



## **MAYOR'S MESSAGE**

*May 7, 2020*

During these unusual times, when there seems to be more questions than answers to the issues surrounding COVID-19, I want to reassure everyone that your City officials are doing all we can to keep the public safe as we work toward the familiar sense of normalcy that we all crave.

Two of the most common questions that we receive have to do with the closure of our beaches and promenade, and the uncertainty of the summer rental season ahead. Fortunately, I have some good news about both of these important topics.

Following lengthy discussions with State and County Health officials as well as in-depth conversations with medical personnel from area hospitals, we feel that it is quite possible that Sea Isle City's beaches and promenade will be opened within the next week. Also, at this point we plan to allow long term rentals of 30 days or more to begin starting May 11, and short term rentals to begin starting May 30.

Obviously, this is good news for us all. However, I remind you that when our beaches and promenade do open, we will need to continue to follow social distancing standards and all other safety directives on the sand and on the promenade because public safety is now and will continue to be our number one priority here in Sea Isle City. When the beaches are initially opened, it will be for limited use only – walking, running, surfing, and fishing. Sunbathing, sitting, and group gatherings will be prohibited.

Naturally, we will announce any and all developments as soon as they occur. In the meantime we ask everyone to continue the good work you have been doing in order to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are still operating under Governor Murphy's state of emergency, and we must continue to avoid non-essential travel, practice social distancing, wear facemasks when shopping and interacting with others in public settings, and limit time outdoors to essential activities such as exercising.

We realize the burden that the pandemic has placed on businesses, and we continue our discussions with State and County Health Officials to do all we can to help get the entire business community open.

You may have heard that your County Freeholders recently organized "The Cape May County-Wide Recovery Initiative," which was initially dubbed "The Business Recovery Task Force." This group, which I am honored to co-chair, was formed with the goals of optimizing and supporting economic recovery and the safe, thoughtful reopening of public places. This initiative, which received unanimous support of all of Cape May County's sixteen municipalities, submitted a plan for reopening our County to Governor Murphy, which advances every measure reasonably possible to ensure the safety of the public while allowing needed economic activity to progressively begin. This comprehensive and detailed plan can be found on our County Website, [www.capemaycountynj.gov](http://www.capemaycountynj.gov).

As a reminder to all property owners, on April 28 Governor Murphy signed an executive order giving municipalities the authority to extend second quarter tax grace periods, which would require a municipal resolution to enact. When they learned about this, the members of City Council quickly planned a special meeting on May 5 (which had to be advertised ahead of time according to State laws) and subsequently they were able to extend our second quarter property tax grace period to June 1. I applaud City Council for acting as quickly as they did to ensure that this benefit was passed along to our local property owners in a timely manner.

Even though a lot of good work is taking place, it's important to realize that we still have challenging days ahead and that we must remain focused on our common goals so we can beat COVID-19 as soon as possible. Meanwhile, please stay safe, stay well, remain optimistic, and remember: We are all one Sea Isle City and together we will be stronger than ever.

Sincerely,

Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio