



# CITY MANAGER MONTHLY UPDATE

Happy July, and Happy 250<sup>th</sup>!

Throughout the busy schedule of the summer, try to take a moment to acknowledge the significance of our 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. We all have our different issues with our country, but we should never forget that no place is perfect and the beauty of a democracy is that it allows us to amend and modify to become a “more perfect union” going forward. And remember that if you are going to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup>, please celebrate safely and responsibly.

***City of Otsego 200-*** As you have obviously noticed; our country is currently celebrating our 250<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. I am hoping you are able to sit back and relax with friends and family to take a moment to appreciate the incredible accomplishment that is and the great country that we live in. Making it a little more local; we will be holding a similar celebration here in the City of Otsego in the near future. If you look at our logo you will notice that we were established in 1831. Meaning that in 2031 we will be 200 years old! And we will be able to have all sorts of festivities to celebrate our own milestone birthday. I have discussed this topic with a few other community members and it doesn't take long to think about all the different ways that this could be celebrated and a lot of fun. 200 years since the 1<sup>st</sup> saw mill and dam were built. A lot has obviously changed, and yet some of Otsego's greatest assets then still exist today. We are still 5 years away but time goes by fast. And a successful celebration will take a lot of time and energy to go as planned. With that in mind we have begun some brief conversations about setting up a committee to properly plan out the celebration. One thing I have tried to figure out is “what day do we celebrate?” There is no declared date of when the saw mill was officially put in place in 1831. So, I looked at the calendar and simply counted off the 200<sup>th</sup> day in 2031 and it turns out to even fall on a Saturday; July 19<sup>th</sup>. What a great day to celebrate Otsego! If you have interest in participating in any of those festivities; keep an eye out for some of those meetings in the coming year or so. There will be a lot of marketing and advertising when those committees are formed. We still have some time, but we all know time goes by pretty fast.

***Fireworks (Private)-*** A lot of people frequently ask about fireworks. Many ask if they can set them off at their own residence. And the short answer to that request is “yes” you can. The longer more detailed answer is; yes, you can during the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day. However, there are specific time and date requirements that you should review before you decide to set anything off. Feel free to check our website for the actual ordinance language. The City of Otsego and all Michigan municipalities must adhere to a state law that was passed about 10 years ago. Unfortunately, we and other municipalities have very little wiggle room when it comes to fireworks, if you do not like the ordinance.

***“THE GREATEST SMALL TOWN IN MICHIGAN!”***

**Fireworks (Displays)-** The City of Otsego has looked into holding a firework show in years past. In 2020 when COVID hit everyone so hard. We found many firework displays were canceled and we had the opportunity to get a discount on fireworks. Unfortunately, the discount alone was not enough for the City to feel compelled to put on a show. Many variables need to be considered such as: tree canopy, wind direction, launch location, additional insurance and community buy-in. It is possible; but if the residents are not requesting it and driving the need for a firework show on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July; no change will happen. A few years back the VFW was hosting a large fundraiser that included launching fireworks and we took all of the precautions needed and signed all of the necessary permits. We had some additional firefighters on to make sure no incidents occurred. The event came and gone and I have not heard anyone asking for fireworks since.

**Winter Parking Ban-** In the coming months we will be reviewing and possibly amending our winter parking ban ordinance. Currently; you are prohibited to park on the street for the months of November through April. After some conversations with a few residents we are considering the removal of the month of April from the list. The reason this is being considered is the fact that when snow does fall in April it is rarely heavy and wet and needing to be plowed. If plowing is not going to be likely, then there is no need to ban residents from parking on streets. If you have an opinion on altering the ordinance; keep an eye out for an upcoming public hearing. Whenever an ordinance is passed or amended a public hearing is required which must follow all of the posting legal requirements.

**August Election-** The entire State of Michigan will be holding an election on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Considering it is a primary election; you will have to declare a party specific ballot. You will also find a local ballot measure as well. The Otsego District Library will be also requesting a millage renewal. They came to a recent meeting to discuss the measure. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to them directly. If you have signed up to receive an absentee ballot, that should be coming any day by the time you read this. If you prefer to vote in person; remember that we do 9 days of early voting for federal and state elections. In person early voting will begin on July 25<sup>th</sup> at City Hall.

**Pavilion Rental-** If you have visited our City parks you have probably identified the multiple pavilions that we have built for public use. We field a lot of questions about renting them out for birthday parties, family reunions and baby showers. That is possible, but as to how you do that depends on which one you are interested in. The pavilions found at Northside Park, Brookside Park and Memorial Park are 1<sup>st</sup> come 1<sup>st</sup> serve. The newest pavilion; TOP Pavilion at Riverfront Park requires a reservation. The reservation comes with a small fee and deposit. It is much cheaper for residents than non-residents. If you are interested stop by City Hall and pick up an application with all of the details.

Aaron Mitchell  
City Manager

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