



A COVID-19 Update from Mayor Desiderio

April 17, 2020

First and foremost, I want to thank everyone for their cooperation and patience as we navigate through these uncharted waters together. I realize that these are unusual and difficult times to say the least, but I remain confident that we will beat this pandemic together and emerge stronger than ever on the other side.

The loss of employment, shuttered businesses, “stay at home” orders, closure of our beautiful beaches and promenade, mounting uncertainty, and sickness and death rearing their ugly heads have created fear and uncertainty on an epic level. However, I am inspired by the goodness that I see all around us during this pandemic, including the countless people who continually step-up to assist others.

The stories of our nation’s health care workers, first responders, grocery clerks, pharmacy employees, and other essential workers doing their part to keep America functioning could fill volumes of books and no doubt will be the source of documentaries and movies for years to come. Also, the men, women and children from our area who are displaying selflessness in many different ways have my undying thanks, including those who are sewing and donating face masks and the individuals who are giving their time and money so charitable organizations and other service groups can continue to help others.

I realize that we are all nervous about COVID-19 and eager to learn what the immediate and long-term future will bring. That being said, please know that your local and county governments are already making plans for the time when this disease is on the downturn in Cape May County. We are discussing plans with neighboring cities, the county, and state to determine a coordinated opening of beaches, boardwalks, and parks. Next week, I will be reaching out to the Sea Isle City business community to begin making plans for the anticipated re-opening of our community’s eat-in restaurants, retailers and other businesses. This will also be a coordinated effort between our county and state partners, and we will not take any actions that could reverse the great strides we have made so far – but I am confident that if we continue to work together, we will soon transition toward “business as usual” because the light at the end of the tunnel is growing brighter.

Additionally, I am honored to have been appointed by my fellow County Freeholders as co-chairperson of a new Business Recovery Task Force, which is being formed to help business owners obtain the information, resources and any available funding they need to keep their lights on and prevent them from furloughing employees. More information about this effort will be forthcoming from our County public relations personnel.

Please know that these words about businesses reopening and people returning to work do not supersede our primary objective, which is to preserve the health and safety of all people. I thoroughly

understand that everyone wants to return to their familiar routines, interact freely with one another and put the restrictions of this pandemic behind us, but that cannot happen unless we all continue to do our part by staying at home whenever possible, practicing social distancing, and following all directives from our state and county health officials. A “return to normalcy” won’t happen overnight – but it will happen. Meanwhile, let’s do all we can to keep one another safe.

As you know, this pandemic has affected nearly every aspect of our lives, including important municipal projects that we continue to pursue and fully expect will be completed – even if it takes a little longer than we originally anticipated. Case in point, our approaching beach replenishment project did not begin this spring as we had hoped. However, we expect Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Company to mobilize here in Sea Isle City in mid-June, at which time they will begin to add sand on the beaches in the middle of town. I realize that June is not the ideal time for a beach-fill to take place, but the timeline is out of our control and we must accept this delivery of new sand when the Army Corps of Engineers can arrange for the work to commence. As was the case with past beach replenishment efforts, we will keep everyone informed of all developments as the project nears, begins, and is seen through to fruition.

Speaking of the Army Corps of Engineers, you are likely aware that they have been very busy helping build field hospitals and securing other facilities during the fight against COVID-19. Naturally, that work has preoccupied the men and women of the ACOE – however, we still anticipate that within the next few weeks the Army Corps will grant us the final permits we need for Sea Isle’s future Fishing Pier and Kayak Launch at Dealy Field. Once those important ACOE permits are secured, we will move forward with construction of this much-anticipated recreation facility as soon as possible. In the meantime, I thank everyone for their patience, and I encourage all of you to stay informed and stay safe.

Please remember that we are all one Sea Isle City, and together we will be stronger than ever.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Len".

Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio

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