



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mayor Kwasi Fraser
kfraser@purcellvilleva.gov; 540-338-7421

PURCELLVILLE MAYOR KWASI FRASER'S COVID-19 UPDATE

PURCELLVILLE, Va. April 1, 2020 — On Monday March 30, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam issued Executive Order 55 to reinforce the Commonwealth's response to COVID-19 and in furtherance of Executive Orders 51 (March 12, 2020) and 53 (March 23, 2020) and by virtue of the authority vested in Governor Northam by Article V, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia, by § 44-146.17 of the Code of Virginia. The goal of Executive Order 55 is to further reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth, Loudoun County, and Purcellville via a temporary stay at home order. The full text of the executive order may be accessed [here](#).

Prior to Governor Northam's order, during my meeting with Chair Randall, Supervisor Kershner, and the Mayors of the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT), it was confirmed that COVID-19 is being characterized as community spread by the Virginia Health Department (VDH). This means there are cases in our towns, and we need to continue to practice social distancing and washing of our hands, now more than ever. The VDH has indicated the coming surge of COVID-19 cases has the very real potential of overwhelming hospitals, many of which are actively working to expand bed space within their facilities, on their properties, and in some cases, looking at alternate sites for bed capacity. On a weekly basis, COLT will be meeting with Chair Randall and Supervisor Kershner to ensure alignment and awareness at the executive leadership level.

For us in Purcellville, social distancing is our key weapon against the growing danger of COVID-19. I understand the temptation to be with neighbors and friends to enjoy the spring weather. However, this is not the time for social gathering since we are battling an invisible danger. Please enjoy this time with your family at home and only leave to procure essential needs and services as described in Executive Order 55. Professionally and personally, this crisis has shown me the value of video conferencing whether it be a meeting with business stakeholders or weekly family meetings with parents, siblings, and others around our country and world. Since we are fighting this battle together with our health care professionals, our decisions to adhere to social distancing and remaining at home are crucial.

As our country's response to COVID-19 escalates to meet the reality of new cases, we are committed to controlling the spread of the virus here. Most notably has been the closing of Virginia's K-12 schools, public and private, for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. As you know, Purcellville is home to five Loudoun County Schools and a private college within a mere 3.4 square miles. Confirming the situation on March 23, LCPS Superintendent Eric Williams informed citizens about measures his office is taking, along with school administrators and teachers, to continue lessons to meet educational goals for the school

year. Moreover, LCPS staff are working to mitigate food insecurity by providing grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches for pickup at 28 county schools, and buses are distributing meals at stops across the county. The closest schools for Purcellville's students are Loudoun Valley High School, Woodgrove High School, and Round Hill Elementary School.

Locally, our Town Council is working closely with town staff to implement federal, state and county guidelines to help ease the additional challenges that COVID-19 is delivering to our business and household budgets. Most recently, we have implemented a Meals Tax Holiday for the months of April and May. As our restaurants will not be charged the 5% Meals Tax, they will not charge this fee to customers. Also beginning in April, the town will waive late penalties on utility bills. While this policy is only a temporary measure, we have not yet set an end date. Our Town Manager provides daily operational briefings to the Town Council.

Testing and Reporting - Filling the Gap with Big Data Analytics and Research Innovation

Owing to limited patient testing, a paucity of data exists. As such, it is difficult to measure COVID-19's impact on our community and to report on possible trends. However, over the next week, we are looking to deploy a link on our website to Illumina Consulting Group's (ICG) COVID-19 Assessment tool. This is a free pilot program from ICG that will use its big data analytics platform to identify and to report trends based on the assessment data that is entered by members of the community. In addition, I am working with a firm called Biobot that is collaborating with researchers at MIT, Harvard, and Brigham and Women's Hospital to launch a pro bono program to map COVID-19 across the U.S. based on sewer data. With new studies showing that SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID-19, is shed in human waste, it is likely collecting in sewer systems across the U.S. As a result, Purcellville will join with other U.S. municipalities in providing samples from our wastewater treatment systems for this free pilot program.

Purcellville's Businesses and Law Enforcement

The town council, together with town staff, are continually considering new approaches to promoting economic resilience and helping our small businesses survive the pandemic guidelines. To this end, the Executive Order lists specific types of businesses and how and whether they may continue conducting business, through Thursday, April 23, 2020.

Meanwhile, many of our Purcellville businesses are feeling the immediate effects of these policies. We can help them get through this difficult time in a number of ways by purchasing a gift card, putting an item on hold, leaving a review, promoting them on social media, shopping by phone, and maintaining memberships and class packages (many exercise facilities are continuing classes online). This is particularly important for our businesses that have had to close temporarily: fitness and indoor exercise facilities, beauty salons, barber shops, the skating rink, and public/ private social clubs.

Our restaurants, farmers markets, breweries, tasting rooms, and distillery have also had to stop admitting customers but may offer take-out and delivery services. Businesses the state

deems “essential” will remain open such as grocery stores, pharmacies and related businesses, electronics retailers, automotive parts and repair facilities, home improvement and hardware businesses, lawn and garden retailers, beer, wine and liquor stores, gas stations and convenience stores, banks and financial institutions, pet stores, feed stores, printing and office supply stores, and dry cleaners. All of these establishments must adhere to guidelines involving sanitary conditions and limits on how many customers may be admitted at a given time.

Also per the Executive Order, currently no limits are in place affecting the provision of health care or medical services, law enforcement agencies, access to essential services for low-income residents, media operations, or the operations of government.

Here, our Purcellville Police Department is asking for the public’s assistance in achieving compliance with the Executive Order, and any violation of it constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor, pursuant to § 44-146.17 of the Code of Virginia, which could result in criminal charges.

Additional Community Efforts

Our Town’s website is being continuously updated with information about Town operations and COVID-19. In the coming days we will be installing a third party application to enable those in in our community to take a COVID-19 self-assessment as they adhere to the stay at home order. Makersmiths at the Purcellville Makerspace have committed to producing 1,000 masks for health care professionals across the county. These masks will help to address the immediate shortage of personal protective equipment needed. The Tree of Life Community Kitchen, located at 210 N. 21st Street, Unit D, is offering free meals every Thursday, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Special Requests and Key Updates

As always, we welcome your ideas and feedback. Please contact me at kfraser@purcellvilleva.gov and town council members at tc@purellvilleva.gov. Regular press releases from the town staff are available [here](#) and at [information about Coronavirus](#).

The Town of Purcellville, Virginia

“Purcellville-your small Town, where history and progress intersect and people prosper,” is an award-winning town of over 10,000 residents located in Loudoun County, approximately 50 miles west of Washington, DC. Having received the prestigious Siemens Sustainability Award for Small Communities, Purcellville continues to be honored for its green initiatives with most recently being the Tree City USA recipient for the 12th year. The Town was reaffirmed as a AAA rated community by S&P Global Ratings, the highest credit rating possible, and is ranked “Safest City” in Virginia in 2020. Once a stop along the W&OD rail line, which has been converted to a multi-use trail from Alexandria, VA to Purcellville, the Town has maintained its historic old-town feel through the restoration and maintenance of its many downtown structures, reflecting the Victorian architecture popular during the early 1900s. Today, Purcellville is the economic hub of western Loudoun County and a popular weekend destination for antiquing, equestrian activities, farmer’s markets, wineries, breweries, distilleries and restaurants. More info at www.purcellvilleva.gov.

###