



**Carl J. Florea**  
Office of the Mayor  
City of Leavenworth

October 23, 2020

Community Members,

It seems a little out of sync to be writing to you all about Halloween while I sit and look out my window at our first real snowfall of the year. However, out of sync is also how this whole year has felt, so it probably makes perfect sense that this is today's reality. I want to address the upcoming Halloween "holiday" because it is another one of those times that has some very rich and meaningful traditions tied to it, for a lot of people and families. At Cornerstone Community, the home I manage for special needs adults, I would often comment that the biggest holiday of the year was Halloween. We would fill the entire month with various Halloween-themed activities – a dance, a costumed bowling time, a group pumpkin carving, several other parties.... you get the picture. Well, it has all changed this year. Because so many of those activities involved gatherings of friends in the Upper Valley and beyond, they will be skipped this year. Again, in acknowledgement that this year, safety is coming ahead of traditions. We still honor those traditions, but we will take a break for now.

So, what are your plans? If you have kids, do you still plan to take them out and trick-or-treat? I have heard from some that they are planning to do this. Others have said that there is no way they will take part in this custom this year. We had this discussion amongst our council at our study session earlier this month. As you might expect, there was this same range of responses among our council. Some feel that doing this in a responsible manner, with masking (not of the eyes, but the mouth and nose 😊), and social distancing, would give the kids a chance to do something that would be somewhat akin to normalcy. Boy, do I get that desire in these crazy times. At the same time, it is important for all of us to not incorporate those items of a "normal" Halloween that would turn it from a safe taste of some semblance of normalcy into a potential "super-spreader" event of the COVID virus. I know that when my boys were in our home, a big part of the Halloween tradition was to run with their friends, (and maybe get into some mischief?? – I don't know and that is probably best!). This is probably part of the tradition we want to skip for this year. For the sake of both the children and the community as a whole. We have done remarkably well keeping our infection rate down. But this is not the time to let up. As we enter this season of spending lots of time indoors, and the holidays begin to take place in which many of us gather with large groups of families and friends, we must be smart and think of safety first.

Some have suggested that I put out a declaration that Leavenworth is banning all trick-or-treating in the city limits. There are two reasons I won't be doing this. First, there is no way we can enforce this. We don't have the capacity to monitor every block, neither would we want to if we did have the capacity. This is not about the city being "big brother". Rather, I would like to think it is about all of us being brothers and sisters to one another. To do what we do because we care for one another. That means doing whatever we do as safely as we

possibly can. That means limiting contact if we are going to participate in things like trick-or-treating. If you are going to have candy to pass out, you can minimize the risk, by putting the candy out in prepackaged bags prepared ahead of time using gloved hands. Or by using tongs to pass out the candy rather than letting kids reach in themselves or using your own hands to pass them out. We have posted some CDC suggestions and guidelines on our city website under the COVID info page.

<https://cityofleavenworth.com/about-leavenworth/community-information/coronavirus-covid-19-updates-for-the-city-of-leavenworth/>

As council member Clint Strand put it, “the key is that whether you choose to participate or choose not to participate in trick-or-treating, that there is care and compassion and understanding for one another regardless.” (That is more of a paraphrase than a direct quote, but the sentiment is important). Again, just as we are reminded of the need to stay vigilant, and not let our guard down even though we are SO ready to get beyond this, we are also reminded of the truth that we truly are all in this together. We need to respect one another and the choices we make, and trust one another to act safely for our community. For those of you who will be out and about that night, please respect the wish of those households who will choose not to offer treats this year. Many of us who have willingly opened our doors to the scary hoards in the past, may decide that we want to skip this year. Respect and care / safety are the keys to getting through this holiday, and the many days and months to come. Stay safe!

PS – A note on the parking meter project. All the poles have been put in the ground and the crews are completing the process of putting the decorative sleeves and meters on those poles. Once those are done, we will be “putting them to bed for the winter” by covering them with “Free Parking” bags for the winter. We have no plans to begin to use them until sometime next spring. Fortunately, we have heard that these meters like to hibernate, anyway! 😊



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