



Tuesday, April 21, 2020

Dear residents, homeowners, visitors and business owners of Wildwood Crest,

We, the elected leaders of the Borough of Wildwood Crest, are charged with keeping our residents safe and informed during this extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Cape May County has risen at some of the highest rates of any county in New Jersey. Kevin Thomas, the director of the Cape May County Department of Health, has stated that he expects our county to be severely impacted by this crisis over the next few weeks.

In response, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and other state officials have put in place a significant number of measures designed to limit social contact, including a stay-at-home order and the restriction of all non-essential travel.

Here in Wildwood Crest, we have made the drastic decision to close all parks, the beachfront bicycle path and the beach in an effort to further encourage social distancing and to urge the public to remain at home as much as possible.

These are decisions we do not take lightly. We understand fully that the beach and our recreational amenities are in many ways the major attractions of Wildwood Crest. We know how much our full-time residents, second owners and many visitors enjoy the wonderful things we have to offer here.

However by keeping the Crest's beaches, parks, playgrounds and bike path open, we would be encouraging people to come to the Jersey Shore to enjoy what they can't at home, simply because those areas are open, and offer a desired change of scenery which would put our residents and visitors at an unnecessary risk. We also would be putting our summer and New Jersey's \$7 billion tourism industry at risk. The fact is for now, as difficult as it is for us to do so, we have closed these facilities to encourage shelter in place, and to make sure potential non-essential travelers know it's really no better in the Crest than it is at home at this time. Our first option would have been to temporarily restrict access to Cape May County and, if necessary, restrict travel across the bridges in an effort to get ahead of the spread (aka flatten the curve) of this outbreak. However, we were quickly told by the Governor's office that simply was not permissible. We are guided by Federal, State and County health officials and by gubernatorial directives so we believe it's in the best interest of public health, safety and welfare of our citizens to temporarily close these facilities.

We are acutely aware that these announcements have touched off a debate regarding our full-time residents second homeowners. We understand that our full-time residents wish as many people as possible would stay away from the island due to health and safety concerns. And we also understand that our second homeowners wish to visit and stay at their properties, particularly as the weather improves with each passing weekend.

But we are at a point where we must do everything possible to limit the number of those becoming sick while also protecting the lives of our first responders and their families, as well as all of our residents. As such, we have strongly urged the public to remain at their primary residence.

To our second homeowners, we fully realize that you are in many ways the lifeblood of the economy here in Wildwood Crest and at the Jersey Shore in general. You are loyal taxpayers who usually require much less use of municipal services, while injecting millions of dollars into our local economy. You add tremendously to the fabric of our great community. Your contributions to Wildwood Crest and the Jersey Shore in general are endless. Without them it would be impossible for our community to survive.

To our full-time residents, you are the people who help make our community welcome to all. You are also loyal taxpayers who help form the incredible personality of our community at all times of the year. Your contributions here are essential, particularly during this delicate time, as many of you serve as essential members of the workforce. You are dedicated first responders, doctors, nurses, grocery store employees, municipal employees, business owners and more without whom our community cannot thrive.

To all who enjoy Wildwood Crest, whether you're a full-time resident, second homeowner or occasional or frequent visitor, you are all vital to our community in a variety of ways. We appreciate each and every one of you.

We as elected officials of our incredible community have strived to do our best to serve all of our residents and visitors, regardless of how many days you stay each year in Wildwood Crest. We are dedicated to improving and maintaining infrastructure, offering a variety of special events and continuing to provide municipal services that benefit all of our full-time residents, secondary homeowners and tens of thousands of yearly visitors.

We wish all of you the best at this most difficult time. We, the elected officials of Wildwood Crest, are confident that this will soon pass and we can all go back to enjoy all aspects of our wonderful community.

Be safe and be well.

Mayor/Comm. Don Cabrera

Commissioner Joyce Gould

Commissioner David Thompson