



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
www.portagemi.gov
(269) 329-4400

Ramona Park Beach House Gets a Face-lift

The team at the Department of Public Services recently completed significant improvements to Ramona Park, one of the crown jewels of the City of Portage Park System. With a focus on function and aesthetic improvements to the Ramona Park Beach House, a 1,000-square-foot addition to the building was constructed. The addition, designed to add balance to the existing building, successfully blends into the original structure so that the casual observer would simply assume that the entire facility was built simultaneously. The addition accommodates the canoe, kayak and paddleboard rental program, new to Ramona Park this year.

The entire building received a new metal roof, forest green in color – the new standard for roofs throughout the Portage Park System. New concrete decking was installed around the entire building, including a new concrete drive so that service vehicles can access the Beach House without damaging the



lawn. Two new bathrooms and changing rooms were also constructed with the installation of new tiling and creation of an outdoor shower. The renovations were completed with energy conservation in mind, including the removal of an old wall-mounted air conditioner, upgraded LED lighting with motion detectors and new ceiling fans.

On the beach itself, a handicap ramp to allow wheelchair bound visitors to enter the water safely was completed. New fencing was installed to replace the existing damaged stockade fence.

What is unique about the approach taken with this project is that the use of city employees allowed the expansion of the project to install a metal roof (instead of asphalt shingles) over the entire structure thereby doubling the life of the roof with no increase in the cost to the taxpayers. It is estimated that if the project had been completed utilizing outside contractors, the cost to the taxpayers would have been \$220,000 dollars. By using city labor, the total project cost came in at \$140,000, a savings of \$80,000. Fundamentally, the goal to create both an attractive, functional space and value for the taxpayers has been met. Please come out to Ramona Park this summer and enjoy this wonderful amenity.

Construction Ahead – Slow Down!

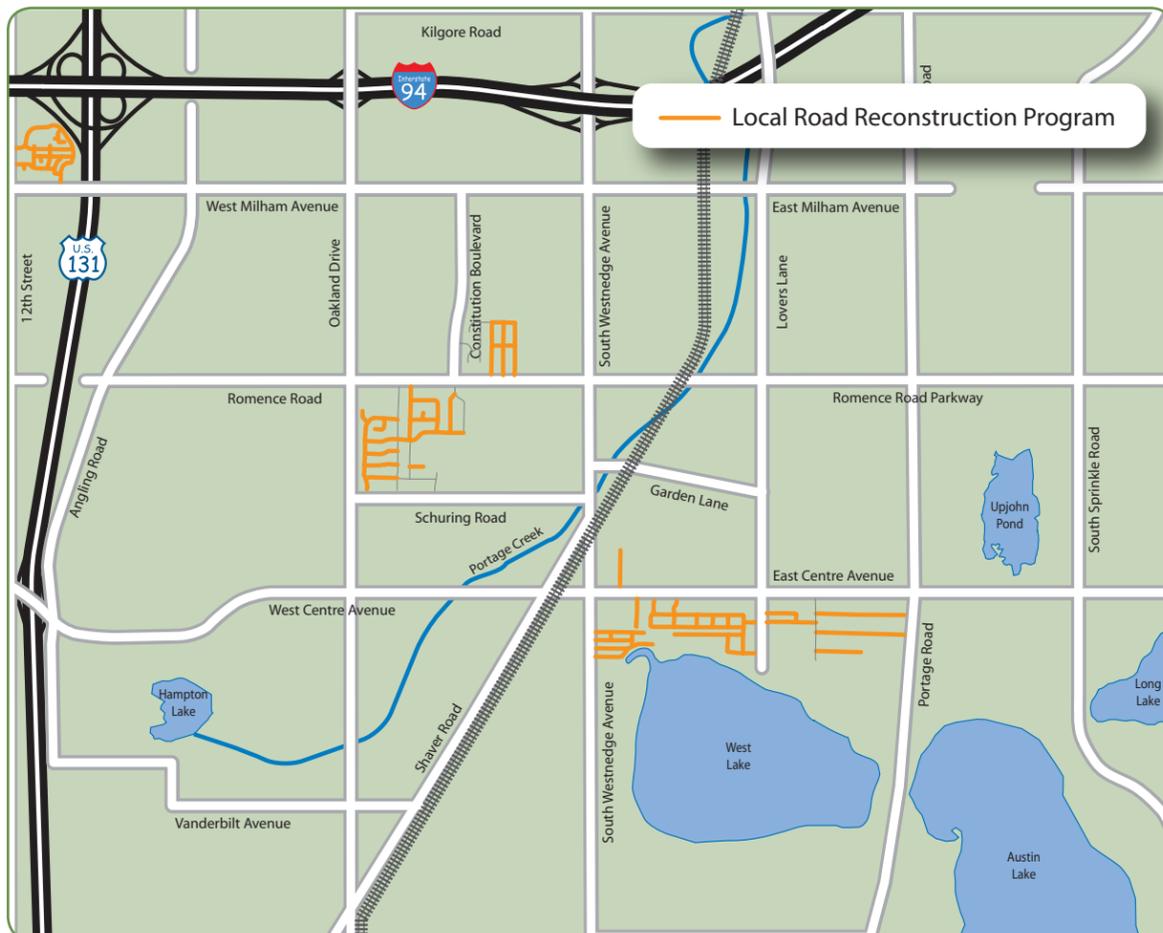
The summer construction season is in progress and several road projects are well underway throughout Portage. When entering a construction zone, drive slowly and be alert to heavy equipment and workers. If detours are set up, please use them and avoid construction areas when possible.

Major Street Reconstruction Projects

	Construction Cost	Estimated Completion Date
South Shore Drive Sanitary Sewer and Water Main Replacement	\$525,000	July 22
East Osterhout Avenue Reconstruction	\$650,000	August 19
South Westnedge Avenue Resurfacing	\$90,000	July 1
West Centre Avenue Resurfacing	\$170,000	July 1
Constitution Boulevard Resurfacing	\$530,000	August 20

Local Streets Program Receives Expanded Scope

In accordance with recently adopted “complete streets” guidelines, local street reconstruction now includes connectivity of missing sidewalk pieces and extensions in Portage Public Schools walk zone areas. Sidewalks provide a safer route for school children, pedestrians and disabled citizens. A map of the Local Street Reconstruction Program is shown below. These projects are expected to be complete by early fall 2016.



What is Crack Sealing?

Staff in the Department of Public Services repair and maintain Portage roads all year long. However, every asphalt surface develops cracks over time that allow stormwater to penetrate and weaken the road base. If left untreated, these cracks can lead to serious road deterioration causing expensive maintenance and reconstruction.

One of the most cost-effective and practical methods to prolong the life of a pavement surface is to seal the cracks to prevent continued surface and base damage. Crack sealing is a very fast moving operation with the ability to seal many miles of roadway in just one day. The process adds very little disruption to traffic flow and the materials set quickly so traffic can return to using the freshly sealed pavement in just ten minutes.

Crack Sealing Process:

1. Roadway cracks are cleaned / dried with high-pressure air.
2. A hot-pour crack sealant is applied.
3. Water is placed over the sealant to reduce stickiness.



As always, the City of Portage reminds motorists to be attentive where road work is being performed and to exercise caution when approaching and traveling through work zones. Work zones may be marked with orange cones or barrels, traffic control devices and/or moving vehicles with flashing lights. City employees are required to wear high visibility clothing including a bright yellow, green or orange vest. Please keep your eyes on the road, obey special signs or instructions from workers and refrain from using cell phones. Thanks to your support, the city will have a safer environment for employees providing critical repairs and improvements to city streets. For more information please contact the Department of Public Services at (269) 329-4444.

Home Improvement Funds Available

As summer has arrived, now is a good time to consider exterior home improvement projects. If you own and occupy a home located in the City of Portage, the following home improvement programs are available to income-eligible property owners:

Housing Rehabilitation Loan

For owner-occupied homes, up to \$20,000 no-interest and low-interest deferred loans* for a variety of home repairs, including: roofing repair, replacement windows, doors, siding, and accessibility improvements. In addition to exterior improvements, funds are available to assist with furnace repair or replacement, sewer and water connections, plumbing upgrades, electrical upgrades and other needed home repairs.

Emergency Repair Grant

For owner-occupied homes, up to \$1,000 to complete household repairs that pose an immediate threat to the health, safety and welfare of the residents. The City of Portage is prepared to quickly assist homeowners who have an emergency situation.

Eligibility is based on maximum income limits established annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are shown in the table below.

Household Size	Maximum Income Limit to Qualify for a Deferred 0% Interest Loan	Maximum Income Limit to Qualify for a Deferred 3% Interest Loan*
1 Person	\$22,100	\$35,350
2 Person	\$25,250	\$40,400
3 Person	\$28,400	\$45,450
4 Person	\$31,550	\$50,500
5 Person	\$34,100	\$54,550
6 Person	\$36,600	\$58,600
7 Person	\$39,150	\$62,650
8 Person	\$41,650	\$66,700

* No interest Deferred Matching Loans also available for every dollar the homeowner contributes toward rehabilitation costs.

To obtain more information, or to request an application, please call the City of Portage Department of Community Development at 329-4477. Funding is limited, so call today.

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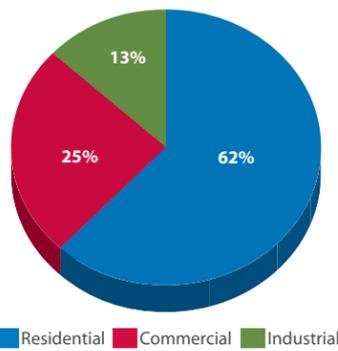
CALL 373-5211 OR VISIT
www.kalamazoo.com/hhw
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HOURS:
 Tues. & Fri. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
 Wednesday Noon - 6 p.m.
 2nd Sat. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 closed in Aug. & Sept. on Sat.)

Economic Strength and Balance: Easy as Pie!

While a solid local economy is no simple recipe, the pie chart to the right illustrates the balance of the Portage economy and its importance to Kalamazoo County. As of March 2016, residential, commercial and industrial property values in the City of Portage are estimated to be \$2.1 billion, representing 23% of the total state equalized value of Kalamazoo County. As a community of neighborhoods offering a wide variety of housing choices, the residential property component continues to represent over one-half of the property value in Portage. The commercial property component reflects that Portage is the regional retail trade center for southwest Michigan, while the industrial sector is evidence of a solid manufacturing and service base.

2016 Property Values



The City of Portage is committed to facilitating economic development activities to maintain a balanced local economy. As shown in the chart, approximately \$320 million of private sector investment in the community has occurred during the five-year period from FY 2011-12 to FY 2015-YTD. This significant level of investment since the end of the 2008 recessionary period created quality neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices, industrial development with important jobs for area residents and commercial growth providing a broad array of consumer goods and services. The five-year average is \$62.8 million, a vast improvement since the recessionary period low of only \$18.1 million in new construction value that occurred in FY 2009-10.

New Construction Value FY 2011-12 to FY 2015-YTD



Brush Drop-Off Day!

Saturday, July 30 - 8 a.m. to 12 noon

The Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program begins July 5. But remember, if you miss your neighborhood collection day, Brush Drop-off Day is scheduled for Saturday, July 30 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon! The City of Portage Compost Facility is located at 10905 Oakland Drive, south of Osterhout Avenue.



The same rules that apply to the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection program apply to the new drop-off service. Visit www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Public Services > Brush Pickup for details. Only brush will be accepted in July. In October, brush and loose leaves will be accepted.

This service is restricted to Portage homeowners; be prepared to present proof of residency (driver's license). Brush from commercial establishments, churches and schools will not be accepted. For more information on this service, please contact the Department of Public Services at 329-4444.

Celebrate National Night Out Tuesday, August 2

National Night Out is an annual community event to promote neighborhood camaraderie and positive interactions with the police. The event harkens back to a time when communities interacted with one another and communicated about the neighborhood in which they lived. National Night Out is the first Tuesday night in August; this year it falls on August 2nd. National Night Out is planned and presented by your neighborhood watch members.



During National Night Out, citizens are encouraged to plan block parties, festivities or cook-outs and go outside to engage with one another for a night of good fun. National Night Out is an effort to "take back the night" from would-be criminals. Most National Night Out events include safety demonstrations, youth events and visits from emergency personnel. The events are organized individually by each Neighborhood Watch for a more personal experience.

Those interested should contact the members of their local neighborhood watch for more details or events. Neighborhood watch members who wish to have the Portage Department of Public Safety attend their event may contact the Community Policing desk at 324-9255. Everyone is encouraged to attend and participate in their neighborhood for National Night Out!

Get to Know Your Neighbors – Plan a Block Party!

The City of Portage encourages community and promotes block parties as a way for neighbors to get to know each other. Block parties are also a great reason to celebrate, increase the sense of belonging in your neighborhood, make connections, start a tradition and, most importantly, have fun!

The block party application process is quick and easy. Simply visit www.portagemi.gov > Departments > City Clerk > Block Parties or contact the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4512. Your application will be received and reviewed by city staff. Locations of neighborhood block parties are limited to residential streets. Please allow staff up to five business days to review the application.

Street barricades are available upon request and may be picked up from the Department



of Public Services located at 7719 South Westnedge Avenue. Barricades must be placed so that emergency equipment such as Police, Fire and Ambulance can enter the area if needed. Barricades should be placed at the beginning and end of the location of the block party to discourage traffic from driving through the area. Please be aware that if alcoholic beverages are served, it must be done in compliance with Local and State Ordinances.

For additional information about holding a block party please contact Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk at herringa@portagemi.gov or 329-4512.

Summer Movie Night in the Park And Respect for Law Displays

**Celery Flats Historical Area, 7335 Garden Lane
Friday, August 5 at 7 p.m. (Movie Starts at 9 p.m.)**

The City of Portage Youth Advisory Committee and the Breakfast Optimist Club of Kalamazoo have teamed up once again to present Summer Movie Night in the Park, along with free public safety demonstrations.

The evening will begin with *Respect for Law* displays from 7 to 9 p.m. Children, teens and adults can visit with public safety personnel from Portage, Kalamazoo County and the State of Michigan and view displays of public safety equipment such as police vehicles, fire apparatus and ambulances. Mounted police and K-9 units will also be present.

The movie *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (rated PG-13) will begin shortly after 9 p.m. Come early for the best seat and bring your lawn chair or blanket. The event is free of charge and popcorn will be provided.



What's Up at the Portage Senior Center?

Garden Club at the Portage Senior Center – Are you interested in joining a local garden club? Garden clubs are involved in local beautification, environmental initiatives and the promotion of educational opportunities. A meeting for those interested will be held at the Portage Senior Center on Monday, July 11 at 10:30 a.m. Representatives from the Kalamazoo Garden Council will be on-hand to discuss how garden clubs function and answer questions.

Heritage Dinner Series – The ever popular evening meals are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. This event is open to the public and participants can request their meals “to go.” Reservations are requested no later than one day prior to the day the meals take place. These special dinners are available for \$10 (includes entrée, sides, dessert and a beverage). The July 19 dinner will feature a violin performance from Megan Healy, local violinist. Call 329-4555 to RSVP.

TED Talks – TED Talks can be about any topic in the world with reliable information from trustworthy speakers. Each month will feature short videos on a chosen topic followed by a group discussion. Join us on Thursday, July 21 at 1 p.m. as the group discusses “How to live passionately – no matter your age.” This event is free and open to the public.

Inaugural Paint the Plow Contest!

The City of Portage Department of Public Services, in partnership with Portage Public Schools, launched the “Paint the Plow” program. The Public Services Department snowplow blades have been painted by students with original artwork to represent the individual schools. The blades will be attached to plow trucks next winter to use on roadways throughout the city. In addition to being visible when in full service during the winter months, the blades will also be used at events within the community to enhance public awareness, promote safety and foster greater appreciation of the Department of Public Services snowplowing fleet and the art programs at Portage Public Schools.

All Portage schools were invited to be involved in this pilot program with ten schools participating. One clean plow blade, painted black and orange, was delivered to each participating school in April. The design and artwork was completed exclusively by students. Students

were encouraged to pursue safety, patriotic, state or weather-related motifs. Students were also encouraged to incorporate their school’s logo, emblem or mascot into the design. There was no specific theme for entries and all of the artwork is original and in good taste.

Plows were collected from each school and are now on display at the corner of South Westnedge Avenue and Library Lane across from City Hall. A special thank you to ePaint Recycling Services for their support of this community project and for donating the paint students used to bring their designs to life!

Time to Vote!

Please visit www.portagemi.gov and follow the contest link to view all of the completed plows and vote online for your favorite design in each of three categories – High School, Middle School and Elementary School. Voting



begins July 1 and ends July 30. Contest results will be announced August 1, 2016. Votes can also be submitted by visiting the Portage District Library located at 300 Library Lane until July 30.

For more information about the contest or how to participate in this event next year, please contact the Department of Public Services at 329-4444.



Visit and Like the New Parks & Recreation Facebook Page!

The Department of Parks & Recreation is now on Facebook! This new addition to the city Facebook family will be used to post parks and recreation related information and to promote upcoming programs and events. Because there are several cities around the country named “Portage,” make sure to search for “Portage MI, Department of Parks & Recreation.”

The city also has Facebook pages for Public Safety and Senior Citizen Services which are popular with residents. Be sure to check out the Parks & Recreation section of the city website for comprehensive information on all 17 city park sites, bikeways and trails, events and programs. Outstanding parks and recreation offerings are just a few of the many attributes that make the city of Portage **A Natural Place to Move!**

July Recreation Offerings

Visit www.portagemi.gov to view more summer events.

Ramona Park Beach

Open daily from 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

- City Resident Daily Permit.....\$5
- Non-Resident Daily Permit.....\$10
- City Resident Annual Permit.....\$25
- Non-Resident Annual Permit.....\$45
- Group Bus Daily Permit.....\$50

Paddle Boat Rentals at Ramona Park Beach – 12:30 - 6 p.m.

- 1-Hour Rental.....\$12
- Each Additional ½ Hour (up to 4 hours).....\$5
- 4 - 6 Hour Rental.....\$36

Paddle Lessons and Demos at Ramona Park Beach

- Sign up at Lee’s Adventure Sports – 381-7700
- Saturday Lessons..... July 16, August 13
\$45.....10 a.m. – 12 noon
- Thursday Evening Demos..... July 14, July 28
FREE..... 5 - 7 p.m.

The Glenn Miller Orchestra

- at Overlander Bandshell.....July 5
FREE..... 6:30 p.m.
- The most sought after big band in the world today for both concert and swing dance engagements.

Celery Flats Music Festival

- at Celery Flats Historical Area..... July 10
FREE.....12 noon – 4:30 p.m.
- Enjoy an afternoon of Bluegrass and Americana music in a natural setting. Donations to the Friends of the Parks Portage are encouraged.

Lunch & Learn Discovery Program

- Once Upon a Raptor** at Central Park..... July 14
FREE.....11 a.m. – 12 noon
- Join us for a story of intrigue and awe where the main characters are alive in the room.

Portage Farmers Market

- at the Portage Senior Center.....Every Sunday
FREE.....12 noon – 4 p.m.
- Portage is excited to partner with the People’s Food Co-op to offer a weekly farmers market.

Youth Summer Camps

- School of Fish Day Camp** at Ramona Park on Long Lake. Registration is due two weeks prior to camp start date.
- Little Lunkers** ages 7 – 12..... July 18-21
\$85..... 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Beginner anglers will learn a variety of skills such as fish identification and habitat, knot tying, casting skills & safety and much more.
- Advanced Anglers** ages 9 – 14..... August 8-11
\$85..... 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Intermediate and experienced young anglers will learn skills such as jigging, advanced knots, artificial lures, intro to fly fishing and much more.

Get Active Portage at Ramona Park – August 13

- Youth Triathlon**..... 7 a.m. check-in, 8:30 a.m. start
- All athletes (6-9 years and 10-13 years) must be pre-registered online at www.kidsgetactive.us.
- Ramona Park Health Fair**.....9 to 11 a.m.
- Now is the time to learn how to live healthier. Participate in activities provided by local health and wellness vendors.

City Preparing for Busy Election Season

The Office of the City Clerk is preparing for the upcoming August 2, 2016 state primary election. The August primary is held to select Democratic and Republican candidates who will appear on the November general election ballot as candidates for state and county seats, and precinct delegates to the Democratic and Republican county conventions.

What is unique about the August primary is that both Republican and Democratic candidates appear on the same ballot, but voters can select candidates from only one party section. Voters who attempt to vote in more than one party section will have their ballot ejected by the optical scan machine; the ballot will be spoiled and replaced with a new ballot.

To vote "absentee" in the August primary, contact the Office of the City Clerk by phone at 329-4511, by visiting the Office of the City Clerk during normal business hours and on Saturday, July 30 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., or by visiting the Secretary of State website at www.michigan.gov/vote. A completed application or written request accompanied

by a signature is necessary before a ballot can be issued. All absentee ballots must be returned to the City Clerk by 8 p.m. on election day in order to be counted.

Avoid the Voting Lines This November: Vote Absentee or Become a Permanent Absentee Voter!

Presidential elections often have extremely high voter turnout and, with that, longer lines. The upcoming November 2016 presidential election will be no different. Avoid the lines by voting absentee or becoming a permanent absentee voter! The City of Portage maintains a permanent list of absentee voters for those interested voters who are over the age of 60, have a permanent disability or meet other specific criteria. Members of the permanent list automatically receive an absentee ballot application that must be completed and returned prior to receiving a ballot. An absentee voter, permanent or not, must always apply for a ballot before receiving a ballot. To join the permanent list or vote absentee, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4511.

2016 Summer Property Tax Bills

The 2016 summer property tax bills will be mailed on Friday, July 9, 2016 and payment is due by 5 p.m. on September 14, 2016. Payment for property taxes can be made at the Treasury Office in City Hall in the form of cash, check, money order or credit/debit card. The Treasury Office is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of Labor Day on September 5, 2016. To pay with a credit card by phone, call 1-866-270-5701 or pay online at www.portagemi.gov > Quick Links > Online Payments.

Payment by check authorizes the city to convert the check to an electronic funds transfer; the bank account may be debited as soon as the same day the city receives the check payment. Payments made by credit/debit card will include a 3% convenience fee, which is charged by the vendor (Point&Pay).

All tax payments received or postmarked after September 14, 2016 will be charged a 3% late fee on the outstanding amount. To avoid the late fee, mailed payments must be postmarked by the post office on or before September 14, 2016 and received by the Treasury Office before September 21, 2016. In all late payment disputes, the Treasury Office will rely on the postmark applied by the Postmaster. Taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2017 will be turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection where additional fees will be added.

Any questions regarding property tax bills or payment methods may be directed to staff in the Treasury Office at 329-4455.

Water Treatment Facility Open Houses Well Attended

Hundreds of Portage residents toured the Garden Lane Water Treatment Plant on March 19 and April 23 to learn about the procedures used in producing high-quality water. Over 60 Portage water customers had water samples tested for lead and copper, all of which met federal and state water quality requirements. Free lead and copper testing will be performed for Portage water customers with concerns about the copper and lead levels in their home until July 31, 2016. Contact the City of Portage Transportation & Utilities Department at 329-4422 to request a copper and lead water test.



Director of Transportation & Utilities, Chris Barnes performs a demonstration for a young visitor.



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City Closings

Non-emergency city offices will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Independence Day

Monday, July 4

Labor Day

Monday, September 5

The next edition of the **Portager** will be published in August 2016

Portager Editor: Mary Beth Block
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Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. and are always open to the public.

The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Administration with concerns or complaints about city services by calling Complaint Resolution at (269) 329-4404 or by visiting www.portagemi.gov > Report It!



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Televised City Meetings

City Council and Planning Commission meetings can be viewed live on channel 190 while Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on channel 187. All meetings can be viewed via live streaming at <http://www.publicmedianet.org/watch-live>.

AT&T U-Verse customers can access City of Portage government meetings on channel 99 and then follow the prompts to access the various meetings.



July

- 7 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 11 7:00 p.m. Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
- 12 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting
- 21 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 26 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting

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