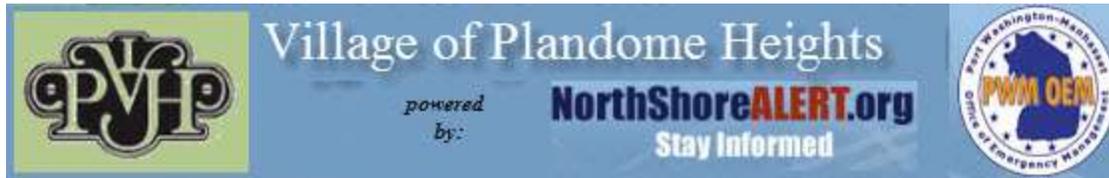


March 27, 2020



A message from Mayor Kenneth C. Riscica:

As Mayor I have access to State and local leadership in calls and emails with officials about the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes Nassau County's top emergency management officer, the Police Commissioner, PWM-OEM, County, State and Town officials, our 9 peninsula Mayors and local medical leaders. I write to offer you some perspective from what I hear. This is not a report about science or statistics; you see what I see. I write to offer a perspective, from my seat at the table. Perspective on where we are and where we are going. You may agree or not, but this is what I hear and see from my post.

With roughly 4,000 cases confirmed in Nassau County, we are experiencing the pandemic. The situation is much different than one or two weeks ago. Our local hospitals are filling up, but not overloaded, as I understand it. Plans and preparations are being made to add hospital capacity by (a) reducing non-essential care and repurposing physical and professional resources (b) adding resources with make-shift facilities at SUNY Old Westbury and (c) recalling retired medical professionals. The hospitals have the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE's) and other equipment that they need now, and more is arriving to stockpile. Despite protections, our medical professionals are succumbing to the virus at some rate. So, a population of nurses and doctors are out sick or quarantined. This strains resources but the need is currently being met. I would say, "hug a nurse if you know one," but please don't.

The good news is that (a) many cases are mild and do not require hospitalization and (b) the mortality rate is lower than once thought it could be. The virus seems to be more threatening to males, senior citizens and anyone with health conditions but especially seniors. The young are not exempt; they are 20% of the hospitalizations, I hear.

I posted the latest map of the confirmed Covid-19 cases in Nassau County on our website.

Testing is being done at a very high rate compared to other states and countries. You need a doctor's prescription for a test and there are criteria to meet to get a prescription. It is that not easy to get a prescription.

If you consume medical care at any level, you will learn about "telemedicine." In-person medical visits are carefully controlled or curtailed. Telemedicine is increasingly available. I had my first "telemedicine" visit yesterday after a carefully controlled in-person visit the day before. Our medical professionals are bravely on the job and using caution and American ingenuity to serve you.

In addition to our medical professionals, our first responders are actively deployed. NCPD made over 900 "transports" (as of last night) and that has risen to nearly 100 per day. Each NCPD vehicle is equipped with appropriate PPE and disinfectant. Despite this, our officer ranks are affected and 90 are confirmed for Covid-19 and others are also in quarantine. NCPD currently is handling this with hard work and long hours. I regret that I do not have information on our firefighters, but I am sure they are experiencing the same. So, you could hug a police officer or firefighter, but please don't.

With the reduced manpower and high demands, NCPD recommends that minor items like car accidents and small crimes reports be dealt with at the Precinct level, 573-6600, and that 911 be reserved at this time for higher urgency matters. This is temporary; we need to help them help us.

It appears that NY metro, with its density, currently has more than 50% of the cases nationwide. I understand that the situation with hospitals in NYC is more strained than we have experienced locally. The good news is that more resources are being deployed through repurposing and by the Governor and the President adding temporary facilities like Javits and the U.S. Naval ship Comfort and other measures.

With strong federal and state leadership and cooperation, we seem to have what we need and are building “stockpiles” (Governor Cuomo’s words today).

On the economic front, the damage will be substantial with many millions suddenly unemployed and many businesses that will struggle to survive. Governments and non-profits will suffer lower revenues, too. The Congress and the President have reacted by, among other measures, passing today a substantial financial support package, the CARES Act, in addition to other actions that, combined, are meant to cushion the blow for many vulnerable Americans, businesses, hospitals and governments. The bill is imperfect in many respects, but it is designed to (a) prevent more extensive damage to the economy and (b) provide us hope. Both are sorely needed

What does any of this mean and how do you process it?

It means that we are now in the full blown thick of the pandemic. It means that if you haven’t learned the imperative of social distancing and washing your hands and wiping down surfaces, you need to catch up yesterday and double down. It means that you should stay home and practice social distancing if you need to go out. It means some solitary exercise outside might be therapeutic for you; there are some beautiful days. It means that now is a good time to check in on our seniors who need to stay home.

And where is this going?

The current plan has been a 15-day “mitigation” plan to slow the growth of the virus (“flatten the curve”) so that hospitals are not overwhelmed. That 15-day period ends this weekend and will be followed by a quantitative assessment of where we are. From that assessment, policy makers can begin to plot the next leg of the course. The expectation is that we will see a spike in cases (as we are seeing) and then a leveling off. That leveling off may take more weeks. The assessment and plan of leveling off will present options for a path forward. I have no crystal ball, but I think the path to normalcy is going to be longer than we expected. In just the past two days, I am seeing governments and organizations extend their “work-at-home” requirements to April 20 and school closings to April 15. So that seems to me to be the consensus target. That makes the plan now “15 + 21,” which is a lot to endure.

At a difficult point during WWII, Winston Churchill told Britons, “*Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.*”

My guess is we may be near the “end of the beginning” after Sunday, when we reach the 15th day mark and begin to hear assessments of a path forward.

So, what is my message?

- Thank you for doing your part.
- Take all the precautions recommended and make sure your kids do.

- Be Calm. We will get through this with shared sacrifice and concern for others.
- Take comfort that the finest American minds and resources, locally and nationally, are deployed. The American spirit has never been defeated and we will win this battle.
- Understand the meaning of the new American lexicon, “flatten the curve” and where we are in it.
- Help someone who needs help, or simply encouragement. It will also take your mind off your own concerns.
- Be Patient. Unfortunately, this is going to take longer and hurt more.
- Support our local merchants if you can. They need your business.
- Start thinking about the end of this. We should begin to see some guidance on that next week.
- Take courage and strength from the bravery and determination of our nurses and doctors and first responders. If they can do this, we can do this.

Be careful, be safe, help others. I am here if you need me mayor@plandomeheights-ny.gov

Ken