

The Somerville Times News Letter

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COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

There are simple steps everyone can take to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Minimizing exposure is especially important for people who are 65 or older or who have an underlying health condition like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, high blood pressure or cancer. Such people have a higher risk of developing serious complications if they do get COVID-19. The safest practice for high risk individuals during the current outbreak is to stay home and minimize close contact with other people as much as possible.

The overall goal at this time is to do what we can to slow the spread of the virus and thus prevent emergency services and healthcare providers from being overwhelmed. In keeping with the guidelines, the Somerville Senior Center will remain closed at least until April 1st. Meals for active members are still available; please contact Liz at 979-596-1822 for details.

It is possible that public hours at City Hall may be impacted in the next few weeks. We intend to maintain our normal operations and office hours until we are advised otherwise by health officials. In the event that we do close City Hall, staff activities will be limited to those required to maintain vital operations, provide stability, and monitor the changing situation. We do ask that you consider making utility payments this month by mail or via the drop box in front of City Hall to minimize traffic in the foyer. Essential services such as Police, Fire, PW, & EMS will continue to be provided.

Local schools, county & state offices and agencies are closing, remaining open, or limiting services depending on the latest guidelines, traffic density and other factors. Many local, regional and state events are being postponed or cancelled to limit mass gatherings where the disease might be more easily transmissible. This week's Tribune has a good article about local response under the county pandemic plan.

Lastly, I know this time is stressful on many levels, but we will get through this. Remain calm, practice basic sanitation procedures often, stay informed, and make the best decisions for yourself and your family. We will continue to monitor the official information and guidelines as they change in the coming weeks and re-evaluate the situation based on the changing official information.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Our next City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 14, 2020. There are no plans to cancel the meeting at this time. However, please be aware that if official recommendations for limiting the number of attendees at any event to no more than 10 or 20 remain in place, public attendance will be limited. The Attorney General and TML are working on ways to help us keep citizens in the loop, while limiting physical contact. We will provide more information as we have it.

CITY ELECTIONS IN MAY

The City will hold a general election for three seats on City Council on May 2, 2020. We hope that during this campaign period, candidates will focus on the issues facing our community in the near (and not-so-near) future. Difficult decisions regarding the future of Somerville must be made: new Planning & Zoning regulations, updated ordinances, development issues, and street & drainage projects will all be on future agendas. Public service is a hard job, and being elected can be tough, too. We congratulate each of you for offering to serve your community and urge you to respect one another and the election process during the coming months.

EVENTS CANCELLED IN SOMERVILLE

The City of Somerville has been notified that both the Texas MS 150 (May) bike ride event and the Carts, Bikers & Babes event (April) are cancelled. At this time the Household Hazardous Waste Collection event on April 15th will proceed as planned. Remember to call before you drive to events scheduled for the next 4-6 weeks.

2020 US CENSUS

You should be receiving a notice in the mail (if you haven't already) regarding the United States Census. Please remember that in addition to being the law, your participation helps the community remain eligible for grants and other financial aid at the federal and state level.

**Stay SAFE and HEALTHY as we
weather the next few weeks!**