possible approval. She said they are required to follow the definition of “homeless” as laid out by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. “MSHDA will do all of the background checks to make sure they qualify,” Hawkins said. “We are the referring agency only.” She said people staying with family or friends don’t qualify. “If you’re living with family couch surfing, that’s not considered homeless. You’ve got water running. You’ve got lights. You’ve got access to all of that,” Hawkins said. She said people who already live in a HUD apartment won’t qualify because they aren’t homeless.

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ELECTIONS

BHAS board incumbents face two challengers

By LOUISE WREGE
HP Staff Writer

BENTON HARBOR — Five candidates are running for three open four-year seats on the Benton Harbor Area Schools Board of Education on Nov. 3. Incumbents Dashuna Robinson, Elnora Gavin and Angela Doyle are being challenged by Josef Bullocks and Roosevelt Bell. Four of the candidates spoke with The Herald-Palladium about what their focus will be if they win a seat. Bell could not be reached for comment.



BULLOCKS



DOYLE



GAVIN



ROBINSON

Fighting for the future

Bullocks, 43, said he is running for office for the first time because the school district is facing several challenges, with 95 percent of the district’s families struggling with economic hardship. “Our young people — over 1,200 brilliant students across six schools — deserve leaders who understand their reality and fight for their future,” Bullocks said. He said academic excellence starts with believing in every student and making sure they have fair access to programs

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Coloma school board election draws five candidates

By RALPH HEIBUTZKI
HP Correspondent

COLOMA — With two incumbents not running again, the Coloma Community Schools Board of Education table will have openings for some new faces — including three candidates vying for two six-year terms in the Nov. 3 election. Board President Heidi Ishmael and Secretary Nicole Hickmon aren’t seeking reelection, while Devyn Han-

ko, Matthew Nicholls and Jon Smith are running for the six-year terms. Incumbent Treasurer Steven Groendyk and Trustee Doug Kraemer are also running unopposed for two partial four-year terms, according to Superintendent David Ehlers. What follows are brief summaries from the candidates about why they’re running, what issues matter most to them, and what they’d bring to the board, if

elected.

Importance of accountability

Hanko, a first-time candidate, considers herself someone who can “bring a fresh perspective, while still having a strong connection to our community and our schools,” she said. She’s a business owner, paralegal and former president of the Coloma Youth Wrestling Club Board, on

which she served from 2022 through this year. “Each of those roles has taught me the importance of communication, accountability, problem-solving and making thoughtful decisions,” Hanko said. “I understand that serving on a school board is not about representing one individual



HANKO



NICHOLLS



SMITH



GROENDYK



KRAEMER

or one group. It is about listening to students, parents, teachers, staff, and community members and making decisions that put the long-term success of our students and district first.” If elected, Hanko pledged to do whatever work is needed to serve effectively. “I am willing to ask questions, listen to different

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