



# THE CITY OF OXFORD

**March 17, 2020**

**MAYOR'S UPDATE RE: COVID-19**

In a time of deep uncertainty, fear and circumstances that are changing literally every hour, we understand that every member of our community is affected by this pandemic. Things I prayed we would not have to implement even 12 hours ago have changed completely.

As of this morning, although there were still no positive Coronavirus cases confirmed in Lafayette County, I believe that is simply because the testing is not readily available at this time. As of yesterday, there were 12 positive cases in Mississippi...this morning there are 21. I spoke a few minutes ago with Dr. Jason Waller who is the Chief of Staff and Director of Emergency Management at Baptist Hospital – North Mississippi, and he has provided this public statement:

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic our community has been turned upside down. It is imperative that we take drastic measures to reduce transmission of this disease. As our country’s medical experts have advised, we must practice social distancing including, no gatherings greater than 10 people and rigorous hygiene. As of this moment we do not have any confirmed cases in our county but in my opinion, it is here. Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to test everyone. We are only able to test the patients sick enough to be admitted to the hospital. Hopefully, testing will be more widely available in the coming weeks, but that may be too late. We must stay ahead of the curve and it is our duty to take measures to protect ourselves, our family and neighbors. If you have flu like symptoms, cough, fever, chills and muscle aches, please practice self-quarantine. If you are short of breath or having respiratory distress you should seek medical attention. If you have a minor illness, please think twice before you seek medical attention, as you may be exposed to the virus in any healthcare setting. This situation is changing on a daily basis. Now is the time for patience and understanding as our local and national leaders make difficult decisions to address this pandemic.”

It is important for you to know that City of Oxford officials had our first meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup> to begin putting plans in place for our community regarding the spread of Covid-19. Our top priorities were then, and remain the safety of our employees and citizens, service to our citizens throughout this emergency and support of our business community as we weather what is indeed an economic pandemic.

The threat of Covid-19 is very real. It is critical that in these trying times we remain calm and make decisions using common sense and compassion. In light of the announcements a few hours ago by President Trump, the White House Task Force Response Coordinator, and CDC Officials, as well as the information provided by Dr. Jason Waller, I will be asking our Board to consider the following to go into effect at 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18:

Require bars & restaurants to go strictly to drive thru, curbside pick-up and delivery service, closing all dining rooms to guests during this state of emergency for at least 15 days at this point.

The City of Oxford will provide designated curbside pick-up during this State of Emergency throughout downtown locations for both restaurants and retail establishments.

We understand that these measures of allowing takeout services do not in any way make up for the loss of revenues of these establishments. The City has not made a determination that restaurants should be closed because we appreciate both the food service that these restaurants are providing and the employment they give our citizens.

We will ask retail establishments to practice the social distancing recommendations issued by the CDC.

AS of this time, all grocery stores remain open and the Pantry will continue to serve citizens who count on them.

It is the responsibility of every American to aid in the prevention of the spread of this virus. Our hope is that of the Federal and State Government that by imposing these measures quickly and firmly, we will help bring this national emergency to an end quickly and help revitalize the economy we all enjoy as soon as possible. We hope that these measures will be the difference between a 2 - 4 week emergency situation and a 6 - 8 week emergency situation. We want to stay ahead of it as much as we can.

In the end, it will be impossible to know if we overreacted or did too much but it will be QUITE apparent if we underreacted or id too little.

These times are so tough on our community. It is important to stick together and support and take care of our neighbors. We will be stronger in the end together.