

COVID-19 Update Meeting
Borough of State College & Neighborhood Coalitions
Friday, April 24, 2020

Borough Staff Participants: Tom Fountaine; Ron Filippelli; Jesse Barlow; Dave Jordan; Natalie Vercillo; Douglas Shontz; Tom King; Kevin Kassab; John Gardner; and Brian O'Donnell

- Overview - Tom Fountaine
 - One more Virtual Town Hall scheduled for next Friday
 - Looking into continuing virtual Town Halls through first couple weeks in May
 - Special Activities and Events cancellations by Borough Council through June 30, 2020 (essentially all large events as canceled through Labor Day)
 - Addressed issues related to state and Governors' actions to slow and mitigate the spread
 - Extended property tax deadline to Sep 30th
 - Moving date of sewer rate increase to fourth quarter of 2020
 - Have a large, diverse committee addressing economic impacts from COVID and how to address these issues across the County
 - Looking into how the reopening on May 8th will impact the Borough/ Centre County

- Mayor Filippelli
 - Highlighted a Proclamation: Bell's Across PA scheduled for May 3rd at 7:00 p.m.

- Ordinance / Health Department - Dave Jordan
 - Curbside Recycling resuming April 27
 - Construction permitted to resume Monday May 1
 - Currently there are a few exceptions that have been waived by the Governor
 - Grass/Weed enforcement has been delayed but is starting back up
 - Properties have been identified that need to cut their grass and have been contacted.
 - Monday April 27th warnings will start to be issued
 - Have been fielding masking complaints
 - Few complaints, most have been outside of our area

- Community Engagement – Natalie Vercillo
 - Postcards have been mailed out to single family homes and several apartment complexes
 - The postcard provides what services are available to those in need in our community
 - Update on Census
 - Developed subcommittee for marketing strategies geared towards students
 - Websters attached Census postcards to their free meal takeout on Thursday April 24
 - Using new marketing style of a competition format between townships
 - Working with IFC President on group quarters reporting for all fraternities
 - Applied for grant from National League of Cities (NLC)
 - \$5,000 grant acquired to engage harder to reach groups (geared towards groups like students)
 - Shared the revised timeline for Census 2020 because of COVID-19
 - Shared a YouTube video made by a PSU student regarding the importance of the census
- Displayed Available Online Resources - Douglas Shontz
 - COVID 19 Local response feature on the website
 - Municipal Services impacted by COVID 19 link

Q & A:

Tom F. briefly mentioned something about rent and evictions--more detail please

Under Pennsylvania Law Local Governments are preempted from being involved in landlord-tenant issues including with evictions and rent payment issues. Because the Borough does not have legal authority to address rent and eviction issues, Borough Council enacted a Resolution to call upon State Officials to put a moratorium on evictions through May 31, 2020. A copy of the resolution was projected on the screen.

Who will be inspecting construction sites for compliance of COVID Recommendations (Code Office or Borough)? What if we see something non-compliant? Who do we notify?

Regarding COVID precautionary requirements such as social distancing, masking, etc., the Code Office does not have enforcement authority, so this is done by local law enforcement having jurisdiction. Any violations should be reported to the police department using the non-emergency number at (814) 234-7150 if this is occurring in the Borough.

Where are construction workers parking? Concern expressed that since parking restrictions have been lifted that workers coming from outside the Borough will be parking on residential streets.

Parking operations are shut down and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. The police will monitor and enforce any safety-related parking violations. In the meantime, the parking volume will be continuously monitored to determine in any staffing changes are necessary. There is nothing definitive yet; however, we anticipate garages will open first and then meter/street parking enforcement will be opened afterwards. We have not seen evidence of parking concerns since our parking operations were shut down.

What have you heard, if anything, about the State College Spikes and their season?

Initially MLB decided to close around 42 franchises. There was a movement across the country to lobby congress and discuss with MLB to push back on that plan. Minor league franchises are looking at missing a whole season. It is likely with the pandemic occurring, the original MLB plan will go into effect and if so, the Spikes will not be playing as a major league affiliate.

Will rental safety inspections be stopped?

They have been stopped for the past 6 weeks. The Executive Director at COG asked all agencies, including the Code Agency, to prepare a plan for reopening and this is one of the issues that will be determined. Likely, rental inspections will be delayed somewhat. The Code Agency is in the process of conducting construction inspections. In the following weeks, we should be able to better answer this question.

Was Toll Brothers project on Whitehall Road given a variance to allow construction?

It was initially reported that they had a waiver from governor. However, over the past week Ferguson Township learned they did not have a waiver, so they were shut down. Of course, construction at this site will be able to resume when all other construction resumes on Friday, May 1st.

When will Mayor Filippelli's video be available?

It will be available Monday (4/27) on the Borough Website as well as on C-net and Channel 7.

What is current estimate of students in town? Still 15-20%

Based on conversations with the major apartment building owners/managers, observations, and police and ordinance activity, the estimation of 15%-20% continues.

Any signs students thinking of coming back for graduation weekend?

We have not heard anything about students coming back. We have a program to monitor social media to track conversations about issues in State College and there has been very limited conversations or interactions indicating that may occur. There have been 12,000 interactions about COVID-19 and only 5 were about that topic. However, we are continuing to monitor the conversations to see if it changes as we get closer to graduation.

Any idea how many restaurants/stores are planning to open downtown if we go "Yellow" in early May? What are you hearing from DSCID?

There is no information available yet since the reopening plan is so new. We have regular conversations with the DSCID so we should get a better understanding over the next couple weeks. It is important to note that under the Governor's Yellow Phase, restaurants and bars will remain take out and curb side delivery only.

Where can we get list of restaurants that are operating for takeout?

DSCID did have a list on their Facebook page, Keystone Real Estate, Centre Daily Times, and the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau all have lists that contain County wide information. Below are two links that may be helpful.

DSCID:

<https://www.downtownstatecollege.com/important-announcement/downtown-restaurant-guide-take-out-delivery-options/>

Happy Valley Adventure Bureau:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kN4HclKwW6SlxMaU5PgC7dasXtOENnVF/view>

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The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 1st from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Meeting ended at 3:58 p.m.