

Piast hosts Senior Focus Group

On January 18th the Piast Institute hosted a Hamtramck Senior Citizen's Focus Group to explore the needs of senior citizens in the city. Those attending were Frank Zakarias, Vera Burk, Arlene Shubert, Abdul al-Mothib and Delphine Wojtowicz. Mrs. Wojtowicz has been nominated to represent Hamtramck on the Detroit Area agency on Aging. The public officials in attendance were Mr. Bert Johnson, representing Representative Bill McConico; Mayor Thomas Jankowski; Deputy Mayor Chris Cornwall and the Wayne County Treasurer. The meeting was convened by Piast Institute President Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski. The meeting facilitator was Ms. Virginia Skrzyniarz, Executive Director of the Piast Institute.

The group aired the concerns of senior citizens on issues of safety, transportation, health services, legal services and the need for the kind of assistance with household tasks that had been provided in the past by the Chores Program. The officials noted the concerns of the group and raised questions and provided clarification on the issues. The group will reconvene in February. Information about the discussions can be obtained by calling or e-mailing the Piast Institute at (313) 664-0321 or vpiaast@sbcglobal.net. ♦

Letters to the Editor

Editor's Note: Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of Main Street nor its staff

The Charter Revision Commission's Strategy for Revising the Hamtramck City Charter

In November of 2002 the voters of Hamtramck elected members to a Charter Revision Commission that would revise the current Hamtramck Charter and then ask the voters to vote on the proposed charter.

We took our responsibility seriously. A lot of work and preparation went into the creation of the proposed Charter on which you will cast your vote on February 22, 2005. Our approach was multi-faceted and consisted of the following strategies.

INPUT AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

We held open public meetings to work through our revisions to the charter. These meetings began in January 2003 and were generally held twice a month, but there were some months when we met a couple of times each week. And every one of our meetings was on the public record and we televised them when possible, but sometimes we had to meet in the library or another room in city hall when the City Council room was being used.

INPUT FROM RESIDENTS

We invited the residents of Hamtramck to tell us what they thought about the revised charter by allowing public input during

our meetings.

We held special public hearings at locations around the city on different nights than our regular meetings so that residents could share their opinions with us.

We mailed out a questionnaire and conducted a telephone survey of representative samples of the registered Hamtramck voters.

As we lived and worked in Hamtramck, the members of the Commission also talked with those we met to find out what they thought about the old charter and about what the new charter should be like.

INPUT FROM HAMTRAMCK OFFICIALS

We invited input from elected city officials, from others working for the city and from the Police and Fire Departments. Their input was in many forms, including official letters to the Commission, speaking at our meetings and in talking with one or two commission members.

INPUT FROM PEOPLE OUTSIDE HAMTRAMCK

We invited elected officials from other cities, representatives from the Michigan Municipal League and other people with interest and experience in city governments to discuss with us their experiences.

RESEARCH

Individually, in committees and as a whole body, the commission also studied surveys, reports, essays, articles, charts, evaluations, opinion pieces, and scholarly studies. Of particular assistance to us was the National Civic League, which has created a number of resources for cities that are creating or revising their charter.

We also examined the charters of other cities to see how they handled various policies within their city charters.

We also established committees which met to gather and evaluate information that was then presented at a meeting of the Commission.

MAKING CHOICES

Our choices for the charter were made after this thorough process of listening, studying, discussing, and evaluating the information and opinions we had collected.

NOW IT IS YOUR CHOICE

On February 22, 2005 you will have the opportunity to vote on whether to accept the proposed new charter. We have mailed a copy of the charter to each household with registered voters. Copies are also available at the Clerk's office in City Hall and the library. We encourage your participation.

The Hamtramck Charter Revision Commission