



March 13, 2020

Fellow citizens of the Amazing City of Temple Terrace,

As you know, the Tampa Bay area has been affected by the COVID-19 virus that has recently spread throughout the world. While there is no reason for fear or panic, health officials and governments at all levels are taking proactive and measured precautions to address the disease and prevent its spread. The City Manager and I have been deeply involved with leaders from Hillsborough County and the other municipalities to develop a coordinated response to this threat. I would like to share with you the results of those efforts and let you know what actions your city leadership is taking.

Yesterday, there was a meeting of the Emergency Policy Group (EPG), which includes the mayors of all three cities, representatives of the County Commission, the County Administrator, the Sheriff and the chair of the School Board. The EPG voted unanimously to declare a local state of emergency. This declaration does several things. It designates the Department of Health (DOH) as the lead agency and commits each entity to follow the guidance set by the DOH and the Centers for Disease Control. It also delegates executive authority to the County Administrator to develop county-wide strategies and ensure coordination. Furthermore, it prohibits price-gouging during the crisis. This declaration is only valid for seven days; the EPG will meet again on March 19 to discuss the next steps.

It is important to note what the declaration does not do. It does not mandate the closing of schools or the mandatory cancelation of events or gatherings. Many cancelations are indeed occurring voluntarily, but there are no mandatory cancelations at this time. Obviously, this is a rapidly changing situation and that could change in the future.

It is also important to note that most of the COVID-19 cases in Florida involve international travel, and that the health departments across the state have been so far very successful at breaking the transmission chain through quarantine and isolation.

Next, I'd like to outline some of the specific measures the City of Temple Terrace is taking. Of primary concern are the senior activities at the Lightfoot Center. Leisure Services Director Karl Langefeld is coordinating with the county and other cities to develop a unified approach to senior activities. Many of these programs are funded by the federal government with funds provided via Hillsborough County, so it is necessary that we coordinate at all levels and act in a unified approach. It is likely that some of these programs may be modified or suspended in the near future in order to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

Office of the Vice Mayor

11250 NORTH 56TH STREET • P.O. BOX 16930 • TEMPLE TERRACE, FLORIDA 33617

PHONE 813.506.6440 • FAX 813.506.6441 • www.templeterrace.com

Similar efforts are underway concerning operations at the Recreation Center and the library, as these are both areas of constant physical interaction. There are currently no plans to suspend normal activities at the Recreation Center or the library, but again, this is a very fluid situation and things could change rapidly.

Efforts have also been undertaken to collaborate with local nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the city to ensure all precautions are being taken.

All jurisdictions are closely evaluating the risk factors involved in community events. As you know, many of the large events locally have been cancelled or postponed. At this time, Temple Terrace has not mandated the cancellation of any events, but the situation is being monitored constantly. All operations of city government are continuing as normal at this time.

Be assured that your City Council and City Manager are proactively involved in addressing this crisis on every level. We will continue to coordinate our efforts with our local partners to ensure we are doing everything possible to keep our citizens safe. I encourage all of you to take basic precautions as outlined by the Florida Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. Information about these precautions can be found at www.floridahealth.gov and www.cdc.gov.

I encourage all of you to take basic precautions to protect yourselves and your families, but not to panic. We will do what Americans always do; we will work together to meet this challenge head-on as a united community. Please feel free to contact me if you have any specific concerns or questions. I will make every effort to keep you informed as the situation develops.

Respectfully,



Andrew R. Ross
Vice Mayor