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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Yorktown revives state of emergency declaration; mandates face covering at all parks and town property

YORKTOWN, N.Y. (November 12, 2020) – The Town Board voted Thursday to revive a state of emergency declaration in response to rising cases of Covid-19.

The state of emergency declaration was originally made on March 13 and it expired in the summer. The declaration of a local state of emergency gives the town supervisor the authority to issue emergency orders that could include curfews, regulating movement into and out of certain areas and ordering public places closed, among other powers.

“What we’re trying to do is prevent a shut down,” said Supervisor Matt Slater. “The whole point of this is to prevent the state from putting greater restrictions on our community. That means we have to rely on the community to take proper action.”

During the previous state of emergency Supervisor Slater issued several executive orders, including restricting access to town-owned buildings to town employees only; closing parks; and ordering child care facilities to create staggered pick-up and drop-off times. Some of the emergency orders may be revived, Supervisor Slater said on Thursday.

In addition to the state of emergency declaration, the Town Board voted on Tuesday to require all visitors to wear a mask or face shield covering the mouth and nose at town parks, recreational facilities or buildings. The decision was prompted by increasing reports of Covid-19 cases; as of Tuesday there were 46 cases reported in Yorktown, which was 15 more cases than over the weekend.

“We’ve continued to put out the same information, the same guidelines, the same parameters, the same recommendations, and yet unfortunately we’re seeing lax compliance,” said Supervisor Slater during the Town Board meeting. “I don’t think that we’re left with many options than to mandate masks at our fields and in our town facilities.”

In recent weeks, some visitors to Yorktown parks have refused to put on face coverings and others have refused to leave the parks for not observing social distancing.

“The bottom line is we don’t want to shut things down, but the other side of the coin is that part of our oath is to protect the public,” said Councilwoman Alice Roker. “If we keep going this way, we might even get to the point where we have community spread, which is the worst place you want us to be. We don’t want to be where Port Chester is.”

The Town Board also discussed closing town parks because some local parents are not properly supervising their children to ensure public health. Signs will be posted at the town’s parks to remind visitors of the mandate.

“We put the onus on the parents and/or coaches, whoever happens to be there, that they must maintain this,” said Councilman Tom Diana. “It’s not like the mall used to be way back when we just dropped the kids off.”

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