



City of Leavenworth

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April 16, 2020

Community Members,

There has been some relaxing done by the Counties, (Douglas and Chelan), to the strict “nonessential” business standards. They have eased the restrictions on some residential construction. This has caused some confusion and more than a little bit of push back on the City. Some are asking if this means the entire county, (including the cities within the county), have relaxed these standards. The short answer is “no”. In such matters, the County is making proclamations that involve the unincorporated areas under their jurisdictions. The Cities still make their own decisions. So, why don’t I go along?

It is definitely a balancing act going on here. I certainly don’t blame the counties. Everyone is trying to balance the needs of people to work, and return to something akin to “normal”, and the needs of all of us to limit the impacts of the virus. And in the great juggling / balancing act, there is no absolute road map. No one has been down this road before. Could we relax a few things like construction on homes without causing the spread of the virus? Especially if social distancing was still practiced on the job site? Perhaps. But, then again, perhaps not. We really do not know. So, I don’t want to pretend I have more information than anyone else. I don’t have any magical powers (where are those superhero powers when you need them?). I just know that we may be pretty close to reaching the peak of this current manifestation of the pandemic. But what that means is this, it means that this is the very worst time to relax anything that has been working for us to this point. It means that right now is the time when your chances of getting the virus are the greatest they have been. Does that sound like the time to let up on any restrictions? I admit, I am one who will err on the side of caution when it comes to this bug. The only thing worse than keeping this shutdown going one day too long, would be to let up one day too soon, and have all the great work we have all done together to obey all the rules, even to our own economic and social detriment, to be done for naught. There is a very real danger, that if we let up our guard too soon, COVID-19 could come roaring back far worse than this first “wave” of the virus. Would any of us really want that?

So, even when we do start to return to “normal”. It will be, must be, a slow start. And it won’t be anything like the normal we knew before this pandemic. For the foreseeable future, we will still need to practice social distancing. The new normal may still be restaurants with far fewer seats filled at once, with waiters and waitresses in gloves, with people wearing masks in public, with no large gatherings. Far more video meetings than before. Begin to prepare yourselves for such an ongoing fact of your life, perhaps until we have a vaccine for this. At the very least, until we can do far quicker, simpler, and effective testing for far greater numbers of people than we can do now. Be prepared for taking “baby steps” towards normalcy. As someone said, (forgive me for not remembering who, maybe the Governor?), “it is not like we will be flicking on the light switch to start this process of coming back. It is more like we will be using a dimmer switch to move just to a bit more light than we now have”. That may be the hardest challenge we will face. We are all so tired of this, so sick of the cost, so ready to jump back in, that the real test will come for us to see if we can do just the baby steps. I know that will be hardest. I just know it! I know it for one little reason. And that is because I can’t even think of my grandkids in Wenatchee, whom I have not been able to hug for weeks now, without choking up. (I know, I know, we have covered my emotional frailty before). Anyway, stay home, stay safe, and plan for your first baby steps. We will get through this! Take care of each other, but still from a distance!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor

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