



# This Week

## With the Mayor



**February 15th, 2019**

## This Week with The Mayor

This is a big newsletter this week with a variety of news and events. Everytime I turned around, there was more to share! I just couldn't stop!

### Peninsular Dam

**The City of Ypsilanti is considering what to do with the city-owned Peninsular Dam.** Should we remove it and return the river to its original path, or should we repair it and continue to maintain it?

To bring you up to speed, two studies have been conducted, to determine:

- 1) if it is possible and how much it might cost to remove the dam; and
- 2) the costs at this time to do necessary repairs on the dam. Both of these studies have been presented to City Council.

You will have an additional opportunity to see each study and ask questions on **Feb. 20th at the Ypsi Senior/Community Center**, 1015 North Congress St., Ypsilanti. Details are below. Following that Town Hall, we will have an open portal and survey to gather YOUR feedback on this important question.

Some of the issues related to this decision include the environmental health of the Huron River as a habitat, anticipated impact of climate change on the river, impact(s) on property/property values for homeowners upriver, effects on fishing/wildlife (both sustenance and recreational), and possible grant money available (for either decision).

Help Council make the best decision possible. Come to our Town Hall, gather information, and send in your perspective via our portal. We look forward to hearing from you!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2607854712588407/>

## The Passing of John Dingell:

I never had the pleasure of working with Congressman Dingell, although it is my honor to work with Congresswoman Debbie Dingell now. His long service as an elected official literally helped shape our country. I doubt we will see that type of longevity and leadership again. Here are just a few numbers.



### His legacy:

- Served 29 terms in Congress (won 29 campaigns as well)
- Served under 11 Presidents
- Longest serving Congressperson in the history of the USA: 1955-2015
- Served with 11 House Speakers
- Served with 2419 House Members
- More than 25,000 votes cast

### Supported the following legislation:

- National Wilderness Act (1964)
- Water Quality Act (1965)
- National Environmental Policy Act (1970)
- Endangered Species Act (1973)
- Natural Gas Policy Act (1978)
- Prescription Drug Marketing Act (1988)
- Clean Air Act Amendments (1990)
- Energy Independence and Security Act (2007)
- Instant Criminal Background Check System Improvements (2008)
- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010)
- FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (2011)

## Mayoral Office Hours Announcement

**Please drop by my upcoming Office Hours!** We can chat about anything that is on your mind. Ideas, questions, information, concerns... it is all welcome.

I will have a special guest joining me: our **Police Chief DeGuisti will be joining us**. Do you have questions or thoughts about public safety? He is the expert. Chief DeGuisti's commitment and willingness to do as much as possible with few resources is commendable. I hope you come out to meet him. See you there!

Here are the details:

**Office Hours: Sun, Feb. 17 from 1-4 PM at Cultivate Coffee and Taphouse, 307 North River St. Ypsilanti**

## Call for Artists

Are you a painter, dancer, singer, fiber artist, comedian, actor, crafter, or any other artist/group of artists? Are you interested in broadening your audience base? Do you have ties with Ypsilanti? If you answered yes to these questions, you may be a perfect fit for University Night of Arts.

Eastern Michigan University and the City of Ypsilanti are proud to collaborate to bring a brand new art experience to our community, University Night of Arts. The hope is to bridge the gap between the Ypsilanti and EMU communities through a unique, shared artistic experience.

The event will take place on April 13th from 4:00-7:00 PM. If you, or someone you know, are interested in participating as a performer or exhibiting your art, please send an email at [contactunoa@gmail.com](mailto:contactunoa@gmail.com) with the subject line "UNA", and include a sample showcasing your talent. This could be a video, photo, or link to your social media or website.

The deadline to apply by email is March 1st at 11:59 PM. Please note that late applications cannot be accepted. This is a great opportunity for promoting your work, so plan to bring your own swag and plenty of business cards. Please don't hesitate to contact UNA with any questions you may have.

### **University Night of Arts Board**

Margita Vojtkulakova

Alison Carpenter

Najd Al Jarba

Orlando Kamaj

Judith Hoffman

## Activists, Groups Fight Racial Inequality

The Michigan Daily recently focused on three efforts to fight racial inequality in Washtenaw County. Read an excerpt below. Click the following link to read the entire [Michigan Daily article](#) by Anna McMurtry.

[One Community](#) is focusing on the residents of Washtenaw County... One Community is made up of court and county administrators, racial analysts, public defenders and health department workers. Felicia Brabec said she and One Community work to educate people about racial inequities within local government...

[T]he NAACP is working on [UM] campus to create a safe space for minority students. LSA sophomore Jaylen Ausley, co-chair of Health and Awareness Committee of the chapter of the NAACP, said the organization was working to educate students about the Black community. Their [NAACP Week](#) starts Monday [2/11] and offers events across campus.

“The NAACP is trying to spread awareness of the Black community,” Ausley said. “We’re more focused on spreading awareness, trying to make people culturally aware because not everyone comes from big cities where they have experiences with people that don’t look like them.”

Another group combatting racism is [The Poor People’s Campaign](#), a national organization that aims to bring together people across the country to challenge systemic racism. The campaign’s [local chapter](#) in Washtenaw held a [Moral Fusion Summit](#) at Brown Chapel AME in Ypsilanti on Jan. 26. The summit centered around topics such as housing, education system, criminal justice system, policing, environmental justice, immigration and health care. Reverend Joseph Summers, an activist with the Campaign and a pastor of Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, said the summit highlighted the campaign’s goals in Washtenaw...

## Water Protection and PFAs News:

### PFAS Response Team Recharged In Executive Order

#### **MIRS Article – Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued an executive order (EO) today designed to strengthen the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team's (MPART) effort to inform the public about perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a man-made substance that's contaminated drinking water in various parts of the state.

The team's charge is to locate this contamination and protect other sources from being infected.

In 2017, MPART was created as a temporary body by executive directive to investigate sources and locations of PFAS and protect drinking water, according to Whitmer's order.

The EO was unveiled along with another to reorganize the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) into the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and an executive directive joining a 19-state U.S. Climate Alliance. (See related story.)

The MPART program has the support of Republicans as well as Democrats and environmentalists.

Rep. Sue Allor (R-Wolverine) issued a statement last week calling on the Governor to reauthorize the team.

"When the previous administration established MPART in 2017, Michigan became a leader in tracking and managing PFAS contamination and controlling public exposure to health hazards. It is crucial that this work is allowed to continue," Allor stated.

Key accomplishments of the team, Allor said, include testing 100 percent of all Michigan's public drinking water sources, testing drinking water at all schools and daycares, identification of and remediation activities at 34 sites, coordination of bottled water supply and response support to affected communities, and completed testing of fish and game in affected areas.

Rep. Gary Howell (R-North Branch), chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, said continuing the PFAS response team was a good idea.

"The PFAs response team has been a real asset to the state in trying to deal with this problem under one umbrella. When she says she is strengthening that, I'm not sure what that means again until I read the precise provision in the executive order," he said.

MPART presented what it has learned about PFAS contamination to the committee in December, and while Howell said the work the team has done was commendable, it stopped short of recommending a number for what the state should consider safe in drinking water.

"We need more information. There is no doubt about that. The report was certainly helpful, but it is not the final answer. And I am very interested in hearing additional testimony from additional experts. I want to give the administration time to get themselves organized as to how they want to proceed." .

Allor noted recent news that the U.S. Air Force will disregard the DEQ's attempt to force its compliance with a regulation that caps the amount of PFAS chemicals entering surface water. The DEQ issued a violation notice in October that the Air Force was failing to meet a 12 parts per trillion (ppt) limit on the amount of PFAS allowed in Michigan groundwater where it co-mingles with a lake or river. She said she hoped the federal government would work cooperatively with the state to resolve contamination issues there caused by the Air Forces' use of PFAS-laden firefighting foam.

Whitmer's EO won applause from environmentalists and Democrats.

"Ensuring families in West Michigan -- and communities across our state -- have safe, clean water must be a priority. These executive orders are another step forward, and I am grateful for the Whitmer administration's readiness and support to address PFAS

contamination. I look forward to working with Gov. Whitmer and the expanded Michigan PFAS Action Response Team to safeguard our water and hold polluters accountable," said Sen. Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids) in a statement.

## Washtenaw Housing Education Partners

Buying a home sometime soon? Does the process seem daunting and confusing? It did for me; I was young and did not have a lot of money. It felt like everything had to be done at the same time. That was 28 years ago, and I can't imagine that it has gotten any easier since then.

If that is the case, here is a class set up just for you! (I would have appreciated it at the time.) This class is led by Washtenaw County staff so you are not being sold anything. They only are there to help you understand the steps of the process without any pressure. Check it out and if it helps, I am glad:

<https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/11110/WHEP-2019-Program-Schedule?bidId=>

## County Housing Rehabilitation Program

Winter finally hit! I thought it would never come. Seriously, we had a calm and practically balmy winter until mid January. And then, boom! Severe cold! Snow! Ice! Welcome to Michigan in the winter, again.

Did your home get damaged by any of the weather? Wind or ice cause an issue with your roof or siding, for instance? Homeowners with incomes that fit the program at this link might qualify for help paying for repairs. Good news, so please share!

<https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/9733/Housing-Rehab-Flyer-PDF>

## Growing Hope and Winter Farmers Markets

The Ypsilanti Farmers Market - Downtown is open year-round at the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace, 16 S Washington Street. From January-April, market dates are every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 3-7pm. February dates are the 12th and 26th. The indoor market supports 10-15 small farms and businesses per week selling produce, meat and eggs, fish, baked goods, and more. Cash, Credit, SNAP/EBT, and Double Up Food Bucks accepted. Please come and check out the Farmers Market

--Dayna Popkey, Farmers Market and Nutrition Manager

## A Message from Food Gatherers

We know many of you are still feeling the effects of the government shutdown. Some of our neighbors were furloughed, some worked without pay, and there are some contractors that may never be provided back pay. **Additionally, all Food Stamp (FAP/SNAP) recipients received their February benefits on their Bridge Cards early! This will cause households to go 40-60 days until they get their March benefits.** (Michigan distributes benefits over the first 21 days of the month). There will be no additional benefits provided in February, and although people can still use their benefits if they have any leftover, many will run out earlier than usual.

**Food Pantries are here to serve you:** If you are in need of food, please visit a food pantry. Check out the hours and locations

<http://foodgatherers.org/needfood>. If other forms of assistance are needed or you are responding to requests outside our county, call 211 or visit here <https://www.mi211.org/>

**Food Gatherers is hosting two special distributions at the Towner building for folks who may have run out of SNAP benefits.** The attached flyer has details.

To find out more about SNAP or your application status, call the Food Bank Council of Michigan's hotline at 1-888-544-8773



## Highlighted Events of the Week

### Pride:

Join the Jim Toy Community Center's Know Your Rights Project and the Outlaws of the University of Michigan Law School for a free clinic dedicated to addressing the challenges of name changes for transgender and gender nonconforming people. This clinic will take place in the basement conference room in the Washtenaw County Clerk's office. Details on how to change your name and gender marker in the state of Michigan will be provided. Information on how to update your Social Security, Passport, Driver's License, and Birth Certificate will also be available. Legal volunteers will be on-site after the presentation to answer questions and assist with forms. This event is free!

\*All Michigan residents are welcome. Washtenaw County residents may be eligible for full in-court representation and assistance with fees through the Know Your Rights Project.

**Free Legal Name Change Clinic**

**Sat 2/16/19, 1-3:30pm, Washtenaw County Clerk's Office, 200 N Main Street, Ann Arbor**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/285932332034417/>

**Heritage:**

Honoring our Past while Growing towards our Future. Join us as we learn more of our history through song and dance. The Parkridge Community Center's Black History Celebration will feature Yodit Mesfin-Johnson as Guest Speaker, musical entertainment by the YCHS Choir, and a soul food supper!

**Black History Celebration, Fri 2/22/19, 5-7pm at Parkridge Community Center, 591 Armstrong Dr, Ypsilanti**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/245968889641790/>

**Diversity:**

The Clean Slate Ypsi community listening session is free and open to the general public. Criminal Records hold people back from moving forward with their lives. Michigan's current expungement system is time-consuming and difficult to navigate. It is estimated that 95% of people who are eligible for expungement of their criminal records never apply. Let's change that! For details, call A Better Way at 734-646-1587.

**Clean Slate Ypsi, Sat 2/23/19, 10am-12noon, Marketplace Hall, 16 S. Washington Street (behind the Farmers Market building), Ypsilanti**

Contact Mayor Beth Bashert

FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/bashert4ypsi/>

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