



Gregory P. Kurtz

Mayor

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MAYOR KURTZ'S WEEKLY UPDATE FOR JUNE 4, 2021

Update: Temporary Homeless Shelter

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries (LMM) recently informed the City that it would close the temporary homeless shelter inside the Ramada hotel on Rockside Road later this month. LMM officials tell us they will transfer the residents to a new, yet-to-be-announced location.

In an open letter to me, the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH) accused the City and me of harassment, hyper-surveillance, racism, and criminalizing homelessness. None of this is true. The more significant issue for me is that NEOCH attacked the entire community with the broad brush of national injustices and “wrongs of history.” It is outrageous.

The City of Independence did not evict the homeless men at the Ramada. The Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries organization made this decision independent of the City and only they can explain the reasons behind the action.

The men, women, and families who are part of the nation’s unsheltered population often need more than a home. They need job training, mental health or addiction counseling, specialized care for disabilities, and other medical and social services.

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries understand this complex social problem. As a non-profit organization whose mission is to serve homeless, at-risk, and vulnerable people, they have years of experience providing the appropriate services and support to help individuals overcome trauma, misfortune, and illness.

There has been a steady stream of misinformation about the City’s interactions with LMM officials and shelter residents, including someone putting out on social media that *Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries purchased the Ramada hotel*. **A Virginia businessman owns the Ramada hotel** and other hotels in the Cleveland area. LMM has a contract to rent approximately 150 rooms from the owner.

Dean Roff created the non-profit Homeless Hookup CLE. He is a one-person operation that relies on volunteers and donations via his Facebook page to collect and personally distribute items to the homeless in Cleveland.

Late last week, he invited people to participate in a “peaceful protest” at Independence City Hall on Saturday, June 5, via Facebook. The announcement was made in advance of LMM’s decision to close the shelter at the Ramada.

Misinformation creates confusion, and in some cases, sparks anger and anxiety that does not serve anyone. My Weekly Updates are intended to keep residents informed. If you are reading this, you have already subscribed. If you have friends and neighbors who do not receive my Friday emails, please invite them to subscribe by sending their name and email address to CityHall@IndependenceOhio.org.

Meet the Two Newest Members of the Police Department

It was my honor to swear in two new members of the Independence Police Department on Thursday, June 3.



Leanne Harvan is a 2013 graduate of Independence High School. Her late father Tom served with the Garfield Heights Police Department, and her uncle Jon Golden is the Macedonia Chief of Police. Leanne returns home to Independence after serving with the Peninsula Police Department.

Tyler Mercado always knew he wanted a career in public safety. He graduated from St. Edward’s High School and Cleveland State University and interned two summers with the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Tyler’s great grandfather was the Chief of Police for the City of Uhrichsville in Tuscarawas County.

Independence Fire Welcomes Daniel Snyder



Daniel Snyder of New Franklin was sworn in on Thursday, June 3, as the newest firefighter/paramedic for the Independence Fire Department. Snyder's wife Brea and 15-month-old daughter Paisley proudly stood by.

Daniel had previously worked as a firefighter/paramedic for the Coventry and Canton Fire Departments. He and his family live in New Franklin.

Concert Series Begins!



The 2021 Summer Concert Series will kick off next **Thursday, June 10, on Public Square**. This year the concerts will be extended an extra half hour from 7 – 9 PM. The band **Celebration** will be performing rock, Motown, and music of the 60s, 60s, 70s, and 80s on the Bandstand. For your dining pleasure, the Original Greek Gyro “Gyro Guys” food truck will on site. **Oopah!**

There will be a **bonus concert on Wednesday, June 16**, with the Community Band -- a mix of high school students and adults of all ages from Independence and local communities -- on the Bandstand. Retired I.H.S. music

teacher Ken Gunlicks directs the band. The Independence Music Boosters will provide refreshments.

You can find the complete concert schedule inside the Community Spotlight and the Independence Post.

We're Hiring!



The City is currently recruiting for a variety of seasonal positions. There are many rewarding opportunities for people to learn and earn!

The ideal candidates must be reliable, energetic, self-motivated, and have strong customer service skills. A positive attitude, professionalism, and the ability to work as part of a dynamic team are essential. Candidates are required to pass

a drug screen test and background check.

Thank You, Mount Alverna Village

[Mount Alverna Village](#) in Parma donated dessert for Friday's 55+ Lunch. They also had three staff members on-site to help pass out more than 300 meals outside the Civic Center.



Last year Mount Alverna Village opened the Ancora Memory Care Community for seniors with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The new facility is adjacent to their assisted living, skilled nursing, senior rehabilitation, and respite care facilities.

L-R: Michelle Young, Community Relations Liaison, Ancora; Mary Lou Fleck, Business Development Liaison; Beth Baszuk, Director, Sales & Marketing



Building Rentals Resume in July

The City will begin building rentals including [Community Center rooms](#), Town Hall, Liberty Station, and the Elmwood Recreation Center starting July 10. Residents can begin making reservations on June 10. For more information, please call the [Recreation Department](#) at 216-524-3262 or the Community Services Department at 216-524-7373.

Get Fully Vaccinated in June

COVID-19 vaccination appointments are available at the Cleveland Clinic Marymount Hospital for anyone age 12 and older. Next **Thursday, June 10**, they will be administering the Johnson & Johnson *single-dose* vaccine to anyone age 18 and older. On June 17 and 24, they will be administering the Pfizer vaccine. The clinic is open Thursdays between 2 and 7 PM.

You can pre-register by calling 216.448.4117 between 9 AM and 4 PM every Tuesday through Friday. Walk-ins are welcome. More info at <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/ohio>



June City Council Meeting

Out of an abundance of caution, the City Council meeting on June 8, 2021 will be virtual. We hope to resume in-person meetings in the near future.



Mayor Kurtz's **SwiftReach** message for June 4, 2021 can be [downloaded here](#).

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