

BASHERT'S BI-WEEKLY MAYORAL BULLETIN



CITY COUNCIL UPDATES



Technology upgrades:

The equipment to live-stream is scheduled to start to be installed June 17. Let the celebrations begin! It will take a few days and once that is done, look out world! You will be able to watch and listen to council meetings at your convenience. You will also be able to find the agenda items you are interested in and go directly to them for audio and visual recordings of our discussions and votes.

Upcoming Agenda items:

The nearly completed budget season has Council passing a number of resolutions and schedules. That is partly why the June 4 council meeting agenda looked so hectic. Following that, and with finalizing the Capital Improvements Plan, we will be starting the process of executing the budget. That involves hiring some new staff (including 2 more police officers), purchasing equipment (DPS has some long put off needs), and putting together various RFQs and RFPs for vendors to work with us.

Welcome New Council Member Sommerville!:

During the June 4th City Council Meeting Annie Somerville was appointed to the vacant Ward 3 Council Seat. Council Member Somerville's term will expire in November of 2020. Annie Somerville was raised in Southeastern Michigan and moved to Ypsilanti in 2013. While waiting tables at Sidetrack Bar & Grill, she attended Eastern Michigan University, where she pursued a degree in Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies. As a student, she focused on millennial civic engagement. After graduation, she first worked as a field director for Jeff Irwin's state senate campaign leading up to the primary election. She then accepted a role as a campaign manager for Dayna Polehanki's state senate campaign. Annie now works as a legislative aide in Lansing for Senator Irwin, where she oversees constituent relations and helps organize district events.



Martin Slagter | The Ann Arbor News

MUNICIPAL FUNDING NEWS AND ANALYSIS:

I am sharing this article with you to help our community understand some of the challenges Council and Staff face as we budget and prioritize Ypsilanti City needs and plans. Our budget is recovering, although our taxes are high, and we are working hard to move our city forward so we are healthy and strong for the next generations of residents. While some of our economic challenges are the result of our own history, some are not. (See the following article.) And the more we understand what we can and cannot influence at the local level is helpful.

Thankfully, we have strong local leadership at the state level. Both Representative Ronnie Peterson and State Senator Jeff Irwin are our allies, and are working hard to help change the poor support the state provides local municipalities like Ypsilanti.

Gongwer News Article - Wednesday, May 29, 2019

Panel: State's Last In Nation Status On Local Funding Hurts Communities

MACKINAC ISLAND – Michigan ranks dead last in terms of local governments both getting assistance from the state and in their own ability to raise revenues, a panel said at the Detroit Regional Chamber's Mackinac Policy Conference, and it is having a major effect on communities being able to provide even basic services.

Ridgway White, president of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, said often communities are told their problems were due to poor management or poor planning.

U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Flint), who moderated the panel, replied it was hard to manage one's way through issues, "when you don't have the money to mow the park."

Amy Liu, director of the metropolitan policy group at the Brookings Institution, said a community's ability to provide basic services is critical to its ability to raise revenues and attract population and development.

And a major concern of the panel was how Michigan communities would weather the next recession.

Mr. White said he was particularly worried about communities doing well now, but would face difficulties when the economy struggled. When a community begins to lose revenue, the revenue will decrease quickly, but then it only rises slowly.

Michigan communities have struggled, even with the improving economy, since the Great Recession in part because of the requirements under the Proposal A school funding amendment that puts a strict limit – no more than 5 percent – on how much a property's taxable value can annually increase.

Ms. Liu said many states provide funding to local government in a variety of ways. Alabama provides local governments a wide variety of methods to raise revenues. In states like of Illinois, which are struggling financially, they have given local governments home rule authority to raise funding.

And other states, like Michigan, which have strict rules on local governments raising their own funds – states like Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Nevada – are generous with revenue sharing.

Mr. Kildee said in solving the issue the state had to remember that communities were not really competing with each other but with other states.

PUBLIC SAFETY OPEN HOUSE:

Have you been curious about what our police stations are like? Do you have a burning (pun intended) question about how our fire fighters do things? Well, now is your chance! Drop in to chat, touch equipment, say hello, get a tour.... It all takes place at the fire station at Michigan & Congress on Saturday June 8 from 12-4pm.

[MORE INFO](#)

PUBLIC COMMENT REQUESTED:

Destination Ann Arbor wants to hear from YOU! They have heard enough from me, that is for sure! :-)) Really, this is your chance to share what you think should be highlighted about our favorite community. Do you think we need to share something with the world about us that is not currently being marketed? Do you think we are missing opportunities? Do you have something special that should be shared with the world? Come on down to Washtenaw 2030 Master Planning session and speak your mind! The session will take place Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at 5 PM – 6:30 PM at 2455 Carpenter Road in Ann Arbor. [RSVP HERE](#)

NEWS FROM GROWING HOPE: BY DAYNA POPKEY

Hello from the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets! It's been a very rainy spring, so some farmers are a tad behind. Despite this, you can still find a wonderful assortment of fresh produce at the market.

Here's what to look for in June:

Strawberries, Arugula, Asian Greens, Asparagus, Beets, Chard, Collards, Kale, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Peas, Radishes, Salad Greens, Scallions (Green Onions), Spinach, & Turnips PLUS all of the non-produce items regularly available at the markets. The Tuesday market is open From 3-7 downtown at 16 S Washington, and the Saturday market is open 9-1 in Depot Town next to the Freighthouse.



AN INVENTORY OF LOCAL NEWS SOURCES:

The eastern side of Washtenaw County does not have many news sources today. Due to the massive decline of available print and other news media in recent years, it has become harder and harder for residents to be informed about what's happening in our community. On City Council, a statement we hear fairly often is "why didn't I know about X?" and it is a valid question. New York Times editor Dean Baquet was quoted in an article on May 21 stating that, within 5 years, almost all local newspapers will be dead. Residents are left feeling uninformed and resentful, wondering how to find out what's happening and how to get connected to the community.

[MORE ON NEXT PAGE](#)

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Social media has come to replace some of that access to local news. It is not a great tool because, with algorithms selecting the subject matter, self-involved trolling, misinformation being inserted into the dialogue, and relentlessly negative comment threads... the facts and point of the news item often get lost or diluted. The good part of that process is that community conversations are ongoing, often lively, and interesting to us all. That said, the task of journalism formerly was to analyze and communicate about often complex topics for integration by the public. That helpful function of news media is practically a thing of the past.

Some of the changes that reduced our access to current news include:

- The loss/closure of the Ypsilanti Press in the late 1990s and the Ypsilanti Courier in 2008
- The Ann Arbor News provided an Ypsi edition for a short while but has undergone various convulsions, leading it to become mostly an aggregating news source today which publishes a print edition only twice per week
- Several online news sources have dried up, such as the Ypsi Citizen and the Ann Arbor Chronicle, which ceased publishing after short runs of 2-6 years
- MLive is a regional news outlet; it doesn't cover small/local politics. While MLive occasionally covers big news, the day-to-day coverage we used to have is not part of their services to our area

So where can you get local news? Unfortunately, the coverage available is much reduced from former years, when Ypsilanti had two dedicated daily newspapers (sometimes more). However, these are a few sources we DO have in our community for local news:

- WEMU 89.1: <https://www.wemu.org/> - they have several news stories a week about a variety of Ypsilanti or regional topics; WEMU has recently added a number of local programs: In the Public Interest, Beyond Books, Art and Soul, Washtenaw United, Civic Matters, Creative Impact, Hidden in Plain Site, and Modern Aging, joining some great ongoing local programming including First Friday Focus on the Environment; The Green Room, Issues of the Environment, and the venerable Cinema Chat.
- Concentrate Media: <https://www.secondwavemedia.com/concentrate/cities/Ypsilanti> - Quality, in-depth articles about local stories or issues. This is good, focused coverage of news/projects/human interest stories on the eastern side of Washtenaw County.
- What's Left Ypsi: <http://whatsleftypsi.com/> A new presence in the area, with a clear and open goal of communicating a Left/Liberal/Progressive viewpoint, and available in print! (I miss holding a newspaper in my hands).
- The Loop: <https://www.ypsilibrary.org/about/connect/newsletter/> - Published by the Ypsilanti District Library, The Loop is beginning to offer more local stories and events from key area partners beginning with the Summer 2019 issue, in response to having "repeatedly heard a desire for more local news and information."
- Beth's Bi-Weekly Bulletin - I humbly add this as a modest contribution to alleviate the news "desert." You can sign up for this and other news from the City at www.cityofypsilanti.com/list.aspx
- Blogs: These do some local coverage and include but are not limited to:
 - Mark Maynard: <http://markmaynard.com/>
 - Damn Arbor: <https://www.damnabor.com/> The writer is a local guy and the blog covers Ypsilanti quite often. Expect lots of good info.
 - Ypsi Real: <https://www.ypsireal.com/blog> This will be focused on events, concerts, festivals, etc.

HIGHLIGHTED UPCOMING EVENTS



PRIDE

First Fridays June: Ypsi Pride

TODAY from 5-10pm

All over Ypsilanti

[FB Event Page](#)

In conjunction with First Fridays Artwalk, Ypsilanti will be bursting with LGBTQ Pride this weekend. See a rundown of events at the First Fridays FB page (below). June is Pride Month throughout the land, commemorating New York City's Stonewall Riots in 1969, making this the 50th anniversary. Expect lots of celebrations throughout the month.

DIVERSITY

Washtenaw My Brother's Keeper Monthly Breakfasts

Saturday, June 8 at 10am

235 Spencer Lane, Ypsilanti

[FB Event Page](#)



These monthly breakfasts exist to impact boys and men of color (ages 0-25) by empowering multiple generations to build community, and using innovative means to change narratives, practices, and policies, resulting in improved outcomes for young men and boys of color in Washtenaw County. Every second Saturday.



HERITAGE

Juneteenth Celebration Ann Arbor

Sat June 16, 12-6 pm

Wheeler Park, on Depot St. between

Fourth & Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor

[Website](#)

The celebration of Juneteenth is a joyful gathering of community members enjoying local talent, food, a replica of the cake walk held at Juneteenth Celebrations of yore and vendors. The current celebration is sprinkled with historical facts about Juneteenth and African Americans. It is held in historic Wheeler Park and celebrates June 19 1865, when Union soldiers sailed into Galveston, Texas, announced the end of the Civil War, and read aloud a general order freeing the quarter-million slaves residing there. It is a de facto second Independence Day commemorating the end of slavery and a first step toward inclusion of African Americans in the greater American dream.

MAYORAL OFFICE HOURS

Mayoral Office Hours coming soon! Location TBD, but lock in Sunday, June 23 between 1-4 PM to drop in with anything on your mind. I will announce the location as soon as it is finalized. See you soon!



IN COMMUNITY,

Mayor Beth Bashert

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

Email: mayor@cityofypsilanti.com

Phone: 734-368-3573

READING THIS OFFLINE?

Here's a list of links I mentioned in the articles above.

Public Safety Open House: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1313631455454443/>

Destination Ann Arbor Washtenaw 2030 RSVP:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScLfGg576FuGfUyYmBXk11ZkAvrqLdj6b90AjSFZ2Fd2C0gsw/viewform>

First Fridays Ypsilanti/ Ypsi Pride: <https://www.facebook.com/events/847835358905567/>

Washtenaw My Brothers Keeper Connection Breakfast: <https://www.facebook.com/events/606954779810756/>

Ann Arbor Juneteenth Celebration: <http://www.annarborjuneteenth.com/>