

Bald
Head
Island

Village's Voice

A NEWSLETTER FOR BALD HEAD ISLAND PROPERTY OWNERS



March 16, 2020

COVID-19 Update

Good evening,

This message provides an update of the status of COVID-19 in Brunswick County, the mandates issued by the State in response to the outbreak, an update on Village services, and information received at the emergency Council meeting that took place this afternoon.

First Case Reported & Additional Resource Available

Over the weekend, Brunswick County notified the public of the County's first presumptive positive case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The initial announcement and subsequent media releases can be viewed on Brunswick County's news site [HERE](#).

Today, Village officials participated in a conference call with Brunswick County Emergency Services and Health Services and their State and local partners. These conference calls will be held daily until further notice and the Village will continue to participate. Brunswick County indicated that several COVID-19 tests have been performed and the results are pending. The County has partially activated its Emergency Operations Center and has opened a Public Health Call Line and email dedicated to coronavirus (1-910-254-2339 or coronavirus@brunswickcountync.gov). These will be open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. The NC Public Health line is available for questions after hours and on weekends (1-866-462-3821).

Governor's Executive Order

Governor Cooper issued an [executive order](#) that bans mass gatherings of more than 100 people and closed K-12 public schools across the state for two weeks beginning March 16, 2020. The CDC has recently recommended canceling all events of 50 or more people for the next eight weeks. Governor Cooper has not issued a mandate reducing gatherings to 50, but it is under consideration.

Transportation

Bald Head Island Transportation began operating ferries with a maximum of 95 (versus 149) passengers per ferry on Sunday, March 15, 2020. Ferry announcements can be found on [THIS WEBPAGE](#).

At the emergency Council meeting, Bald Head Island Transportation indicated that so far, no passengers have been “bumped” to later boats. Island employers have staggered work schedules to keep numbers evenly divided on the contractor ferries. If the mandate goes down to 50, it will be a “game changer” and the Village and Bald Head Island Transportation will need to establish priority groups so that essential personnel can get off and on the island.

In addition to the possible decrease in the number of people allowed on the ferries, Bald Head Island Transportation indicated that if there is a passenger that tests positive for COVID-19 that the vessel the passenger traveled on is required to be taken out of service until it is cleaned and inspected. Indications are that if a vessel has a second positive passenger, it will likely be taken out of service indefinitely.

Restaurants

Along the lines of the impact to the ferry system, if there is a positive COVID-19 patient that dined at a restaurant, that restaurant will also be closed, cleaned, and re-opened after inspection. The Bald Head Island Club and Shoals Club have already begun distancing diners, using salt and pepper packets, limiting the number of reservations allowed, and other recommended measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Carry-out and curbside service options are recommended for restaurants.

Village Services

The Village continues to take proactive steps and is following County, State and Federal guidelines regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Village offices remain open, though we encourage all to use email or phone contact whenever possible. The Village will implement staggered work schedules and telework options as the need arises with the goal of maintaining the same level of service. The regular Council meeting and work session scheduled for Friday, March 20, 2020, will take place as scheduled.

At the emergency Council meeting staff identified the options for transporting suspected cases off the island to prevent exposure without interfering with the ferry service. Screening of ferry passengers and on-island COVID-19 testing was also discussed. These items will be investigated further by Staff as there are several legal and procedural issues related to both options.

REMINDER:

If you are on Bald Head Island and are [symptomatic](#) and have been told by a physician that you need to be tested, please call 911. As always, tell the 911 operator that you are on Bald Head Island. This will ensure that if you are symptomatic and in need of testing that Public Safety can coordinate your care with the least amount of exposure to others. If you think you are sick, please do not come directly to the Public Safety building.

For more information about novel coronavirus go to the following websites:

[CDC](#)

[NC DHHS](#)

[BRUNSWICK COUNTY](#)

If you have questions about COVID-19 call North Carolina's Coronavirus Helpline at 1-866-462-3821 or use Brunswick County's Public Health Call Line and email dedicated to coronavirus (1-910-254-2339 or coronavirus@brunswickcountync.gov).

As always, if you have any other questions or comments feel free to e-mail or call!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carin Z. Faulkner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'F'.

Carin Z. Faulkner

Village Public Information Officer

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