

April 1, 2020

To our Little Silver residents, businesses, and allies:

I write on behalf of the Governing Body to keep you abreast of our efforts to help stop the spread of COVID-19, to provide you with helpful information, and to ask for your help.

First, the numbers. As of March 31, we had 15 confirmed cases in town, up from 3 as of March 15. We continue to post the town-by-town numbers on www.littlesilver.org and on Facebook as they come in.

There is nothing unusual about the increased number of cases in Little Silver, which seems about even with, and often slightly less than, increases elsewhere. The Monmouth County Regional Health Commission continues to identify and notify those who might have had contact with residents who have tested positive.

Regardless of the numbers, however, our collective mission remains clear: stay home, as ordered by the governor in Executive Order 107. There are very few exceptions. Both a summary of the order, and the order itself, are on our website and Facebook page.

In Little Silver, beyond shopping for necessities, there is little reason to venture out, other than to get some fresh air with family, always socially distanced, as defined in Order 107. The Borough Council's regular meetings are being conducted through Zoom, as noticed and advertised. The Recreation Department's activities are all cancelled until further notice, and gatherings of ten or more of any kind are banned. You may patronize the businesses that remain open (and we encourage you to do so), but you must follow the protocol of that business and socially distance while doing so.

Otherwise, stay home. We know, you've heard it, and it's not easy, but that's what needs to be done, and that's what the governor has ordered. Our police have the authority to enforce the order, allowing only for the exceptions in Order 107.

Staying home protects not only you, but your neighbors, friends, and our volunteer EMS and other first responders who put their lives at risk and continue to respond to every call. Thank you for continuing to keep our volunteers as safe as possible as they continue to work for all of us.

For those who may be especially susceptible to the virus or need assistance, Little Silver Helpers can be reached at littleilverhelpers@gmail.com, or (732) 383-5017. This volunteer group has expanded by collecting monetary donations to purchase meals and gift cards (from local businesses) for front line people, including healthcare workers, pharmacy staff, first responders, and others. For those who would like to donate, their Venmo account is @LittleSilver-Helpers, and checks may be mailed or hand delivered to Corinne Thygeson at 78 Queens Drive.

In addition, some of our businesses are helping others by collecting donations to support healthcare workers, first responders, and others, and we do our best to keep that information, and information about their services, current on our website.

There are two other ways to help. We are keeping the vestibule between the two sets of front doors at Borough Hall open to accept donations of personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves. Please wipe any surface on the doors or in the vestibule after dropping the donation. You may also donate hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and Lysol spray directly to our volunteer Fire Department and EMS squad by leaving it at the door to the firehouse. Thank you to everyone who has already pitched in!

With respect to municipal services, our Public Works Department has resumed operations, with half of the crew reporting one week, and the other half the next, to prevent a total department shutdown should a worker test positive or become symptomatic. We had encouraged residents to refrain from putting out brush for a time, but that activity can resume now that pickup is moving forward. Because we are at half-staff, please be patient if we don't get to your pile right away.

The borough recycling yard, however, remains closed, and the public works buildings and grounds are closed to the public. Curbside recycling and trash pickup continues as regularly scheduled.

Borough Hall, though staffed with a single employee at any one time, also remains closed to the public, as do our Library and other public buildings, including the Women's Club. You may continue to call borough hall or email as usual, but there might be a delay in receiving a response. We need to protect our employees and follow the social distancing and stay-at-home orders just as everyone does.

Our police department continues to fulfill its duties, even at personal risk. One of our officers this week tested positive for the virus. Thankfully, the officer had been off for three days before becoming symptomatic, and was not in the department building or on duty in town after becoming symptomatic. Please keep this officer and all our front line people in your thoughts and prayers.

For our businesses, my calls with federal and state legislators indicate that relief in many cases will be available. Grants and loans will come through county and state agencies - and not the municipality - so we refer you to those agencies for assistance. Presently, information about grants and loans can be found at <https://faq.business.nj.gov>.

In addition, the county has provided a phone number and email address for general questions: (732) 845-2070, or MonmouthCOVID19@visitmonmouth.com. Further, the town continues to publish a list on littlesilver.org of our businesses, with updates about their services and outreach to our residents. They have been hard hit but have continued to be extraordinarily supportive, so please support them as you are able.

There is a lot of information out there, some of which changes daily. We will continue to update our website and Facebook page with information as it becomes available, and to archive all our posts on the website for easy reference. We encourage everyone to arrange for access to these sites if you have not already done so. Certainly, be sure you are registered for our emergency alert system by visiting <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/BF989F572F2E> or by calling (866) 939-0911.

Lastly, this is not easy. NJ Mental Health Cares, the state's behavioral health information and referral service, has a number you can call for help with anxiety and other issues related to the COVID-19 crisis. You can call 1-866-202-HELP (4357) for free, confidential support.

Our school mascot? The Warriors. We are warriors, and more: kind and helpful, but powerful and relentless against a common enemy. We on the governing body couldn't ask for better allies and friends, and are confident that you will all do what needs to be done to stop this virus in its tracks.

Please call Borough Hall with questions or concerns, and please email me at bobneff80@gmail.com, or call me at home at (732) 576-8595, if you have any difficulty getting through. We are, truly, in this together.

Sincerely,

Mayor Robert C. Neff, Jr., members of the Borough Council and your Borough Administration