



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**INFORMATION PERTAINING TO DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE
TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

PURCELLVILLE, Va. March 20, 2020 —As Town Manager, on March 16, 2020, I announced a Declaration of Local Emergency under the authority set forth by the Code of Virginia § 44-146.21, with the understanding that the Council shall confirm this declaration within 45 days. The Town Council is scheduled to ratify this Declaration at the Town Council Work Session on Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

Because of the uncertainty of the Coronavirus, the Declaration of Local Emergency will be held in place until further notice. During the local emergency, the following measures will be taken to mitigate community spread and provide for necessary containment to the maximum extent practicable.

1. All committees, commissions and boards meetings will be suspended until further notice with the exception of the Planning Commission, Board of Architectural, and Board of Zoning Appeals. For these three exceptions, these committees will meet on an as needed basis, and staff will work toward limiting agendas to items that require immediate action. In addition, the administrative team will relocate these meetings into the Council Chambers to create maximum separation of members as well as the public that are required to attend these meetings.

Council Meetings - Regular Meetings, Special Meetings, Work Sessions and Budget Work Sessions will be held virtually, televised live stream to minimize community spread and protect the health and safety of our citizens and employees. Following presentations by staff and deliberation by the Council, questions from the public can be received by conference calling capability (information provided prior to each meeting). Staff will provide answers to questions, where possible, and post all questions and answers online.

2. Building Access – **As of Tuesday, March 17, 2020, Town Hall is closed to the public until further notice.** Members of the public will be encouraged to contact town personnel by phone for any special business or informational needs. All payments will be encouraged to be made via check through U.S. Mail, the Town's drop box and/or through our third-party credit card payment service. Deliveries and packages will be encouraged to be dropped off via appointment (if necessary) or in a drop box during normal business hours. Appropriate signage is displayed on the front doors to Town Hall. Relative to our other municipal buildings, there will be limited access, by appointment only, for Public Works, Water Plant, Waste Water Plant and Police Dept.

As you are aware, the Bush Tabernacle has voluntarily closed, and we have closed the Train Station for all public meetings and gatherings effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020 until further notice. Staff has notified those with reservations to cancel and offer to reschedule or process refunds. No decisions have been made with regards to Fireman's Field as spring activities do not commence until May.

3. Parks and Recreation Activities – all Town-sponsored events coordinated and hosted by the Parks and Recreation Division are canceled for the remainder of March and all of April, including the Town-wide clean up scheduled for this weekend and the Music and Arts Festival. Staff will be contacting groups who have submitted event applications to ensure that these events are in compliance with CDC recommendations.
4. Finance – Water and Wastewater Cut-Offs - During the declaration of local emergency, the Town will not cut-off any service for non-payment of water and sewer bills. For any citizen who has difficulty in paying for utility services, the Town will offer payment plans to assist those in need.

Meals Tax - It is generally understood that we cannot waive or postpone payments of the Meals Tax for our restaurant community. The Meals Tax is not a tax paid by the entrepreneur, rather it is a tax collected by the entrepreneur, in trust from the consumer to the Town. It is prohibited under law for the entrepreneur to utilize trust funds for operational requirements or subsidizing their liquidity. However, the Council has scheduled a discussion at the March 24 work session on relief for local businesses during this state of emergency, and we will render direction following policy set forth by the Council.

Sales Tax – The Town has no authority over State Sales Tax, and therefore cannot waive or postpone the collection of this tax.

Other Local Tax – On March 24, the Town Council will also be discussing potential relief for local businesses and citizens.

5. Coordination with Outside Vendors, Agencies and Constituents – where possible, teleconference meetings will be encouraged for all outside vendors, agencies (including pre-bid conferences currently being advertised by the Town), and constituents. Should person to person meetings be required, we will maximize separation between parties and practice hygiene procedures as recommended by CDC.
6. Personnel – the administration is relaxing our personnel rules and regulations to afford the ability of employees to stagger shifts and work remotely, where possible. In addition, we will be modifying our rules for leave to ensure that all employees have sufficient time should mandatory quarantining be instituted for necessity or precaution.

While these restrictions will certainly mean that we will no longer be conducting business as usual, our entire team is committed to provide the excellent level of service delivery across all departments. Each member of our professional team stands ready to rise above any obstacle, barrier or constraint to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our residents and our business community.

Lastly, as the public is aware, our most important resource in our town is the men and women who continually provide the highest level of dedication and commitment to make this community one of the greatest Town's in the state. These restrictions are being put in place not only to protect our community but also to ensure that we protect the health, safety and welfare of our employees and first responders so they can continue to effectively respond during the length of this crisis.

The Town of Purcellville, Virginia

"Purcellville-your small Town, where history and progress intersect and people prosper," is an award-winning town of over 10,000 residents located in Loudoun County, approximately 50 miles west of Washington, DC. Having received the prestigious Siemens Sustainability Award for Small Communities, Purcellville continues to be honored for its green initiatives with most recently being the Tree City USA recipient for the 12th year. The Town was reaffirmed as a AAA rated community by S&P Global Ratings, the highest credit rating possible, and is recognized as one of the safest towns in Virginia. Once a stop along the W&OD rail line, which has been converted to a multi-use trail from Alexandria, VA to Purcellville, the Town has maintained its historic old-town feel through the restoration and maintenance of its many downtown structures, reflecting the Victorian architecture popular during the early 1900s. Today, Purcellville is the economic hub of western Loudoun County and a popular weekend destination for antiquing, equestrian activities, farmer's markets, wineries, breweries, distilleries and restaurants. More info at www.purcellvilleva.gov.

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