



City of Leavenworth

700 Highway 2 / Post Office Box 287
Leavenworth, Washington 98826
(509) 548-5275 / Fax: (509) 548-6429
Web: www.cityofleavenworth.com

City Council
Carl J. Florea - *Mayor*
Carolyn Wilson
Mia Bretz
Sharon Waters
Clint Strand
Jason Lundgren
Anne Hessburg – *Mayor Pro Tem*
Zeke Reister
City Administrator - *Vacant*

May 26, 2020

Community Members,

OK, so we had a pretty active weekend over the Memorial Weekend Holiday. I know that for our businesses it was a much-appreciated reprieve from the last couple of months of a nearly empty town. But, rather than address the community today, I want to address my letter to our many visitors, those who came this past week, and those who will be coming in the weeks and months to come.

Dear visitors,

Many of you came to visit us for the first time in quite a while this past Memorial Day weekend. I am glad you felt comfortable visiting our great community. As you know, we appreciate you and rely on you to keep our economy going. You also know that you can count on the businesses and people of Leavenworth to be gracious, welcoming hosts. I heard from a number of you who visited us what a wonderful time you had. One person who visits us regularly wrote to say that this was his best visit ever! He loved the added space in the closed street that allowed him to keep distance from others and allowed for a relaxing visit. I am glad to hear that this visit exceeded your expectations! We do take pride in being good hosts!

One of the ways we are working hard to be good hosts is by wearing our masks when we greet you. We do that, knowing that it is a very simple and easy way to demonstrate that we care for you. We want you to know that we are doing what we can to make this the safest environment for you. But I would also ask a favor of you. You could you show us the same care and appreciation for us by also wearing a mask when you are in close proximity to others? I know that some have chosen to make political statements by not wearing a mask. For some reason, wearing a mask has become, for some, akin to giving up our rights. We can choose whether we want to wear a mask or not. Yes, you can. And if your choice only impacted you, I would totally support you in deciding if you wanted to take the chance to get the virus or not. Absolutely! Just like you can choose to go into the winter wilderness without water or the extra clothing necessary to survive overnight. Your choice, your risk, your loss. Sad, but nonetheless, a choice. But this is not about giving up rights, it is about caring for the other, pure and simple.

There is a rather foolish old game called Russian roulette. You're familiar. You put one shell into the chamber of an old pistol and spin the chamber. Then you hold the gun to your head, and pull, "click" (you hope, otherwise if it's louder, you lost). I never understood the draw of that game. Never played it, nor do I know anyone who did play it (I least no one that would admit it to me). A one in six chance of ending your life just doesn't feel like something I would like to do. But, there is a logic that says, "Hey, it's my right and if I want to take the chance, what's it to you?" OK, you have that right! But here is the problem I have with using your "right" not to be told what to do when it comes to wearing masks in public during this pandemic. The problem is, you're doing the gambling, you're taking your chances, you're loading the single shell into the barrel of the gun, but instead of turning it and pointing it at your own temple, you are choosing to point it at another person's temple – maybe a complete stranger, or maybe a family member. Masks are all about wearing them for those around you. They are not done in order to protect you. That is why I wear my mask when in your company. It is my mask that is worn for you. Yours is worn for everyone else. If you knew, without a doubt, that you had COVID-19 and would be infecting those in your air space, would you still intentionally keep a mask off. What if you know one of those people you infected would die? Would you still refuse? Well, the point is, with this virus, we don't know. But is it worth the chance? Wouldn't we really want to do the right thing for others and wear it?

I must admit, I am baffled by the current widespread movement rejecting masks. Rights? Really? When doing such a little thing could keep us all safer, (and our businesses open longer). We will continue to practice safely to welcome you to our community. And if you will return the favor, we will thank you and you will help us be here for you the next time you want to visit. Thanks for caring! Stay safe!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor

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cflorea@cityofleavenworth.com