

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 4/13/2020

"COVID-19 Sylvania's Update"

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect all our lives here in Sylvania. Governor DeWine has extended the Stay-At-Home Order for Ohio until May 1st together with ordering the schools closed through April, and may extend it further. There are many virus cases in Lucas County and some right here in Sylvania, but our efforts at social distancing are definitely helping to slow the spread of the disease through our community.

During the duration of the pandemic, I will be giving regular updates to you about how Sylvania is responding to this crisis. Here is my latest update as of April 13, 2020.

Our Sylvania first responders continue to provide police, fire and EMS services. They are taking special precautions and so far have avoided any major exposures. The City of Sylvania Police are working with a new schedule of platooning all personnel to multiple 8 hour shifts in groups that do not physically interact with the rest of the force. A plan is also in place to move to 12 hour shifts if some officers do need to be quarantined.

All other City employees have also been platooned into alternate day shifts to limit the amount of exposure to each other and provide more social distancing. Water, sewer, streets, parks and trash/recycling collection continue on schedule. City Hall and other city buildings are locked, but employees are on the job and still available every work day via telephone and internet. I encourage you to use the secure lockbox at the front door of City Hall to deliver utility payments, tax forms, etc.

City Council will be meeting as usual on the first and third Monday nights of each month at 7:30 p.m. However, beginning April 6th the meetings are being livestreamed and councilmembers will have the option to attend electronically or in person. Public viewing information will be posted on the City's website.

During the April 6th City Council meeting, I signed a Declaration of State of Emergency for the City of Sylvania. We join the State of Ohio, Lucas County and many surrounding municipalities with this Declaration, making our local businesses, residents and institutions eligible for federal loans and grants.

We also have joined the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the State of Ohio in delaying the 2019 income tax filing deadline until July 15, 2020. Our Sylvania income tax office remains open to answer your questions via telephone or email.

The 2020 U.S. Census is also ongoing. It is vital we all be counted in order to receive all appropriate funding for our schools and local governments. The easiest way to be counted is to go online and complete the form. I did, and it only took about 10 minutes.

Both Shred Day, scheduled for April 18th, and the Arbor Day Ceremony, scheduled for April 24th cannot be held as scheduled. New dates will be announced. Our trash collection contractor, Republic Services, has suspended large item pickup service in order to have just one employee in their collection trucks. The Unlimited Pickup scheduled for this spring has been postponed for the same reason.

Many of our Sylvania restaurants are open for carryout and curbside pickup even though their dining rooms are closed. I have enjoyed several meals from around town, and encourage you to do so as well. They need our business and the variety is excellent to enjoy. Many of our local shops are also open for online and telephone shopping.

Unfortunately, many community gatherings have been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic. First Friday Night Red Bird Art Walks have been suspended for now. The Chamber of Commerce Expo had to be cancelled along with the Olander Park Easter Egg Hunt. The Sylvania Maple and Main Arts and Music Festival scheduled for May 30th and 31st has also been cancelled by Sylvania Art Commission. Their Tree City Film Festival, however, is proceeding virtually April 17-30th.

The Sylvania Area Chamber of Commerce is continuing to assist local businesses, and they are an excellent resource for business updates during this Stay at Home period. Both the Chamber and the Sylvania Rotary Club are still having their meetings, only virtually, for their members.

As permitted by Governor DeWine's Stay at Home order, some construction projects continue around town. Most notable is construction at the SOMO apartment complex along the river east of the downtown hotel. Other outside construction continues around town including roofing replacement projects and springtime landscaping improvements.

Improvement work continues in Harroun Park to clear out invasive species and return the park to a more natural state. This work is funded through a grant from the State of Ohio. A study is also underway for providing a signalized crossing for the River Trail where it crosses Harroun Road.

The State of Ohio and Lucas County are providing excellent leadership and coordination during the pandemic. I and other City officials are in daily communication with them and with our neighboring communities. There is a daily phone conference and situation report with the Lucas County Emergency Operations Center. I have been participating in weekly phone conferences with area Mayors and was invited to a virtual meeting with Governor DeWine.

Our local efforts to "lower the curve" of the pandemic infection are working, and we need to continue our social distancing efforts. Our parks and our River Trail remain open, but please do not congregate into groups where the virus can spread. Limit your trips away from home and be careful to protect yourself and others when you visit grocery stores, gas stations and other businesses that remain open.

There are lots of resources available and being publicized in the media to help those in need. Be sure to lend a hand to seniors and families in your neighborhood, especially those who may not feel safe at home, whether due to food insecurity, or perhaps child abuse or domestic violence in these stressful times.

We are all in this together! Be safe! Be healthy! Best wishes to all!

