



# THE CITY OF YPSILANTI NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020

Dear Fellow Residents and City Leaders of Ypsilanti,

This [month] our Nation lost two titans who helped shape the civil and human rights that we all enjoy today: Congressman John Lewis and Reverend C.T. Vivian. Both of these men worked alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and sacrificed enormously for our Country. Although I have only had the chance to meet one of these men, the great Congressman John Lewis, I am inspired by the legacy that both of them leave behind for generations to come.



In remembering the career and life of Congressman John Lewis, it is fitting in this election year to highlight the importance of voting. I encourage all residents to get registered, ensure that their family and friends are registered, and to exercise your right to vote either by [voting by absentee ballot, which you can request an application for now, or in-person in both the August 4 and November 3 elections](#). John Lewis is credited with saying, “the vote is the most powerful, non-violent tool we have in a democratic society.” Fighting and defending the right to vote was a hallmark of Congressman Lewis’s heroic life as a civil rights activist and during his more than 30 years in the United States House of Representatives.

Congressman John Lewis and Reverend C.T. Vivian also stood for something else: the right to be heard and to be represented. At the foundation of their fight for equal rights was the idea that we all had a voice and should be heard. One powerful way that this can be done is by ensuring that we are all counted in this upcoming census. Help make sure that Ypsilanti is adequately represented, take 10 minutes or so to ensure that you, your family and friends [complete the census](#). The census helps determine how we are represented in Congress and helps determine how resources are provided to communities across America.

As I said, I am inspired by the life of these two men and have hope that together we can find the same courage and commitment that those who have come before us had, to make our unique city a more perfect and grand place. Together we can begin to heal our city as we continue to address the continuity of leadership and government, face a public health pandemic, and address racial bias in our communities. I hope that you will stand with me in these struggles.

As your Mayor, I am committed to unity on our City Council, leaning into the key issues facing our city, and working with our city staff to further our city’s strategic goals. I am also committed to engaging all of our residents in embracing this movement for racial justice in our society through engagement with all members of our community, and I will continue to support and encourage efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19, especially in our most impacted areas, and help us recover from its devastating impact.

I am honored to serve as your Mayor and I look forward to working with all of you during these difficult times, but importantly, moments of opportunity. This is an opportunity for us to do better and to be better. We are a diverse city full of thinkers and doers, let us embrace our differences to forge a path of unity for us now and for those that will follow behind us.

Better to best,  
Lois Allen-Richardson  
Mayor

Lois Allen-Richardson  
Mayor  
City of Ypsilanti  
Phone: 734-972-3673



NEWS FROM THE DESK OF CITY MANAGER, FRANCES MCMULLAN



From: Catherine McClary  
Subject: Water Shutoffs Prohibited through December 31, 2020 - Governor's Order

Gov. Whitmer prevents Michigan water service shut offs through end of the year due to coronavirus pandemic

Updated Jul 08, 2020; Posted Jul 08, 2020

By Cheyna Roth | croth@mlive.com

LANSING -- Michigan residents will be safe from water shutoffs through December 31, 2020.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive order on Wednesday that [extended a prior order](#) requiring that water services be reconnected to residences that had their service shut off. The order was issued as a safety measure due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Whitmer said in a statement that the extension is "the right thing to do."

"As Michigan families grapple with the impacts of COVID-19 on public health and our economy, our administration is taking proactive steps to ensure that no one has to worry about having access to clean drinking water or losing power during this unprecedented crisis," she said.

Under the executive order, public water suppliers must restore services to residences that were disconnected due to non-payment or damaged infrastructure unless doing so would create a risk to the public health, for example, cross-contamination. However, the order does not remove the obligation to pay past-due water bills and does not prevent water suppliers from charging their customers.

"Extending the water reconnection order at least through the end of the year is absolutely necessary to ensure that Michigan residents have access to safe, clean, affordable water for drinking and hygiene," said Mary Brady-Enerson, Michigan Director for Clean Water Action in a statement. "Michigan's water affordability problems did not begin with this pandemic, and they won't end without further action to prohibit the practice of shutting off water for nonpayment."

To that end, Whitmer is also calling for Congress to pass the Heroes Act. It would put \$1.5 billion toward financial assistance for low income and at-risk customers to help with their water payments.

Detroit has been hit especially hard with water shutoffs. After the reconnection order was initially issued in March, the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) created the Restart Grant Program to help cities comply with the order. Under the program, 2,477 Michigan residents had their water turned back on, including more than 1,200 families in Detroit, Whitmer's administration said.

"Black and Brown families in Southeast Michigan have struggled the most because of this virus," said Sen. Adam Hollier (D-Detroit).

"It is my hope this order will allow many more families to have their water restored for sanitation purposes. As we know, hand washing is one of the best things we can do to protect ourselves from COVID-19 and other illnesses."

A new state law, [signed by the governor on July 1](#), sets aside \$25 million to reimburse water utility providers that forgive past due utility bills and fees during the coronavirus state of emergency.

Catherine McClary  
Washtenaw County Treasurer  
Serving the public remotely  
mcclaryc@washtenaw.org

## PRIMARY ELECTION- AUGUST 4, 2020

*From the desk of City Clerk, Andrew Hellenga*

### Absentee voting

The City has sent over 3,000 absentee ballots to voters for the August Primary. If you have not returned your ballot yet, it is strongly recommended it be done in person to ensure your ballot is received by close of polls (8:00 pm) on Election Day. If you would like to request an absentee ballot, you may do so by mail until July 31st at 5pm, or in person until August 3rd at 4pm. However, as stated above it is strongly recommended to do so in person. The Clerk's Office will also be open on Saturday, August 1st from 8am until 4pm to process absentee ballots.

### Polling Locations

While voting absentee is encouraged as the safest way to participate in this election, all polling locations will be open, with proper precautions in place to ensure voter safety. If voters do choose to vote at the polling locations, while not mandated by law, it is **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** that masks be worn, and social distancing adhered to while voting to protect yourself and your neighbors.



## NEW PLAYGROUND AT PARKRIDGE PARK!

*By Jada Tillison-Love | jtillisonlove@cityofypsilanti.com*

On Wednesday, July 22nd, the City of Ypsilanti in partnership with the Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development (OCED) hosted a virtual input session for kids in the community to share their thoughts and ideas for the new playground that will be built at the park's current location. The input session was live streamed on the OCED's Facebook page.

The kids were able to let the City know what colors they would like to see at the new park, their favorite park equipment to play on, and they were able to vote on a few models shown in the PowerPoint. Parents were also able to weigh in on what they would like to see at the park. Fun educational components were among the suggestions.

The excitement for the new park was evident and the anticipation for the final vote is high. There is still time for kids and their parents to provide their ideas and check out the models before the final vote. To share your thoughts, check out the [OCED Facebook page](#) to watch the live input session and submit your ideas in the comment section.

The final vote for the new playground will be an in-person session at the Parkridge Playground from 12 PM - 8 PM. If you and your children live in the Parkridge area, feel free to come out and cast your vote!

### NEW PLAYGROUND AT PARKRIDGE PARK: COMMUNITY VOTING

Wednesday, August 5th in Parkridge Park  
Stop by between **Noon & 8pm** to cast a ballot





## PARKING METER PAYMENT SUSPENDED

The City of Ypsilanti is suspending paid parking throughout the City in response to the national coin shortage. People parking their vehicle will still be required to abide by posted time limits.

“We’ve heard from both visitors and businesses that people just don’t have, and can’t get, coins for meters. This is out of their control or our control. There simply aren’t enough coins in circulation, nationwide, for all the needs,” said Frances McMullan, City Manager of the City of Ypsilanti.

Although payment will no longer be required at meters, the posted time limits will still be strictly enforced.

Additional information about parking in the City may be found at [cityofypsilanti.com/parking](https://www.cityofypsilanti.com/parking).

Reading this offline? Here are some links referenced above.

Election info

<https://www.cityofypsilanti.com/188/Voting-Election-Information>

Census website

<https://2020census.gov/>

Executive order extension

<https://www.mlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/gov-whitmer-signs-executive-order-requiring-water-reconnection-during-coronavirus.html>

Corona virus spending

<https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2020/07/whitmer-signs-off-on-880-million-in-coronavirus-spending-delaying-july-1-budget-deadline.html>



Your story could be published here!  
Send your story to Jada Tillison-Love  
[jtillisonlove@cityofypsilanti.com](mailto:jtillisonlove@cityofypsilanti.com)