



OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN
TOWN OF BROOKFIELD

Friday, May 15, 2020

CORONA VIRUS UPDATE #25

To: All residents
From: Steve Dunn, First Selectman

NO ADDITIONAL BROOKFIELD RESIDENTS LOST TO COVID-19 VIRUS

Thankfully, we have lost no more residents to the virus, so the number of deaths remains at seven. New infections have plateaued, demonstrating the effectiveness of the measures all of us have been taking. We thank you all for your efforts, but remember it's essential to continue to protect our neighbors by isolating ourselves and our families. Please, stay home unless absolutely necessary.

The number of new patients and hospital admissions is slowing, another indication that our social distancing efforts are working. As of this writing, we have 149 confirmed cases, but no new information on those hospitalized. To be accurate, we will only report those cases confirmed by our Director of Public Health.

PARKS REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL AFTER MEMORIAL DAY

We are not opening parks until after Memorial Day weekend, on the advice of our Director of Public Health. We are very concerned that we will have an overflow of visitors unless we open in conjunction with surrounding towns and following state guidance. This is subject to change as we get further direction from the state, which is coordinating with Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Delaware to have an orderly reopening.

TESTING FOR VIRUS AVAILABLE TO ALL WITHOUT PRESCRIPTION

Anyone can now get a test without a doctor's note. We encourage everyone to get tested.

TOWN IS OFFERING COVID-19 TESTING TO ALL POLICE, FIRE, EMS AND TOWN EMPLOYEES

We have arranged to test all staff for the virus and antibodies, which will help us ensure they are safe. We ask that all employees be tested, which takes five minutes -- results are returned in 24 hours.



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BOARD OF FINANCE COMPLETES BUDGET

The board has finalized its budget for next year. Town Operations will go up .31% and schools will received a 3.25% increase. The Mill Rate will rise 1.76%. If revenues were to remain flat, the Mill Rate increase would be .71%, but in an abundance of caution, the board lowered the revenue estimate. The board has scheduled a virtual Town Hall on Tuesday night, June 12, and we encourage all residents to join. Details are on the town website.

The board, which has until June 4 to submit the final budget to the Town Clerk, has done an outstanding job in writing a budget that is sensitive to the needs of our residents.

PPE FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES AVAILABLE SO PLEASE APPLY IF YOU NEED IT

We've received PPE that we promised local businesses would be available. Our Police Department picked up the supplies this morning and will distribute them to these businesses. If you are a small business and haven't already ordered, please place an order and we will try to fulfill it. In the last round, 92 firms requested over 2,800 items, all delivered by our police. We thank them delivering these needed supplies to our businesses.

REOPENING OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Last week I signed an executive order suspending, for the duration of the pandemic, many zoning regulations to allow our businesses to open safely starting on May 20. The governor issued an executive order this week covering the same. All businesses need to provide to our staff a plan to reopen, but reviews will be expedited and we are waiving any associated permit fees. Once these businesses reopen, we encourage you to support and frequent them. We have formed a committee of town employees and Zoning Board members to oversee these and move them forward as quickly as possible.

"BROOKFIELD RECOVERS" FUND NOW OVER \$42,000 IN DONATIONS

I am very pleased to tell you that our residents have responded quickly to our request for donations to the *BROOKFIELD RECOVERS* Fund, which allows the town to help our neighbors who need assistance. This is one of the reasons Brookfield is a great town to live in. Thank you to all who have donated. You can donate by sending a check to the town at 100 Pocono Road -- write *Brookfield Recovers* on your check -- or you can donate on line electronically on the town website.



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The number of those needing assistance has grown tremendously over the past few weeks, and our ability to provide these services is stretched, but thanks to your generous donations, we have been able to meet their needs. Here is where you can donate on line via credit card or PayPal:

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=KSP8S9D4F85XU&source=url

SCHOOLS CLOSED THROUGH THE END OF THE YEAR

The governor has declared that all schools will remain closed for the remainder of the school year. We are meeting with the superintendent and the Board of Education to understand how the town can help open schools safely in the fall.

NEW RULES FOR GOING OUT IN PUBLIC

The governor has issued an executive order requiring that everyone who goes out in public wear a mask. Please follow this rule to keep everyone safe. Studies show that if two people are wearing masks, the chance of transmitting the virus between them drops to 1.5%.

PLAN FOR REOPENING TOWN HALL

We are putting new protocols and procedures in place to safely open Town Hall. In order to do so safely, we are going to install sneeze guards in many offices and reconfigure employee work spaces to achieve safe distancing. We will slowly open Town Hall to the public, but all visitors will need to make an appointment, wear masks, have your temperature taken and answer questions issued by the CDC. Our goal will be to keep you and our staff safe. All of this depends on our ability to purchase the correct protective equipment, which is in short supply. Details on our plan will come out next week.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE CANCELLED

We have cancelled the Memorial Day Parade.