



THE CITY OF OXFORD

April 28, 2020
Mayor's Update

I want to see if I can define where we are. I know it is confusing.

Our Board adopted a 4th Resolution on Thursday, April 23rd. This 4th Resolution was to go into effect on April 30 allowing non-essential businesses to offer curbside service. Our Stay at Home order is currently in place until April 30th.

The Board also adopted Serving Oxford Safely – A Plan for Recovery Phase I at this same meeting. It was to go into effect 14 days after the peak allowing businesses to open under the guidelines established in this plan.

On Friday, April 24, Governor Tate Reeves issued Executive Order 1477 that did not allow for everything in our Phase I plan to open 14 days after our peak date. The Governor's Order allows for municipalities to put in place requirements that are stricter than his Order but not more lenient. So, his list of businesses that cannot open is the ruling Order. He did allow non-essential businesses to open effective yesterday, April 27th. Since our Resolution did not allow this, our Resolution is the ruling order.

About as clear as mud, right?

Today our Board considered further options for opening non-essential businesses.

First let me explain that the peak has been established.

You can review these charts that we are using to establish this peak. When you got to the oxfordms.net site, there is an orange bar that says "Updates on community Efforts regarding Coronavirus" when you click on that it will be the first thing on that page each day. We will update before 4:00 pm each day.

You will note that are determining the peak by taking the number of positive cases for each day and subtracting the number of recovered cases after 14 days and the number of positive cases at Long Term Care Facilities. The staff members of LTCF are remain

included but residents in these facilities who will not have the opportunity to get out in the public are taken out.

The peak date is established as April 18th with 14 days from that date being May 2nd.

As we move forward these numbers combined with information from healthcare professionals and data from our hospitals will be considered.

Again...as I always repeat...we know this can change in an hour but we can only make decisions based on what we know right now.

Why are our numbers leveling and decreasing... our healthcare professionals tell us that is because of three things:

- Social distancing
- Hand washing
- Face coverings

I, and this Board, have been challenged on social media regarding our authority to require face coverings. So, for those of you making this argument:

Mississippi Code Section 45-17-7 authorizes the Mayor to issue orders necessary for the protection of life and property, once the City has proclaimed a state of civil emergency, which the City of Oxford has done. The Mayor and Board of Aldermen also have the authority to make orders, rules, and regulations as necessary for emergency management purposes under Section 33-15-31. Finally, Mississippi Code Section 21-19-3 specifically grants the City the power to make regulations to prevent the introduction and spread of contagious or infectious diseases.

The City has been in near constant consultation with local medical professionals, who tell us that requiring face coverings in public is one of the most important things – if not the single most important thing -- that the City can do in order to protect public health and safety, and prevent the spread of a highly contagious and deadly disease, at this stage of the pandemic. Given the specific guidance of the City's Emergency Management Coordinator, local health professionals, and the experiences and information provided to the Board of Aldermen regarding the spread of diseases and the large number of people in close contact to each other, particularly at what have been defined as essential businesses, the Board of Aldermen made the prudent

decision to require essential businesses and services, to require their employees and patrons to wear face coverings when they enter those businesses.

You may have seen the article in the Oxford Eagle this weekend where Dr. Eric Dahl who has consulted us over the past month was interviewed about face coverings. The article ends with his quote that

“The longer we put up with the social concept of caring for one another by wearing masks, the better this will get, the less severe it will be and the lower the death rate will be for all.”

I would like to remind the public that a face covering does not have to be a mask. Dr. Eric Dahl did a video stressing not only the importance of wearing a face covering but how to make one out of three paper towels and two rubber bands.

As our resolution currently stands... 14 days after our peak would be this Saturday, May 2nd.

The Board of Alderman in the meeting we just adjourned voted to move forward with Phase I of Serving Oxford Safely for the businesses allowed to open and not specifically prohibited by the Governor’s Executive Order 1477. The Board also voted to require face coverings in all businesses for employees and customers.

A quick overview of businesses that are prohibited from opening tomorrow per Executive Order 1477 are:

Restaurant Dining rooms

Close contact services including tattoo parlors, aestheticians, massage therapy facilities, barber shops, hair salons, nail salons, and tanning salons.

Fitness and Exercise gyms and dance studios

Entertainment venues including bowling alleys, concert venues and movie theaters, and children’s party and play facilities

Organized athletic team activities

Outdoor recreation except for individual recreation and walking trails

Executive Order 1477 also prevents the opening of tennis or basketball facilities at this time as only individual outdoor recreation is allowed.

With Executive Order 1477 businesses allowed to open tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. according to the guidelines of Serving Oxford Safely Phase I, and with mandatory face coverings for all employees and customers include but are not limited to:

Retail businesses

Offices and General Businesses

And Non-emergent medical health services

Grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores, childcare facilities, auto repair stores, auto sales and others that have remained open

A quick announcement:

Free face coverings will be distributed on Friday, May 1st at Oxford High School located off of Sisk Avenue on Charger Loop. There will be two distribution times from 8-10 am and from 5-7 pm. There will be a limit of 4 face coverings per vehicle. This free distribution is a partnership between Visit Oxford and Chick-Fil-A and the City of Oxford. The face coverings are actually made from Double Decker T-shirts!