

BASHERT'S BI-WEEKLY MAYORAL BULLETIN



THOUGHTS ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

"Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."
Winston Churchill

The curve is flattening! That is great news. It's not quite where we want it yet, but the positive results of Stay Home, Stay Safe are undeniable (for those who can). Yet, the need to stay home from work and social contact continues. We need to redouble our efforts to keep socially distant to stop (yes) a second and/or third wave of infections, a real possibility should we relax our efforts too early. For those who must work or are essential workers, we appreciate your courage.

Whether Michigan partially opens up again in mid May, late May, or some other time, we will still be wearing masks, washing our hands often, and wondering about who/how an item that we are now holding in our hands was handled.



This is a stressful time for all of us, including me. Tensions and anxieties are high, patience comes and goes like the tide. In my house, we have a saying: "Under Stress, We Regress." In other words, when people get stressed out, we lapse into our basic fight-or-flight instincts, which usually do not include patience and understanding.

A reminder:

Be patient and kind with others. If there is a disagreement, it is likely not personal, even if it feels that way. The majority of [communication is nonverbal](#): most is tone of voice, inflection and body language. This means that doing important communication by text, email, or social media is bound to include buckets of misunderstanding. When you see a miscommunication happening, pick up the phone, try Zoom, Facetime, Skype, or other tech supports that work for you. Even these latter technologies lack normal conversational pacing, smells, and other social cues that help us understand one another. So give others the benefit of the doubt, especially NOW, during this pandemic.

Think long-range, end of summer for a "new normal," and even that normal won't be the normal we had before COVID-19. COVID is here to stay. With no vaccine in sight for many months at best, we are all going to be susceptible to it, and it still could have drastic possible outcomes for many people. A possible vaccine, coupled with comprehensive accurate testing, are the only things that will actually bring about whatever "normal" our future holds.

The good news is that a vaccine is likely to be developed. Keep in mind, development takes time and is complicated. After that, mass production of millions and millions of doses will also take time. Finally, distribution will also take time.

So sit back and relax. It's going to be a long pandemic.

BUSINESS AND COVID

Businesses are starting to plan on what might happen, post "Stay Home, Stay Safe." How busy will they be? How many staff will they require?

Businesses are NOT expecting to return to normal business the day they open up again. Predictions range from 25% to start and range from there, as I understand it. However, Ypsilanti is lucky that the great majority of our downtown businesses are locally-owned rather than chain stores or franchises -- it adds to our City's diversity and uniqueness.

Here is what we can do to help preserve our local Ypsi businesses. BUY LOCAL! Buying from an independent, locally-owned store will help get an employee back on the payroll, help buy products from local manufacturers, help nearby businesses by contributing to a vibrant business district that is distinctive and attractive to visit.

"YOU CAN'T BUY
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~unknown

FIRST FRIDAYS YPSI UPDATE

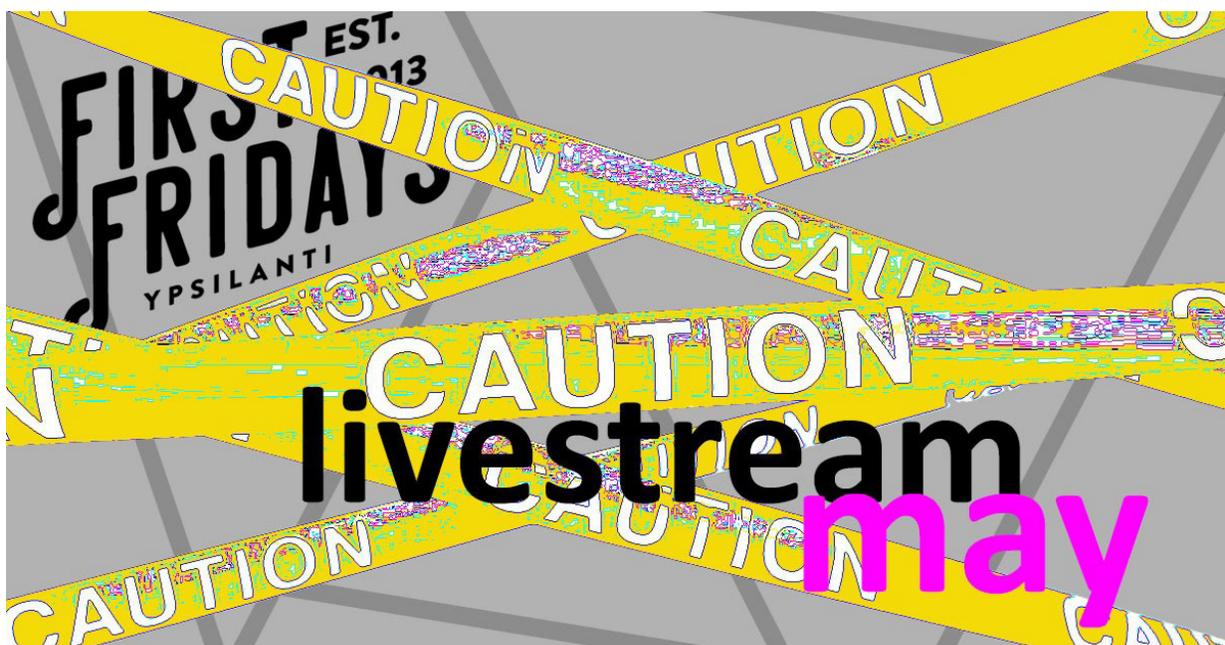
Join us tonight (Friday, May 1st) for our second ever livestream! We're featuring local artists and musicians, as well as local businesses. It's a great way to celebrate Ypsilanti's talent while staying home and staying safe!

We're streaming from 5-11:30pm.

Check out our [facebook event page for the full lineup and livestream link!](#)

June Preview: Due to the pandemic we had to postpone all of our most important spring fundraising events for Ypsi Pride. This, and our commitment to keep our community safe has led us to make the decision to to cancel the Ypsi Pride street festival on June 5th. No worries, we will be celebrating pride in new creative ways this year, but from a safe distance! Stay tuned for more details!

Elize Jekabson, Co-Founder First Fridays Ypsilanti/ Ypsi Pride



YPSI AREA ONLINE MARKET

Speaking of Buying Local...

It doesn't get any more local than what farmers and food craftspeople offer at your local farmers market. And now you can shop there safely and easily through the [Ypsi Area Online Market](#). Check it out! Every Tuesday, you can have a bag of items that you picked out yourself, grown or baked at a local farm or establishment, waiting for you and you alone!

My family did our first order this week and it was a beautiful experience. Fresh baked cookies, some gorgeous escarole, delicate spring lettuce, and other items are now gracing our meals. Purchased safely and easily by the consumer, delivered without contact, "farm-to-table" is now available to you from Growing Hope!

While our experience was seamless and easy, I happen to know that Growing Hope worked super hard on this! Glitches and headaches abounded, but they persevered, thankfully. I encourage you to check it out.



STATEWIDE TASK FORCE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS AND COVID-19

The African American Crisis Coalition is a group that was birthed, in Michigan, out of the Covid -19 pandemic. It has become a national group in just a short period of time. The AACC connects grassroots organizers, community leaders and elected officials. It was founded by Tashawna "Political Princess" Gill. Who is a national grassroots organizer, and political strategies, from Detroit MI.

In just over one month 120 groups, organizations, businesses ,municipalities and community leaders have all signed on to be partners or members.

The African American Crisis Coalition was a response to the large number of African Americans losing their lives because of the Corona Virus. In urban city, across the country, African Americans are the ones being hit the hardest. The AACC was created to encourage African Americans to save themselves by using and putting together their resources. This would allow them to help each other immediately and problem solve.

The mission of the African American Crisis Coalition is to educate The African American Community on the consistent inequalities that run rapidly throughout their communities. They aim to enhance the quality of life for all African Americans by inspiring, educating, and providing training on healthy living.

The Coalition aims to

1. Help African Americans access basic needs (example - water).
2. Help Access Healthcare.
3. Help lead a healthy lifestyles.
4. Serve as "The Clearing House" of available resources.

The African American Crisis Coalition is an example of what people can do when they work together. If you would like to join them please reachout to Tashawna Gill at Tashawnagill@gmail.com.



Tashawna Gill
Founder

MINISTRY OF SILLY WALKS GETS LOCAL

Are you familiar with Monty Python and the Ministry of Silly Walks? I am a lifelong Monty Python fan and this is a classic from that sketch comedy team. [Check it out.](#)

Cami Fussy [recently revived this in our town](#), adding a little smile into our quarantined days. Enjoy!



PPEs FOR RESIDENTS

City Council voted down an initial resolution to distribute PPEs to our most vulnerable residents at the last Council meeting. What we disagreed on was tactics, not goals. I am passionately devoted to protecting our residents, as is all of Council.

This Tuesday, Council will consider a grant proposal to do just that, using a partnership with EMU to make hand-made masks for this purpose. The proposed grant will go much further than our original plan and, should Ypsilanti be approved for the grant, it will provide the following:

- 2500 cloth face masks from EMU at \$2 each -
- \$5,000 5000 plastic bottles, 3oz at 50 cents each-
- \$2,500 65 gallons of hand sanitizer at \$40 per gallon -
- \$2,600 100 gallons of cleaning disinfectant at \$26.99 per gallon -
- \$2,699 5000 rolls of Paper Towels at 82 cents per roll-
- \$4,100 5000 rolls of Toilet Paper at 70 cents per roll -
- \$3,500 Printing and publishing materials - \$2,500

A great idea made bigger and better! Way to go!

RENTERS SUPPORT PROPOSAL

Some residents who live in rental properties have been lobbying Council for assistance. There is a current moratorium on evictions which will end shortly following the closure of Stay Home Stay Safe. This will allocate funds to assist people who have had severe economic loss because they might not qualify for unemployment or some of the other supports for folks who lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council members Annie Somerville and Nicole Brown have proposed a solution! Check out this Resolution and contact City Council with any feedback. We will vote on this May 5, Tuesday.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YPSILANTI:

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Ypsilanti would like to help our residents who have been negatively impacted financially as a result of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS this expenditure was not originally appropriated in our FY 19-20 budget and would need a budget amendment in our line item 102-7-6900- 965-00 to allocate funds for rental assistance; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Council approve the budget amendment for _____ for rental assistance, and directed the City Manager to develop a plan to allocate funds.

PETE MURDOCK BIRTHDAY

Pete would have had a birthday today. He was the first to make jokes about his being born on May Day because it is also International Workers Day, a holiday born out of the labor movement of the early 20th Century. May Day reflected his wider politics in a modern, local way and he enjoyed the irony.

Pete was a mentor to me, encouraging me to get involved in electoral politics and helping me learn to campaign, as well as teaching me the mechanics of GOTV. (Not sure if you'd thank him for that but...) Although we sometimes disagreed, I respected him and miss him.

This will be his first birthday following his passing away last year. If you feel so moved, say hi to his tree in Prospect Park or drop his spouse Grace Sweeney a line saying that you are thinking of her. Ypsilanti's political scene is less colorful for his being gone.

PROCLAMATION Council Member Pete Murdock

The City of Ypsilanti is honored to acknowledge and pay tribute to Council Member Pete Murdock, an exceptional individual that served City of Ypsilanti and its citizens with extreme dedication; and

WHEREAS, Pete Murdock was born in Boston Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, Pete Murdock arrived in Ypsilanti in the late 1960s, as fable has it his car broke down in Ypsilanti on course to Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Pete Murdock began serving Ypsilanti's Ward 3 during the 1970s and then as Mayor in 1983; and

WHEREAS, Pete Murdock always researched best practices in other communities and knew the nuts and bolts of local governments; and

WHEREAS, the 1980s was a time when Ypsilanti was losing its industrial base and downtown businesses and at the same time there was an awakening of Ypsilanti's history and architecture; and

WHEREAS, when there was a need for young leadership to make a change, as a Council Member Pete led the way and continued throughout the years; and

WHEREAS, Pete Murdock supported rental inspections, the historic district, zoning enforcement, recycling, and enforcement of building codes at a time when they were not popular positions; and

WHEREAS, Pete Murdock took the unpopular opinion of defending the Historic District Commission's rejection of the National Bank's proposed "cheese grater" facade; and

WHEREAS, with Pete Murdock's support of Ypsilanti's Historical District Commission it survived, and is now an accepted part of Ypsilanti's local government. When asked why he gave his support he responded "sometimes you have to do what's right"; and

WHEREAS, Council Member Murdock is a trail-blazer known for challenging the status-quo and for not being afraid to face hard issues in order to promote Ypsilanti's greater good.

NOW, THEREFORE, The City Council of the City of Ypsilanti, in a debt of gratitude, proclaim our deepest appreciation for all Council Member Murdock has championed on behalf of the City of Ypsilanti.

The City Council of the City of Ypsilanti

TRAIN STATION NEWS

Sadly, we learned that Ypsilanti was not approved for funding for the Train Station. That news came during the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to City Manager McMullan, we did not learn why we were turned down for some time after hearing the news. During the last City Council meetings, we discussed some of those reasons and here they are for your information.

Please know that I am deeply disappointed, like many of you. The City, Council, and our State and County representatives were all energized by and excited for this project. I expect a lively Council discussion on this when we consider our next steps.

City Manager McMullan communicated the following reasons for the grant being rejected:

- Outdated data was used to show projected ridership. The reason that choice was made for the grant is that, although ridership has dropped in more recent years, staff concluded that larger numbers rather than recent data would be more effective.
- AMTRAK was relatively silent on our proposal. According to staff, it was hard to get the letter of support from them, let alone more active support.
- CRISI did not feel that we made a case for having a new station/platform 8 miles from another. Again, this is fed by the low level of participation or active support from AMTRAK.
- Insufficient political support was given at the Federal level. While both our Senators and our Congresswoman sent strong letters of support, more was needed. This was a missed opportunity by Council and our Community, which to me is a lesson learned. That said, based on the other objections from CRISI, this might or might have been enough to help.

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS PURCHASED BY DEVELOPER FROM EMU

When Eastern Michigan University built the College of Business on Michigan Avenue in our downtown district, there was a complex vision behind that decision. EMU had plans to build a "corridor" of college facilities, bridging the City and the University. Those plans never went past the COB.

Ultimately, it was not effective economically, systemically, or culturally for EMU to have the COB disconnected from the main campus and they have been working on selling it for some time.

A sale has been made to a developer, who has plans for retail and office space for that space. There is an acute need for both of these in our city. Our Development staff has been working with the developer on this for some time now and we all are excited by this move.



Eastern Michigan University will need about a year to transition the College of Business to the main campus. See this [WEMU article](#) about this for details.



IN COMMUNITY,

Mayor Beth Bashert

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Phone: 734-368-3573

READING THIS OFFLINE? Here's a list of links I mentioned in the articles above.

Communication is nonverbal

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B0080430767018131>

First Fridays Livestream

<https://www.facebook.com/events/872328786573337/>

Ypsi Area Online Market

<https://growinghope.net/ypsi-area-online-market/>

Ministry of Silly Walks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCLp7zodUil>

Ypsi Silly Walks

<https://www.facebook.com/ypsisillywalks/videos/793255434499362/>

EMU COB

<https://www.wemu.org/post/emu-board-authorizes-sale-current-college-business-home>