



THE CITY OF YPSILANTI NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020

FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY MANAGER

The Governor has indicated that complaints of coronavirus like illness (CLI) in emergency departments have increased for the sixth week in a row for the state and there are now four regions where greater than 1% of all persons at the emergency department present with CLI (Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Traverse City, and Upper Peninsula). Hospitalizations for COVID-19 have doubled over the last three weeks. There are more than 5% COVID hospitalizations in all regions except Traverse City. The state death rate has increased for five consecutive weeks to 2.1 deaths per million people. More than 20 weekly deaths are seen in four regions (Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Upper Peninsula).



As of October 29, 2020 Governor Whitmer has issued an Emergency Order Under [MCL 333.2253 – Gatherings and Face Mask Order](#). The order in summary authorizes the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to impose any restrictions they deem necessary to prevent spread of COVID-19 and promote health. I have attached for your reference The Governor's Order and various flyers from the MDHHS that you may post at home and work to serve as visual reminders of safety requirements and precautions.

The City of Ypsilanti continues to place high priority on the health and safety of its residents and employees and is encouraging the public to please wear face masks, wash hands regularly, exercise social distancing, avoid large gatherings and stay home except to obtain food and for medical emergencies.

The Clerk's office is the only department at city hall open to the public, Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to conduct business via telephone, email, city website, drop box and US mail. All other departments are open by appointment only. All departments at city hall, except the Clerk's Office will be closed on Tuesday, November 3rd for the General Election.

As we approach the Thanksgiving season, in spite of the current pandemic, I urge all to exercise gratitude by thinking of something you are grateful for. Try to see the glass half full instead of half empty. Gratitude allows us to see the best in each other in our lives. Let's practice optimism.... it's contagious. Let's reimagine our lives and create happiness in the small things in life. The practice of gratitude helps our mental health. In the next weeks ahead, write down things that you are grateful for and watch your mood, health and behavior improve.

Lastly, daylight savings time ends on Sunday, November 1, 2020. At 2:00 a.m. residents should turn clocks backward. Sunrise and sunset will be about one hour earlier on November 1st than the day before allowing more light in the mornings.

Staying Connected,
Frances McMullan, City Manager

[MDHHS Epidemic Order 10/29 Fact Sheet](#)
[Social Gathering Guidance 10/29](#)

COVID-19

MDHHS EPIDEMIC ORDER OCT. 29

MDHHS has issued orders under a law first enacted by the Michigan Legislature after the Spanish Flu of 1918 specifically to deal with epidemics. Note that the Supreme Court struck down a different, broader law.

Under MDHHS's epidemic order:

1 **Masks** must be worn over nose and mouth in gatherings of two or more people, including stores, offices, schools and events. Businesses cannot admit people without masks, with few exceptions.

4 **Organized sports** require masks (except for swimming) and have gathering limits.

2 **Capacity** limits apply to indoor and outdoor gatherings, including business, social and recreational settings. **They're stricter inside.**

5 **Employees** who can work from home must do so.

3 **Restaurants and bars** must limit capacity for gatherings, **may only seat six people per table**, may only serve alcohol to parties who are seated, and must keep tables six feet apart.

6 **Contact tracing:** Many businesses, including bars and restaurants, must collect phone numbers from their customers so they can be contacted in case they are exposed to someone who is ill.

All regions are in Phase 4 of reopening. The same rules now apply to all of Michigan.

To read the complete MDHHS Oct. 29, 2020, Epidemic Order, visit [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus). Questions or concerns can be emailed to COVID19@michigan.gov.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE MAYOR

Greetings to all,

It is hard to believe that this unparalleled year is beginning to wind down. We are fast approaching the holiday season. Very soon Halloween will be behind us and we will be looking straight into the face of Thanksgiving.



Before that however we still have Election Day coming up in less than four days. I want to encourage everyone to vote. I have heard it said "we must vote as if our lives depended upon it"; I take it a step further and say "they do." Someone asked me why I vote, my answer is, "I vote because voting is a responsibility and voting is a right; and I vote to say who I want to give authority to over my life." Please exercise your right and take your responsibility and vote. You can vote in person now at the clerk's office or by absentee ballot by dropping your ballot in the mail slot at City Hall or any of the drop boxes made available. There is a box at the entrance to the parking lot behind City Hall, one at Parkridge Center and one on campus in the circle drive at the Student Center. No excuses, make your voice heard.

The 2020 Census is over, by Supreme Court order it ended on October 15th. We as a city did not do as well as we had hoped. Our return rate was 67.1. A great big thank you to everyone who completed their forms or replied online. We appreciate all of the census workers, who worked tirelessly to get everyone counted. The census comes every ten years but in many ways it affects our lives much longer. There is always next time.

Unfortunately, COVID is once again on the rise in Michigan. That means it is not time for any of us to let our guards down. With the Flu season coming upon us at the same time, more than ever we must practice safety precautions. It is time to get our flu shot, wear our masks and practice safe distances. This is not going to last forever, if we do what we need to do to stay safe and well we will get to the other side. Be strong and of good courage.

We have been hosting a series of Town Halls around community policing in the city. A special thanks to those of you that "zoomed" in to watch the movie "WALKING WHILE BLACK...Love Is The Answer", by the author and producer, A.J. Ali. It was a prelude to the beginning of the series of meetings. The focus of the second meeting was to hear from residents, unfortunately, not many residents attended. The third meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday, October 27th, at 7:00pm. At this meeting Chief DeGiusti will share his plan for Community Policing. Please plan on joining. The link can be found on the city website. Hope to see you there.

This has been a very different year for all of us and even more difficult for some. With the threat of COVID still with us it will be a very different holiday season. Where the holidays are usually a ton of love and cheer, hugs and kisses, we will have to find new ways to celebrate and show our affection, in the interest of keeping each other safe. Many of us will be facing the holidays without loved ones that either succumbed to COVID-19 or another ailment. But we can make it through this time. We can draw strength and peace from the fond and happy memories that we have of past times with them. I too, will be included in that number. But, I know we will make it through these times by helping each other. By reaching out to those we know who are the elderly, those who live alone or have lost a loved one or someone near and dear. A quick phone call, a note or card can make all the difference in brightening someone's day. A little love goes a long way. Have a blessed and safe Thanksgiving however you choose to celebrate.

Remember, love is the answer!

ENFORCEMENT OF EXPIRED DRIVER'S LICENSES

There have been numerous questions regarding enforcement of expired driver's licenses and/or vehicle registration. The Ypsilanti Police Department would like to provide residents with clarity and direction.

The executive order issued by Governor Whitmer to temporarily extend the expiration of state identification cards, driver's licenses and operator endorsements, as well as suspending penalties for vehicle registration violations has now expired. We understand that the current process to renew these items may take several weeks and that many residents have an appointment that is after their date of expiration. Due to these realities the law enforcement leaders of Washtenaw County are extending the enforcement grace period for individuals who may be stopped by a law enforcement officer from a Washtenaw County Agency through the month of October.

What this means for you:

If you are stopped by an officer from a Washtenaw County law enforcement agency within Washtenaw County and your license or registration is expired, officers will not issue a citation. Effective November 1st officers will have the latitude to issue a citation to anyone that is expired and does not have proof that you are in the process to renew. If you have an appointment to renew and have proof of that appointment, officers can accept that as reason for your operating while expired. It is important to point out that this grace period does not prevent officers from issuing a citation should the circumstances deem it necessary. We encourage all residents to be proactive and apply for renewal prior to expiration. Do not wait until you are expired to begin the process.

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Congratulations to Captain Scott Maddison for receiving the Firefighter of the Year Award!

Captain Scott Maddison has been awarded the 2020 Firefighter of the Year (FFOY) Award by Washtenaw 100 which is given to a firefighter who exhibits bravery, dedication, and service.

Fire Chief Ken Hobbs shares a congratulatory message and many kind words about Captain Maddison and his time with the Ypsilanti Fire Department:

"I nominated Captain Maddison not for a single incident, but for his exemplary career. Scott was hired by the City of Ypsilanti in May of 1996 as a firefighter (FF).

In May of 2021 Captain Maddison will retire with 25 years of outstanding service to the City of Ypsilanti and the surrounding communities. Scott has ALWAYS exceeded expectations and excelled at every level. As a FF, he was always improving his knowledge, skills and abilities in order to attain the next level of leadership. Scott was promoted in 2008 to Lieutenant (Lt.).

As Lt., Scott assisted with shift planning, training, and establishing goals and objectives. He also took on the responsibility of apparatus maintenance, a role in which he continues to fulfill to this day. As Lt., he set out to improve himself to the next level.

In 2011, Scott graduated from EMU's fire staff and command program. In 2013, he was promoted to Captain (Capt.). His responsibilities as Capt. include the planning and supervision of his shift. This also allowed him to take the role, that I feel that sets him apart from others, the role of Incident Commander.

Capt. Maddison is known throughout Washtenaw County for his exceptional leadership when managing Fire Suppression Operation and Emergency situations. His exceptional attention to detail makes him an outstanding incident commander to maintain the life and safety of FFs on the scene, the persons involved in the emergency situation and preservation of property.

Scott has served as director and instructor for the FF training counsel, deputy director of the Washtenaw County Hazmat Team, Fire Academy Course manager for WAMAA, rapid intervention and safety and survivor instructor and has received numerous awards including 6 life safety awards.

Scott has also made time for his passion for flying by becoming a licensed pilot instructor. Scott and his wife have spent his career leading by example. He has never lost a willingness to share his knowledge and mentor others. He is the type of leader FFs enjoy working for and learning from because they are confident in knowing that he will make them better FFs."

RENOVATIONS AT PARKRIDGE

This fall Parkridge Community Center has undergone a number of exciting new improvements aimed at gearing up for the return of indoor activities. Parkridge has not held indoor activities since the pandemic began, instead relying on outdoor and virtual programming to stay connected with youth in the neighborhood. As we look ahead to colder and shorter days, preparing Parkridge to safely resume some indoor activities has become a major priority.

The City of Ypsilanti, in partnership with Washtenaw Community College who staffs the Parkridge Community Center, has been developing a plan to open better than ever once it can be done safely. The Center has passed an indoor air ventilation test recently and some improvements have been made to help air circulation. Additionally, Parkridge has undergone a physical indoor transformation with new flooring, paint, and ceiling tiles. These improvements valued around \$30,000 have occurred just over the last 30 days thanks to the kind support of volunteers, local churches, and the United Way. Although it's not certain when Parkridge Community Center may safely open due to the ongoing pandemic, the City is taking steps to ensure it continues to serve a vital role in the neighborhood and looking forward to the space looking better than ever.

-Christopher Jacobs, Community Development Manager

RUTHERFORD POOL

Rutherford pool, located in the city of Ypsilanti, is a well-utilized, well-loved facility serving a diverse range of community members from across the city, township, and county. It was originally built in 1971 with a projected life span of twenty-five years. With close attention to annual repairs and the addition of a liner, the life span of the pool was stretched to nearly forty years. Unfortunately, Rutherford pool was closed at the end of the 2011 season due to numerous problems, including excessive water leakage, major pipe corrosion, deck trip hazards, liner tears, leaking drains, and damage to the electric pump from flooding. At that time, the City was in fiscal hardship and had no capacity to staff and fund the rebuilding of the pool. A group of committed residents realized the importance of the pool to the community, especially to under-served children and youth who had few formal recreational opportunities in the City, and moved quickly to establish a non-profit group, "Recreational of Rutherford Pool" (FORP), to help. Over a focused and determined two-year period, FORP completed a \$1,050,000 fundraising campaign, re-opening Rutherford Pool in May 2014.

However, that project only addressed rebuilding the pool itself and was not enough to renovate our bathhouse. In 2018, a two-year community fundraising campaign was initiated by the FORP Board, the group which through a formal partnership with the City of Ypsilanti, is responsible for the operation, programming, maintenance, and staffing of the pool. The purpose of the campaign was to secure funding to repair and update the many issues that we had with our aging bathhouse, which had been in use for almost 50 years, with few capital improvements over the decades.

After formidable grassroots fundraising of over \$700,000, we were finally able to move forward on much needed renovations to the locker rooms and bathhouse, with plans for improved lighting, seating and locker space, a new roof, and the addition of gender neutral and family changing rooms. New plans were made to ensure the renovated building would be ADA compliant and fully accessible. The architectural design was drafted by Cornerstone Design Inc. of Ann Arbor, and Ypsilanti-based Phoenix Construction was selected in a competitive bid to perform and oversee construction.

Construction started in the fall of 2019 and we expected to unveil a beautiful and modernized bathhouse for the 2020 swim season. We did not expect to see our beloved pool sidelined for the entire summer due to Covid 19. The current pandemic pushed our remodeling timeline back, and then we also made the difficult decision to preserve the safety of our community by remaining closed for the 2020 season.

Construction is now nearing completion – the exterior has been repainted, the roof and electrical work is completed, and the interior has a new floor, new fixtures and a brand-new layout. We have also added native plants to the landscaping around the building. Still to come, we are putting in new concrete around the entrance and hoping to install solar panels on the roof.

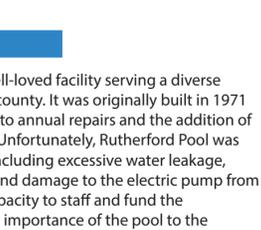
Where do we stand looking toward 2021? We miss swimming and our patrons! We miss the community that has stood by us through all our challenges and previous endeavors. We are still hoping to fundraise an additional \$30,000 for items that will pull together the final efforts of our bathhouse renovation. The locker rooms need new shelves and lockers, new benches, and baby changing stations. Outside we'd like new benches and lounge chairs for our patrons. We also hope to purchase bathing suit wringers to save our bags and items.

CITY EMPLOYEES TAKE DIVERSITY TRAINING

As the awareness of racism rises across the country, city employees enroll in diversity training to ensure all employees are provided a workplace environment that is free of discrimination, and allows all individuals to feel safe, valued and respected. This training will aid in enhancing involvement with the City and its residents.

PENN DAM REMOVAL & RIVER RESTORATION — UPDATE

In September, after pandemic-related delays, the Huron River Watershed Council and the City of Ypsilanti were awarded a generous grant of approximately \$330,000 from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Fisheries Habitat Grant Program to advance the remedial design of Peninsular Paper Dam (Pen Dam). Removal of the dam is a fisheries restoration priority of the MDNR.



The awarded funds will be applied to assess the impounded pond above the dam, examine nearby infrastructure, plan the restoration of the impounded pond, and design the process for removal. No deconstruction will be done during this phase of the project.

In the coming months, community members will be able to share their expertise, suggestions, and vision for the restoration and revitalization of the area, especially Peninsular Park, which is right next to the dam. The project team will provide updates at significant milestones throughout the process.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION VACANCY

Seeking a New Member of the Historic District Commission

The Ypsilanti Historic District Commission (HDC) has had a vacancy since February this year. Per City Ordinance, this vacancy must be filled by a resident of the Ypsilanti Historic District to ensure that there is neighborhood representation on the HDC.

The HDC meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7pm. The HDC is responsible for safeguarding the community's built historic resources that are designated within the City's historic districts. The HDC reviews exterior changes to properties in the districts and decides whether the change is appropriate or compatible with the historic resource. The HDC also reviews local nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, supports education on local history, and promotes training opportunities to learn about the maintenance of historic structures.

For more information on the HDC, please visit www.cityofypsilanti.com/hdc. Click the "Vacant" link to apply to serve. To find our more on the Ypsilanti Historic District, and to see if you reside in a historic district, visit www.cityofypsilanti.com/hd. Please contact Scott Slagor, Preservation Planner, with any questions at sslagor@cityofypsilanti.com or 734-483-9646.

Reading this offline? Here are some links referenced above.

Gatherings and Face Mask Order:
https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98455-543708--,00.html

MDHHS Epidemic Order 10/29 Fact Sheet:
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/10-29_Epidemic_Order_Fact_Sheet_706515_7.pdf

Social Gathering Guidance 10/29:
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Social_Gathering_Guidance_Final_706519_7.pdf

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