

Finding aid for the Grand Rapids neighborhoods collection Collection 252

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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2006-
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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title	Grand Rapids neighborhoods collection
Date [inclusive]	1914-2009
Extent	5.9 Linear feet Six boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Grand Rapids neighborhoods collection is a devised collection which brings together materials which have the common mission of supporting and documenting unique neighborhood areas and their businesses for Grand Rapids, Michigan. The materials collected here may include a history of a specific neighborhood, if one has been created. Items may also be found which document that history, such as newsletters and other publications, maps, flyers, images, original documents of the organization and website content.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Since the early 1900s, neighbors in Grand Rapids have been forming associations and alliances in order to encourage unity and preserve unique cultures and traditions. Some of these associations have created traditions such as street fairs and neighborhood watches in order to create pride and pool resources. As is common among cities, many neighborhoods in Grand Rapids began as ethnic communities. Polish and German immigrants settled on the West Side and the Dutch on the East Side.

The Creston neighborhood was one of Grand Rapids' first neighborhoods to create an organization. The Creston Citizen's Association was formed in 1906 for neighbors and businesspeople in the area. Little is known about associations that existed between the time of The Creston Citizen's Association and the emergence of many neighborhood associations in the 1970s.

During the 1970s neighborhood associations flourished. President Nixon worked to build a stronger relationship between neighborhoods and the federal government. In Grand Rapids, neighborhood associations such as Eastown Community Association and Garfield Park Neighborhood Association were formed by neighbors concerned about the declining appearance and increasing crime in their neighborhoods. Heritage Hill Neighborhood Association also formed during this time to advocate for the preservation of historic structures threatened by urban renewal. The Madison Neighborhood Association and Belknap- Lookout Neighborhood Association were formed by ACORN, a national organization. These neighborhood groups formed by ACORN eventually broke away from ACORN to form their own neighborhood associations.

Since the 1970s many more neighborhood associations have formed in Grand Rapids. Some of these associations such as the Madison Area Neighborhood Association and the South East End Neighbors have gone through rough times. Many organizations have broken up and reformed as boundaries and causes shifted. Creston Neighborhood Association is an example of this as they absorbed the North End Neighborhood Association.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson initiated a Model Cities Program, which was intended to bring a working relationship between the federal government and neighborhoods. The program struggled to keep up with the relationship, which frustrated neighbors all across America. President Richard Nixon became aware of this frustration and signed the Community Development Act of 1974. The legislation came into place under President Gerald R. Ford. This legislation was intended to revive the idea of Model Cities in America. President Ford consolidated the funding from numerous neighborhood projects to create CDBG (Community Development Block Grants).

Grand Rapids involved its citizens in the legislation and received numerous CDBG grants. Stocking, Belknap, Baxter, Madison, Roosevelt Park, John Ball Park, Eastown and Heritage Hill were among the many neighborhoods who received these grants. These neighborhoods each formed a Target Area Council to oversee the grant money in the neighborhood.

Common projects for the Target Area Councils in Grand Rapids included home repair, alley paving and lighting, tree planting, park beautification and crime prevention. Many of these Target Area Councils

helped to gain interest in neighborhood organizations and were either absorbed into or helped to create neighborhood associations once the projects were completed.

Scope and Contents note

Previously Coll. 252 was called the Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Association Records. In the Spring of 2006 it was decided to broaden the scope of Coll. 252, to create a home for materials received in the department from the various neighborhood associations. At the same time, staff were aware that informative materials on the neighborhoods were not being received in the department, and should be sought from the various area organizations. Calvin College student intern Emily Hamstra took on the challenge to obtain new materials from the associations, and to assist in the organization of new and existing materials to create Coll. 252.

Note: East Grand Rapids may feel like a neighborhood to those living in the Grand Rapids community. But, in fact, it is a separate incorporation, and not an official neighborhood of Grand Rapids proper. Perhaps the most comprehensive access to information about East Grand Rapids may be available in the History Room, at the East Grand Rapids Library. Ask Grand Rapids Public Library staff for assistance in finding information on East Grand Rapids in the various collections of the GRPL Archives.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department 2006-

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Coll. 156, The Grand Rapids Area Humanities Council and Coll. 343, Heart and Soul Collection. The book Heart and Soul : Grand Rapids Neighborhoods was prepared through grants under the Grand Rapids Area Humanities Council.

Coll. 224, Neighborhood Places graphics / Jane VanderLaan, artist. Amy Miller, realtor, who conceived the series and hired Jane VanderLaan to illustrate the series of images of favorite places in various areas of Grand Rapids. 2005-

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Baxter Neighborhood Association.
- Black Hills Citizens for a Better Community.
- Creston Citizen's Association.
- Creston Neighborhood Association.
- East Hills Council of Neighbors.
- Easttown Community Association.
- Fuller Area Neighbors.
- Fulton Heights Neighborhood Association.
- Garfield Park Neighborhoods Association.
- Heartside Neighborhood Association.
- Heritage Hill Association, Inc..
- Madison Area Neighborhood Association, Inc.
- Neighbors of Belknap Lookout.
- North Park Neighbor Association.
- Northeast Citizens Action Association.
- Oakdale Neighbors.
- Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Association.
- Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association.
- South East End Neighborhood Association.
- South Hill Neighborhood Association.
- South West Area Neighbors, Inc.
- Wealthy Street Business Alliance.
- West Grand Neighborhood Organization.

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Subject(s)

- Citizens' associations -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Neighborhood government -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids

Baxter Neighborhood Association**Collection Inventory****Baxter Neighborhood Association****Scope and Contents note**

The Baxter Neighborhood Association was formed in 1982 under the direction of Hattie Smith, Mary Jo Thiel, and Barbara Hoekwater.

	Box	Folder
Informational brochure, n.d. (copy) 2004.050	1	1
News clippings, 1999 and 2001	1	1

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout (00.[5018])**Scope and Contents note**

The Belknap neighborhood formed the Hill District Improvement Association in 1962. The Hill District Improvement Association was one of the first active neighborhood associations in Grand Rapids in the post-WWII era. This organization fizzled out as the neighborhood became a popular neighborhood for renters and college students.

Noticing the need for a neighborhood association in the Belknap Lookout neighborhood, ACORN, a national organization, sought to revive the association. But, the neighbors found ACORN to be too controlling, and formed Neighbors of Belknap Lookout on their own in 1978.

The neighborhood association began a relationship with the hospitals that began to develop in the area. Tensions between the two groups began to ease in the 1990's when the hospitals built Belknap

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout (00.[5018])

Commons. Belknap Commons became a community and health care center for the people of the neighborhood.

The material for this collection came from the “Neighbors of Belknap Lookout” vertical file.

	Box	Folder
Minutes, September 7, 1976 and December 12, 1996	1	2
Belknap Lookout Newsletter, November 1979 - June 1981	1	3
Articles, Winter 1984 Grand River Valley Review and 1/28/1999 Grand Rapids Press	1	4
Lookout Hill Renaissance, info on homes for sale, 1994 and n.d.	1	5
Dedication of mural pamphlet and letter, 1982	1	6
Color Me Coit!: Map of the Belknap Neighborhood	1	7
Belknap Target Area Council (00.[5018].x) Minutes, February 22, 1977 - January/ February, 1979	1	8
Correspondence, 1977 and 1978	1	9
Petition for Stop Sign at Coit and Michigan Ave.	1	10
Block Surveys, 1977	1	11

Black Hills Citizens for a Better Community (00.[5018])

Neighborhood guide. "This is the Belknap Neighborhood Handbook" Compiled by the William James College Planning Team. [n.d.] 00. [5815].1; moved from M977.456 B412t	5	15
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Black Hills Citizens for a Better Community (00.[5018])**Scope and Contents note**

Black Hills Citizens for a Better Community was formed in 1981. The documents in this collection were found in the "Black Hills Citizens for a Better Community" vertical file.

	Box	Folder
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Correspondence, 1976 - 1978	1	12
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Newsletters

	Box	Folder
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Hills Herald, 1976	1	13
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Hills Herald, 1977	1	14
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Hills Herald, July 1978-March 1979	1	15
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Black Hills Banner, no date	1	16
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The Black Hills Voice, August/ September, 1986

	Box	Folder
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General Demographic Characteristics, Census, 2000

News clipping, Oct. 4, 2001 Grand Rapids Press	1	17
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“The Black Hills” from “Yesterdays of Grand Rapids” by Belknap	1	18
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General Demographic Characteristics, Census, 2000

	Box	Folder
Burton Heights photo CD, 2002	1	19

Box

Burton Heights Images, 2002. CD. Master. 2003.064.		1
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Creston Neighborhood Association**Scope and Contents note**

The Creston neighborhood was the first neighborhood to organize its own associations. The Creston Citizens Association formed in 1906. Though this group helped to establish the Creston neighborhood, they are not related to the Creston Neighborhood Association of the present.

The Creston Neighborhood Association was formed in 1970. On October 28, 2003, by unanimous vote, the North End Neighborhood Association was absorbed into the Creston Neighborhood Association.

Most of the documents from this collection come mainly from the “Creston Neighborhood Association” vertical file. Copies of “The C.N.A. News” were printed from the association’s website.

	Box	Folder
The CNA News, 2004	1	20
News clippings, 1914 - 2005	1	21

Creston Citizen's Association (00. [5018])

History, printed from blog	1	22
Creston Citizen's Association (00. [5018])		
	Box	Folder
Information for "History of Grand Rapids and Kent County", E.B. Fisher, editor	1	23
Letter to E.B. Fisher from Association, September 17, 1917.	1	24
East Hills Council of Neighbors		
Scope and Contents note		
<p>The East Hills Council of Neighbors was formed in 1978. Neighbors met initially to discuss the crime related to the bars in their neighborhood. In 1986 the East Hills Council of Neighbors helped to close the White Rabbit Bar, which decreased neighborhood crime. The Council has been working to utilize the large population of artists in the neighborhood to enhance the neighborhood aesthetically.</p> <p>The East Hills Council of Neighbors is a conglomeration of six smaller neighborhoods- Cherry Hills, Fairmount Square, Fitch Corners, Congress Park, Diamond Gate, and Orchard Hill.</p> <p>In 1989 Cherry Hill formed its own association to confront problems of absentee landlords and drug crime. The Cherry Hill Association also worked on the historical preservation of homes in the area. The Cherry Hill Association has since fizzled out, and was included in the East Hills Council of Neighbors again.</p>		
	Box	Folder
ECHO : East Hills Council of Neighbors Newsletter, Autumn 2005	1	25

East End Improvement Association (1994.032)

News clippings, 1998 and 2006	1	26
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East End Improvement Association (1994.032)

	Box	Folder
Book of meeting minutes, accounts, and articles of association, 1927-1931	1	27

Eastgate Neighborhood Association**Scope and Contents note**

The Eastgate Neighborhood Association was formed in 1990 as a reaction to the expansion of the Metropolitan Hospital.

	Box	Folder
Gatewatch Newsletter, 1998 - 2000 (00.[5552].1-4)	1	28

News clippings, Grand Rapids Press, 1999	1	29
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Easttown Community Association**Scope and Contents note**

In 1970 the WEFF (Wealthy, Ethel, Fulton, and Fuller) Association formed within those street boundaries to address issues of crime and absentee landlords.

In 1973 Dr. Norbert Hruby, President of Aquinas College, began to worry about the decline of the neighborhood and the subsequent effect on Aquinas College. Hruby formed the Easttown Community Association, which replaced WEFF as a more active association.

Eastown Access Newsletter (2005.007E / 00. [5108])

Twenty-one neighborhood residents, who are elected annually, now govern the Eastown Community Association. The association oversees the annual Eastown Street Fair, as well as many other programs of both neighborhood and citywide importance. The association has taken an active role in crime prevention.

Most of the documents in this collection were taken from the "Eastown Community Association" vertical file. Copies of the "Eastown Access" newsletter were taken from Collection 285, Michigan and Grand Rapids Serials Collection.

Eastown Access Newsletter (2005.007E / 00. [5108])

	Box	Folder
1975-1978	1	30
1979-1980	1	31
1981-1982	2	1
1983-1985	2	2
1985-1986	2	3
1987-1990	2	4
2001. July, Sept., Nov.	2	5
2002. March, Sept., [Dec.]	2	6
2003. March, Nov./Dec.	2	7

Eastown Access Newsletter (2005.007E / 00. [5108])

2004. v. 31. Nos. 1-6, Jan./Feb.-Nov./Dec.	2	8
2005. v. 32. Nos. 1-5, Jan.-Oct.	2	9
2006. v. 33, No. 1-3,	2	10
2007. v. 34, Nos. 2-4, Apr.-Nov. and no. 5, Dec. 2007/Jan. 2008.	2	11
2008 v. 36, Nos. 1-3, Feb.-July, 5-6, Oct. 2008-Jan. 2009	2	12
2009. v. 37, Nos. 1-3, Feb.-July, No. 5, October-Nov (2009.063.3)	2	13
	Box	Folder
ECA letter dated 7/26/2006 with some organizational history; 2002 Business directory and parking map 00.[5018].x	3	1
WOOD TV8 website pages, 2/27/2008, regarding explosion	3	2
2/27/2008 Email with images of explosion (00.[5593].2)	3	3
Color photos (5) of explosion (00.[5593].3)	3	4
Eastown Community Association. Security alerts.(2)	3	5
ECA letter, n.d. Fund raising. 2006.069BAdded 10/31/2006	3	6
Eastown E-News. Oct. 2007 – Jul. 2008 (00.[5593])	3	7

Fuller Area Neighbors

Emails and other notifications, Aug. 2007 – Apr. 2008	3	8
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News clippings, 1974 - 2002 (00.[5018])	3	9
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Fuller Area Neighbors

Scope and Contents note

The Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church created Fuller Area Neighbors in 2000 to address neighborhood concerns and to promote a spirit of neighborliness among the residents.

	Box	Folder
Grand Rapids Press articles, 2001 and 2003	3	10

Fulton Heights Neighborhood Association

Scope and Contents note

The newsletters in this collection were printed from the Fulton Heights Neighborhood website.

	Box	Folder
Fulton Heights NA Newsletter, Fall 2005	3	11

Garfield Park Neighborhood Association (0.[5018])

Scope and Contents note

Heartside/ Downtown Neighborhood Association (00. [5018])

In 1973 Garfield Park residents Don Janderonoa and Katie Cuncannan joined together members of the Burton Heights Ministerial Alliance, area business leaders, and concerned neighbors to form the Garfield Park Neighborhood Association.

This association helped to unite the neighborhood after the race riots of 1967. Neighbors joined together to revive Garfield Park to patch the scars of the riots on the park.

The documents in this collection were found in the “Garfield Park Neighborhood Association” vertical file and on the association website.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence, 1976 - 1978	3	12
GPNA Newsletter, 1976-1982	3	13
Garfield Park Connector, (Bimonthly) 2006- 2008 Note: Most issues printed from website	3	14
Garfield Park Connector, 2008	3	15
Grand Rapids Press Article, 2006	3	16
Neighborhood Association history from website, and walking tour flyer (00.[5307].1)	3	17
Ephemera, flyers and brochures	3	18
Heartside/ Downtown Neighborhood Association (00. [5018])		
	Box	Folder

Heartside/ Downtown Neighborhood Association (00. [5018])

Correspondence regarding Senior Citizen Safety, 1978 and n.d.	3	19
Correspondence and planning documents regarding Catholic Central HighSchool, 1978 and n.d.	3	20
Community development proposal, 1977 - 1979	3	21
Correspondence regarding police foot patrol, 1978-1979	3	22
The Advocate Newsletter, 1977-8	3	23
Heartside Neighborhood Association Newsletter, 1978-1979	3	24
Heartside Neighborhood Association Newsletter, 1979-1980	3	25
Heartbeat Newsletter, October 1980	3	26
HDNA Newsletter, 2000-2001	3	27
Articles 2001 - 2006	3	28
Cathedral Newsletter, 1976, pg.6	3	29
Westminster Presbyterian Church clippings 1977 - 1978	3	30
Lighting proposal and petition, 1977 (Formerly 252-3-12)	3	31

Heritage Hill Association

Articles on neighborhood history (Formerly 252-3-21)	3	32
Invitations	3	33
Historic Heartside Calendar, 1982	3	34
Heartside Neighborhood Association pamphlet, 2000	3	35

Heritage Hill Association

Scope and Contents note

The Heritage Hill Neighborhood Association first formed in 1968 as a response to new developments that would destroy the historic homes in the neighborhood. By lobbying to make Heritage Hill a historic district, the association helped to save the neighborhood from an urban renewal project that would have leveled most of the neighborhood. Today, Heritage Hill is one of the largest historic districts in the United States.

The association began with historical interests, but then grew to include community issues such as crime and education.

The documents from this collection come primarily from the “Heritage Hill Association” vertical file and the association website.

	Box	Folder
The Master Plan of Heritage Hill, Heritage Hill NeighborhoodAssociations, July 20, 1988.	3	36
Information printed from website	3	37

Heritage Hill Target Area Council 00.[3058].1

Heritage Hill Walking Tour, guide pamphlet (00.[5018])	3	38
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Heritage Hill Target Area Council 00.[3058].1**Scope and Contents note**

The Heritage Hill Target Area was one of the neighborhoods that received CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) in the mid to late 1970's. The Heritage Hill neighborhood formed a Target Area Council to oversee the grant. The grant helped to assist homeowners with much needed home repairs. This program helped to improve the conditions of some of the historic houses of Heritage Hill, as well as improve the parks, streets, and alleys. The program sought to create more parks in the neighborhood, and to expand the amount of historical markers throughout the neighborhood.

The Heritage Hill Target Area Council records were formerly housed in Collection 254. These items were evidently sent from Abe Drasin, and appear to have passed by the desk of City Commissioner William Johnson. This collection includes meeting minutes as well as some correspondence.

	Box	Folder
Meeting packets, 1976	3	39
Meeting packets, 1977	3	40
Meeting packets, 1978	3	41
Meeting packets, 1979	3	42

Madison Area Neighborhood Association**Scope and Contents note**

North East Citizens Action Association

The Madison Area Neighborhood Association, like Neighbors of Belknap Lookout, was formed by the national organization ACORN. The Madison Neighborhood broke free from the ACORN organization so that the association would be under the control of people of the Madison area.

In 1979, free from the ACORN organization, the Madison area neighbors formed their independent neighborhood association named in honor of the father of Civil Rights in Grand Rapids, Paul I. Phillips.

The Paul I. Phillips Association experienced financial trouble over the years and slowly became less active as a community organization.

In the 1980's The United Methodist Church Community House became worried about the lacking Paul I. Phillips Association and formed the South End Community Association.

In 1987, South End Community Association and neighbors in the Madison area again became one united association.

SECA continued to grow, and in 1996, Madison neighbors decided again to separate the associations. The Madison Area Neighborhood Association was established as part of the Madison Square Co-Op program that sought to revive the neighborhood.

The Madison Area Neighborhood Association has been independent since 1996.

Box Folder

Grand Rapids Press articles 2005 - 2006

4

1

North East Citizens Action Association

Scope and Contents note

Interfacing with the Kent County community on the northeast of Grand Rapids, this area is bordered on the west by N. Fuller and on the south by I-96, with busy Leonard St. cutting through the center west to east. It includes a mix of residential, including apartments, industrial, and Kent County offices, such as the Kent County Corrections Facility and the Kent Education Center at opposite corners of the area.

Box Folder

North Park Neighbor Association

News clipping, May 21, 1998 Grand Rapids Press	4	2
North Park Neighbor Association		
	Box	Folder
North Park News, 1987 issues	4	3
Oakdale Neighbors		
Scope and Contents note		
This small southeast area was an early Dutch neighborhood. It sits between Eastern Ave. and Kalamazoo north of Griggs.		
	Box	Folder
Clippings, 1990 - 2001	4	4
Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Association		
Scope and Contents note		
Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Association formed in 1974 in response to the “white flight” and increase in “for sale” signs throughout the neighborhood. This association helped to stabilize and unify the racially diverse residents of the neighborhood.		
	Box	Folder
Newsletters, 1980-1985, nd. (1988.024)	4	5-11

Documents related to the preparation of the videotape "The Story of Ottawa..."

On-line newsletter, 2003 - 2005	4	12
Skill survey, n.d. (1988.024)	4	13
Logo stickers (9 adhesive backed decals with "Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Association") 1994.042	4	14
1983 Guide to Bus Riding. Supplement to Grand Rapids Press. 1988.024	6	1
Documents related to the preparation of the videotape "The Story of Ottawa Hills". Accession 1994.042		
	Box	Folder
Ottawa Hills History Video Script Master. 10/1/92	4	15
[Video Project Working Notebook] with Video Script, Shooting Script, Voice over cues, Audio cues, and Slide shots	4	16
[Scrapbook of Ottawa Hills History Video Project] including newspaperclippings, interview transcripts, budgets, correspondence, etc.	4	17
Oversized enlargements of newspaper clippings, Accession 1994.042		
	Box	Folder
"Ottawa Hills, Indian Village Unit" GR Herald, Mar. 11, 1928	6	2
Two maps of Ottawa Hills, one from the GR Herald, June 15, 1924	6	3

Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association (00.[5018])

“Ottawa Hills Second” GR Herald, July 21, 1923	6	4
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“Ottawa Hills at Giddings and Franklin” G.R. Herald Sept. 10, 1922	6	5
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Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association (00.[5018])

	Box	Folder
Correspondence	4	18
Community Research Institute Website prints for Roosevelt Park.	4	19
“The Roosevelt Park Neighborhood”, ca. Late 1990's brochure. 2009.031	4	20

Grandville Avenue Gazette 2009.031

	Box	Folder
1991-1995	4	21
1995-1997	4	22
1998-1999	4	23
2000-2001	4	24
2002-2004	4	25
2005-2009	4	26

South East End Neighborhood Association (00.[5018])**South East End Neighborhood Association (00.[5018])****Scope and Contents note**

In May, 1974, individuals outside the South East End, but committed to the neighborhood, formed HEFF (Hall, Eastern, Franklin, Fuller). This organization evolved, and SEENA was formed in 1977.

SEENA targets the housing and drug problems of the neighborhood, and often sponsors parties and parades in King Park.

The material from this collection was found in the South East End Neighborhood Association vertical file.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence, 1979	5	1
Scenario Newsletter, 1979 - 1984	5	2-7
List of area businesses, distributed by neighborhood association, 1979	5	8

South Hill Neighborhood Association**Scope and Contents note**

The South Hill Neighborhood Association began as a small block club in 1987. The block club grew and formed the South Hill Neighborhood Association in the fall of 1999.

	Box	Folder
Jul. 27, 2000 Grand Rapids Press article	5	9

South West Area Neighbors**South West Area Neighbors****Scope and Contents note**

SWAN was formed by Shirley Sieting in the 1980s. Sieting was frustrated with the John Ball Park Neighborhood Association for losing their funding after not cooperating with grant funders, and sought to form a new association that could meet the needs of the neighborhood.

	Box	Folder
Jan. 3, 1993 Grand Rapids Press article	5	10

Wealthy Street Business Alliance (2006.045)**Scope and Contents note**

The minutes in this collection are from the files of Amy Ruis. Other information was found on the Wealthy Street Business Alliance's website.

	Box	Folder
Minutes, 2005 - 2006	5	11
Prints from wealthymainstreet.org	5	12

West Grand Neighborhood Association**Scope and Contents note**

The description of the neighborhood found in the collection was copied from the Stempliski/ Westside papers.

General Directories and Maps

	Box	Folder
“John Ball Park and West Grand” article 1999.066B box 2	5	13
		Box
[Exhibit]. Happy 75th Anniversary. Richmond Park Pool / Display created by Emily Anne Hamstra. Donated with the support of Walt Gutowski and Swift Printing Co. Summer 2007 Exhibit. 2007.094		FF.IX.D

General Directories and Maps

	Box	Folder
1989 - 2006	5	14