

Long Island COVID-19 May 4, 2020

RETURNING ISLAND RESIDENTS/VISITORS

Whether coming from out of state or not, if you are returning to the Island you must assume you could be carrying the virus. If you have been on this Island in self-isolation for over two weeks you probably do not.

All of us have reached the point where we are trying to make informed decisions on how to move forward from this COVID-19 crisis and the resulting closing of the State. The Town Select Board has been looked to throughout this crisis to provide guidance for seasonal property owners on when they can return. We greatly respect your patience and participation in protecting our vulnerable population but we feel pressured to come up with a workable plan. The problem is increased by the Governor's Four-Stage approach to reopening the State www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine, which is not clear and leaves these decisions up to interpretation and the clarifications keep coming. It's important to note that we are located in Cumberland County, the hardest hit area in the State.

Returning from Out of State-We will continue to ask residents who are returning to the Island from winter stays or travels out of State to be responsible and heed the current warnings coming from the Federal and State CDC offices concerning travel and the risk of spread, plus the State of Maine mandates. We appreciate you, as you are all family, and you are what make this Island what it is to so many. We look forward to seeing you when the pandemic passes. If you are determined to return to the island, we urge you to bring your own food, pharmaceuticals and other needed supplies with you as you self-quarantine for the required 14 days, so as to not diminish the limited supplies available on the Island. Deliveries may be available but could be limited.

Some out of State owners decided on their own to just come to the Island and open up even before April 30. We are also seeing off-island contractors coming on a regular basis. These actions have elicited justifiable concern from those that have worked so hard to protect each other and ourselves for these last 2 months.

To be clear - The Maine mandate does not allow those coming from out of State to not quarantine, even if just coming to the Island to open up or “just for the weekend”. Back & forth ferry and water taxi rides and trips to the Boathouse are not self-quarantining.

Maine Residents-For those who are Maine residents returning to the Island, we trust they have followed the Stay at Home and social distancing rules since the Governor’s first Executive Order and can plan on coming to their homes and opening up, based on their own assessment of the risk to their fellow Islanders and themselves. They must, however, respect others and maintain social distancing and preferably a mask. **The observations in the last few days are that this is not something those coming to the Island understand. Social Distancing is real!**

All must consider the risk you expose your community to by coming to the Island. Our community has an aging population and our resources are stretched. Whether coming from out of state or not, you must recognize that you could have the virus, spread here to a vulnerable resident, and leave without knowing. We don’t have the ability to help care for you if you get sick. You would have to go to the mainland which is already feeling the strain. Casco Bay Lines has severely reduced service to 3 boats a day which greatly hinders travel, and is supposedly only for essential travel and freight. Masks are required. These trips also stop at Peaks Island, resulting in crowding which prevents proper Social separation. As more businesses start to open, there will be more ferry riders and increased risk to exposure.

The following are subject to change but are current today;

- The new Long Island Bakehouse will continue to have gas two days a week, Wednesday (5-7) and Saturday (10 to noon).
- The Transfer Station remains on limited winter hours with an additional Thursday pickup.
- The Post office continues to be open but with adjusted hours and later mail delivery
- The Boathouse Store remains well stocked but with pre-placed orders only. No customers in the store. (207-766-5709)
- The Learning Center Facility and Library, Community Center and Town Hall remain closed to non-essential workers.

- There is no extra berthing at the Town Floats for extended tie ups, >2-hours.
- The Gift Shop plans to open at some time but with social distancing protocols.
- The Community Garden is open but also with strong protocols.
- Annual Town Meeting is set for June 13 2020 and details are still being worked out with the Governor's office.
- State primary elections are set for July 14 by absentee ballot and at the Community Center. (details to follow)

RENTERS REQUEST

We are asking those that provide rentals to reconsider those rentals in the near term to again minimize the spread. The Islanders are very concerned about visitors unfamiliar with the Island and our at-risk population. Unlike many Islands we have no public hotels/motels and no full-service restaurants which will be attracting visitors who do not understand our limited services. However, we do have a large amount of rental properties that the owners rely on for income. One estimate was as high as 50 homes are available for short- or long-term rentals on Long Island. It was noted how important these are to our citizens but we have no **“Central Registry”** to communicate with the owners concerning their issues or rental plans going forward. All the islands and much of the State are looking for a rental policy. This will continue to be a major part of discussions.

We are reaching out to all Rental owners for contact information, and request they share how they will handle their rentals this season. *Hopefully we can share ideas from others that may help them plan. This registry can also help our EMS staff for 911 calls.*

Please send your contact information to Amy Tierney at Clerk@longislandmaine.org.

Be safe

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