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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Deanna D'Amore at ddamore@norwalkct.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

**HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MAY 28, 2020 AT 7:00PM.
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Nick Sacchinelli, Chairman; Dominique Johnson; Thomas Keegan; Lisa Shanahan; George Tsiranides; Manny Langella; David Heuvelman

STAFF: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Chief Thomas Kulhawik, Norwalk Police Department; Chief Gino Gatto, Norwalk Fire Department; Asst. Chief Chris King, Norwalk Fire Department; Michelle Deluca, Deputy

Director, Emergency Management; Nick Roberts, Director of Recreation and Parks

I. WELCOME

Mr. Sacchinelli called the meeting to order at 7:00PM

II. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation this evening.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. City of Norwalk Reopen Plan

Ms. D'Amore said that Mayor Rilling has a reopening plan that has several different phases and they coincide with the Governors reopening plan and his phases. Our reopening of phase I started on May 20, 2020, and a big component of that plan is related to Recreation and Parks.

Mr. Roberts said he is happy to report with the exception of Cranbury Park the rest of the park system remained open to residents for passive activities from the very beginning of the outbreak. Considering the importance of physical and more importantly the mental wellness during these times he thinks it was the right decision to make and it was positive for residents to be able to get out and have a place to go and find some peace. He said they are continuing to restrict the use of certain amenities which will increase issues and concerns with regard to social distancing and protocols. That conservative approach is in the city's reopening plan which is available online and emphasized this is a slow and phased reopening plan which was strategically put in place to limit all day visits and overcrowding at some of our facilities.

Mr. Roberts said that during phase I they have since reopened all of the facilities to both pedestrian and vehicular access including the beach and the boat ramps at Veterans Park with limited hours, the gardens at Fodor Farm, and Oak Hills Golf Course. He said that non-resident parking at the beach has been restricted and they have also reduced the capacity of the overall parking lots at a lot of the facilities during this first phase. He said that bathrooms, playgrounds, picnic tables and athletic fields etc. are still restricted in these phases as many of

these amenities are high touch and high usage areas and we want to reduce the places where people are congregating. All concerts, events and programs and reservations have been postponed indefinitely to ensure compliance with the Governors executive order that limits gathering to no more than five people. There have been some residents that have been complaining because we have reopened and they expect everything to be back at its normal condition and it's not so. This is a slow approach and we will eventually get there but we are trying to put measures in place to safely do that.

Mr. Roberts said Phase II which potentially will go into effect on or around June 20, 2020, the following restrictions will be lifted: lifeguards will be on duty on the weekends at the beach; parking capacity will increase to 75% in some areas but does not include the beach at this time; athletic courts and fields will be reopened to individual sports and activities. We did not want to open certain things because it makes it hard for us to do enforcement and did not want to overcomplicate things so are holding off opening all athletic courts and fields until later in the reopening plan. Summer camps are still to be determined but should have an answer with another week or so.

Mr. Roberts said phase III includes a majority of system being open and as we enter phases three and four we will get back up to the normal operating level. Mr. Roberts said they have also added measures to protect staff and the workforce and have not had a staff member become ill during the duration of this event. He said the biggest part of this plan is having communication with the public and with staff and enforcement is key. He said it has been a group effort to get everything in place and everything has worked well so far.

Ms. Johnson said that she saw during the Mayors briefing that there have been some issues with folks taking the tape down on the playgrounds and asked if there is anything the committee to do as far as information to share with residents. Mr. Roberts said just to continue to push the messaging out that those amenities are closed and that there is a reason why they are closed, and to remind people that although those things are currently off limits in a couple of weeks will slowly open as we continue progress through the reopening plan.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if the opening of summer camps hinge on the decision of the public schools or is it possible that some of the camps will be able to open. Mr. Roberts said since the parks programs operate in the school space we want to be consistent in our approach as a city.

The committee members thanked Mr. Roberts for all the work he and his team have done.

Ms. D'Amore said that city hall will remain closed to the public until phase three and will be open by appointment only and are still encouraging remote work and staggered shifts.

b. COVID-19- Updates

Ms. D'Amore said that they continue to monitor the cases and report the positive cases as well as the deaths. The latest number is 1997 positive cases and there were 10 more cases reported today than yesterday, and 130 residents who have passed away. She said they continue to look at the data and do see the cases now trending down but will be following it closely especially since we are starting the reopening process.

Ms. D'Amore highlighted on the work that staff has been doing and said she first wanted to begin with the Emergency Response Team and said they are incredible people who volunteer their time and are an incredible resource for our community. She said they have been working with Glenn

Iannaccone who is our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Donna Schlegel who is our volunteer coordinator as well as Lamond Daniels, the Chief of Community Service. They have been supporting a range of needs in the community during this crisis.

Ms. D'Amore said another big piece of this has been related to enforcement and the Governor has created a public health facility designation so Health Directors have the authority to enforce the rules related to any of the public health facilities, so the sanitarians have been working very closely with Planning and Zoning and Economic and Community Development and others as they have been reviewing all of the applications for outdoor dining and also going out and inspecting and helping them through this whole process. She said the public school nurses have also been an incredible resource and dedicating their skills and knowledge to help us.

Ms. D'Amore said a big thing for us moving forward is thinking about vaccination and although we don't have a vaccine yet we are planning for it, but the big thing they are planning for now is the flu vaccination and are planning for a drive through model.

II. Emergency Management

Ms. DeLuca said they are still having regular EOC calls as well as strategic meetings on Thursdays with a lot of the health providers. She said they EOC calls have been on a weekly basis for March and April but that for May and June will do the call every other week and focus more on the reentry and recovery mode. She said the big part for the past several weeks has been providing the PPE to our nonprofit partners so that they can continue to do the work that they are doing in the community, and the State of Connecticut has launched a small business program for PPE and last week approximately 700 small businesses and sites that requested PPE, but this week has dropped down to approximately 200 and she expects it to continue over the next few weeks. She said another big piece is the long term recovery committee and the Governor has been focusing on the long term recovery in each of the five planning regions. She said she has set up a steering committee and she will also set up some working groups and will hopefully continue through the next few months if not longer, and will look at some of the resources and what additional assistance we can provide both to the residents and the businesses that have been impacted.

Ms. DeLuca said the Hurricane season begins June 1, 2020, and will begin to look at what the impact of Covid-19 will have on some of the shelter operations.

Mr. Sacchinelli thanked Ms. DeLuca on behalf of the committee for all that she has been doing.

III. Fire

Chief Gatto said that Ms. DeLuca has been doing a tremendous job. He said from the very beginning the Fire Department has been proactive and started to acquire as much PPE as they could and Asst. Chief King has been doing a great job in obtaining PPE. He said they had modified their operations plan completely for Covid-19 and the Fire Department has only had one positive case of Covid-19.

IV. Police

Chief Kulhawik provided an overview and said they have basically been following on best practices which have been changing almost daily, and as they have been changing their approach both with the officers and also combined dispatch. He said that Norwalk EMS has done a tremendous job and have taken the brunt of the Covid-19 calls and have protected the officers and the firefighters from being exposed unnecessarily and have been great to work with. As a result of the pandemic the call rate had dropped dramatically over the past two months and similar to the Fire Department Covid-19 had little effect on their staff, and most of the civilian staff has worked remotely. He said at the last Common Council meeting a federal grant was approved that was obtained for police which is paying for most of the things that had to be put in place due to Covid-19, so there will not be a lot of expenses from the police department. The biggest issue they are now facing is the enforcement and some civilians don't know what the rules are and if you are outside of 6' you do not have to wear a mask but if you are inside 6' in public you do. The one thing that has concerned him is that the community relationships have been one of the focus points and he has been trying to impress on the officers and staff and he is afraid they are losing a lot of the community involvement and policing because the police are now only enforcing violations, because due to social distancing and other restrictions are not able to be out in the community like they used to be. He said the biggest thing that he took away from all of this is cooperation amount all of the department heads in the city and everyone has been willing to work together and that is what makes Norwalk very different then other municipalities.

Ms. Shannahan said the community officers have been making a very good impression with their community and she thanked him.

Mr. Sacchinelli thanked Chief Kulhawik for acknowledging the EMS teams and also thanked them on behalf of the committee.

Ms. Johnson said she has heard from a very small amount of the businesses that some people are going into stores refusing to abide by the stores decision to require them to wear masks and asked Chief Kulhawik what he would suggest small business owners do if they encounter that. Chief Kulhawik said although the Governors order is to wear a mask if someone feels that due to a medical issue that they should not be wearing a mask because it would be a negative impact on their medical condition then they don't have to and they do not have to prove that they have one. He said as a private e business they can make rules to limit to whomever they don't want to serve if they don't want to follow the protocols that have been put in place.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SHANNAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd
Telesco Secretarial Services