



Pittsfield Charter Township

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Office of the Supervisor

We the People

Pollster Frank Luntz has noted that, “Our greatest strength historically — that “We the People” share a common goal, idea, and even a national dream — is now a glaring weakness, as we cheerfully slice the ties that once bound us together.”

This highlights the fact that, today, regardless of partisan association, the majority of Americans feel a sense of alienation rather than part of a larger whole. In my opinion, the decline of traditional media (or the ‘fourth estate’) and rise of social media has contributed significantly to creating this divide. The latter thrives by validating and reinforcing our moral, religious, and political viewpoints, while, simultaneously, denigrating and shaming those whose viewpoints differ from ours. Social media perpetuates these subtle and, increasingly, explicit divides to further their own corporate success. After more than a decade of this socio-cultural framework, during a year riddled with health and safety disasters, we have reached a point where so many feel that the divide between “us” (those who think/look/pray/vote like us) and “them” (the rest of the world) is too great to bridge!

To reverse this trend and divisions, we must look around our own local communities to understand its strengths and weaknesses and commit ourselves to sustaining the former and rectifying the latter in whatever capacity we can, one person at a time. For instance, in Pittsfield Township, over the past decade, we have cultivated a culture of inclusivity and respect that makes us the community of choice as local and national leaders come together to discuss solutions to fight systemic racial injustices (October 17th, 2:00-6:00 pm at Lillie Park). However, we continue to struggle with such issues as providing fully inclusive access to housing and transportation along with being more proactive in addressing the climate emergency.

I believe we can, in fact, bridge the divide by: (a) committing ourselves - individually, one person at a time - to being kind and respectful in all our words and actions; and (b) contributing to sustaining the strengths and addressing the weaknesses within our local community. Let’s take back our incredible individual power and reinstate the ideal of “We the People.”

To that end, please look out for the community survey, being conducted in October, which seeks your input on how we can enhance public safety (police and fire) services in Pittsfield Township, particularly as they relate to promoting racial justice and equity. In addition, I am in the process of re-thinking Township Boards/Committees/Commissions, many of which were established a decade or more ago. The new framework will focus on the topics outlined in the Sustainability Blueprint (Agriculture & Local Food Access; Transportation; Facilities & Infrastructure; and Environment & Waste Management) and ask for volunteers like you to help lead us in a direction that reduces our community’s carbon footprint and works toward combating climate change. Look for more details in the upcoming months and we hope you will sign up to assist via the Volunteer Interest Form.

Thank you for your continued partnership with Pittsfield Township as we work together to continually improve the quality of life for all in our community. Please remember to be kind and patient with yourselves and each other.

Mandy Grewal, Ph.D.
