

Absentee Ballots – for the general election are in the mail. I've received and returned mine, well before the election date.

The first district has no candidate on the ballot. I support Dale R. Cooper for this City Council seat as a write-in candidate (he filed as a write-in). In order to vote for Dale, you need to enter his name as he registered, Dale R. Cooper, on the line and darken the circle to the right.

Roger Zielinski is the only candidate on the ballot for the 3rd district, and is completing his first term on City Council. I support Roger enthusiastically for a second term and hope to work with him the next two years to advance the concept of fiscal accountability and responsibility for the City of Manistee. Roger is tireless in his research and prepares for the issues facing City Council.

I am unopposed for a 2nd term for the 5th district and ask for your vote for a 2nd term. A sustainable budget, greater transparency, accountability, and responsibility are my goals for the next term. We have brought greater debate to a number of issues, and with some new members on City Council should have more success in moving the City forward.

Erin Martin Pontiac is the only candidate on the ballot for the 7th district and was appointed to the City Council to replace Eric Gustad (who moved out of the City) for the remainder of that district term. Erin was prepared and focused at her first meeting, and brings a unique perspective to the Council. I enthusiastically support Erin for a full term and look forward to her contributions to improve the City.

Dale, Roger, and Erin are all independent minded and bring a mix of experience, expertise, and enthusiasm to the process of City Government. Your vote and support is important, so please consider these candidates when casting your ballots this election cycle.

Rietz Park (a "memorial" park) has been an issue since our budgeting process earlier this year. The park was conveyed to the City with terms to remain open to the public and maintenance by the City. The Manistee Saints have used a portion of the park as an "exclusive" ball park in the past and received a \$6,000 annual appropriation from the City for maintenance of the area. It has been discussed to separate that portion of the park and lease the area to the Saints (as well as restore it to the property tax role), but that runs contrary to the City Charter, which requires a vote of the electors to buy, sell, or lease Memorial Parks. Also brought to light during a bus tour of parks and City recreational areas last week was the fact that water to irrigate the park was previously unmetered (discovered while replacing a service line) resulting in an estimated \$15,000 annual revenue loss to the City. These issues are being addressed.

TIF – Tax Increment Financing. Lots of chatter about this is recent development agreements and some new proposals. A great deal of information is available online. Basically, developers and communities benefit from "capturing" future improvement tax revenue (for up to 30 years) to pay for development and infrastructure cost associated with the development of property. We have several Brownfield TIF projects going now, Edgewater/North Channel and Joslin Cove. The City (as well as County and State) will not see tax revenue for public services for many years from either development. There will be some City infrastructure improvements financed with some of these captured taxes, but it is prudent to evaluate TIF pro and con issues on an individual basis so it is not over-used and is applied to a general community benefit.

Streets- Work continues on this year's projects. There is never enough money to address all concerns and issues, but it my intent to continue emphasis on improved infrastructure and making sure all of our streets are brought up to good condition and well maintained.

As always, I appreciate your comments, suggestions, and the opportunity to assist you with concerns and issues for the City of Manistee. Jim