



Pittsfield Charter Township

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Office of the Supervisor

Marking Independence Day for our Nation - and Community - of Immigrants

As requested by many of you, I am continuing my community updates, albeit on a monthly basis.

Approximately 1 out of every 4 Pittsfield Township residents are foreign-born, reflecting the fact that America is a nation of immigrants. Nearly 15 years ago, I became the first immigrant to hold public office in Washtenaw County. I share this because my experiences highlight the fact that while there are some that will and do discriminate to perpetuate hate, the ability of our community - as a larger whole - to look past race, age, physical abilities, immigration status, and economic barriers is what makes Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, and our country so unique and remarkable.

However, as we celebrate these uniquely American traits and values on July 4th, we must remember that they weren't achieved without struggle and require continuous vigilance. A decade ago, when I took office as Supervisor (the first person of color to do so), Pittsfield Township had a reputation of racial profiling. Trustee Edwards-Brown spoke very eloquently about the issue at our June 10th Board meeting. It has taken our administration many years of implementing a policy of zero tolerance for hate to hard-code respect and inclusivity into all our work products and processes. That is one of the reasons we are now ranked as the 8th most diverse suburb to live in the State of Michigan. The current reputation of our public safety personnel as being inclusive of and respectful to all, in addition to their outstanding responsiveness to public safety incidents, is the reason Pittsfield was also recently ranked as one of the safest places to live in the State of Michigan.

This work and approach has ensured that we are fully compliant with local and national standards in limiting the use of physical force - including #8cantwait: <http://www.pittsfield-mi.gov>.

While we've conducted a plethora of public engagement processes (an average of 2/month, since 2009), they've been largely focused on land use and sustainability issues. We've also conducted a bi-annual customer satisfaction survey, since 2010, in partnership with the University of Michigan that has consistently rated Pittsfield residents' as being satisfied with their public safety services. In addition, we conducted our first racial equity forum in February and intend to continue that discussion in order to promote racial justice, both in Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County.

As an immediate next step, we will be undertaking an in-depth public engagement process to obtain your input on how your local leadership can work to improve both social justice and public safety services. To begin with, please look out for a request from us to take a survey. If there are specific issues you'd like us to cover as part of the survey, please let us know: supervisor@pittsfield-mi.gov.

Your input – and partnership – is what, in the final analysis, allows us to hold Pittsfield up as an example of not just our vibrant diversity but also a shining example of what's most attractive to everyone around the world about the American Dream. Even as our community has reasons to celebrate this Independence Day, clouded as they are by the Pandemic and ongoing fight for social justice, we remain committed to doing more and better so we never get complacent and continually push for Respect, Inclusivity, Sustainability, and Equity (#RISE) in Pittsfield Township.

Mandy Grewal, Ph.D.
