

Town Administrator Report to Select Board – March 24, 2020 Meeting

COVID-19 Updates

Good evening – over the last week the Dennis Select Board held two Emergency Board Meetings to address the ongoing challenges the community is responding to as we all navigate through this global health crisis. The Town has issued a series of addresses and media releases, as well as an Emergency Declaration, all of this information can be found on the Town of Dennis website at www.town.dennis.ma.us/home/news/coronavirus-covid-19-information

Additionally, at noon on Tuesday, March 24, Governor Baker ordered all non-essential business to close their physical locations and is advising people to stay at home to avoid person-to-person contact. The list of Essential Businesses that may remain open can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-essential-services>.

Grocery stores, gas stations, and healthcare providers, among others will remain open for business. If you are unsure if a business in Dennis is open, for the time being, please call them directly. We are still reviewing this issue and the Governor's Executive Order and guidance and making decisions for Dennis. We will be updating this information in the near future.

If you must go out to shop, please remember to abide by social distancing, wash your hands frequently, and avoid large groups of people.

The Town of Dennis is communicating through a number of different media outlets to reach our citizens, including: The Town of Dennis Facebook page, which is updated frequently, Channel 18 for Board Meetings where Emergency Updates are given, Media Releases are shared with all local radio, and new outlets including Cape Cod Times newspaper as well as the Register and Wicked Local.com. We have a COVID page where all updates are kept as well at www.town.dennis.ma.us and Dennis is also sharing updates on Twitter. We have also updated our phone message at Town Hall to include much of this information. All information is cross posted on each of these outlets.

For the most recent state-level information from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, including testing information, please hang up and dial 2-1-1.

At this time, as of today, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Dennis.

There have been questions about the information that can be shared about individuals who have contracted COVID19, those suspected of exposure to the virus, and those with whom information can be shared. Dennis will not be sharing any personal information to members of the public or media. All of our residents are still protected by HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules. These rules ensure the security of patients' protected health information (PHI) and require reasonable safeguards to be followed to protect PHI against impermissible uses and disclosures. The HIPAA Privacy Rule restricts the use and disclosure of PHI to those providing healthcare operations.

Dennis will not be disclosing the whereabouts, home address or Names of people with COVID19 to the public.

We can share the latest numbers of confirmed cases, information about the precautions you should take, and the latest list of rules and regulations enacted to contain the spread. We will be updating the Health Department website often with the latest information.

As has been the case, the Dennis Town Hall and other administrative offices are closed and many Town employees are working from home. Please continue to leave voicemails and emails for specific offices and we will do our best to respond as soon as possible. The Police and Fire Departments are fully staffed and prepared to respond to emergencies. The Health Department is essential and will also be available - please reach out to them by email or call the department and leave a message. The best email is kkeller@town.dennis.ma.us Department of Public Works continues to maintain the water, sewer and road maintenance, and the transfer station will be open regular hours for house hold trash only no recycling at this time.

Please continue to remain at least 6-feet away from others, even while outside. Do not congregate in groups, either indoors or out. Playgrounds and parks are closed to group recreation. The Dennis Beaches are open and you may continue to walk, run and bike outside with members of you immediate household, or alone. The roads are open and you are not prohibited from driving. Please stay home as much as possible and avoid coming into close contact with others.

Thank you to the Health Director and the Emergency Operations Team for all their work thus far and the Select Board for their leadership. The patience and understanding of the community is appreciated, please know your health and safety is our highest priority.

Thank you and please take care,

Elizabeth C. Sullivan
Town Administrator