



Mayor Annette M. Blackwell

NOTICE OF CLOSING CITY HALL AND SENIOR CENTER TO THE PUBLIC

On March 12, 2020, Amy Acton, MD, MPH, Director of the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), pursuant to the authority granted to her in R.C. 3701.13 to "make special orders...for preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases" issued an Order targeted at preventing the spread of COVID-19, a highly communicable disease by prohibiting "mass gatherings" of one hundred (100) or more persons in areas such as confined spaces.

Importantly, the Director's Order also stated: *"Regardless of whether an event or gathering falls within the definition of mass gathering, all persons are urged to maintain social distancing (approximately six feet away from other people) whenever possible and to continue to wash hands, utilize hand sanitizer and practice proper respiratory etiquette (coughing into Elbow, etc.)."*

On March 15, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that no gatherings with 50 people or more take place for the next eight weeks to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Yesterday, March 16, the President and federal health care officials and experts, during their daily press conference, recommended gatherings of no more than 10 people take place.

Accordingly, the Mayor convened the City Directors, Department Heads and Chiefs and the Council President to discuss the City's immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the best ways to keep City employees, residents, especially seniors and those most vulnerable to COVID-19, safe from infection and illness while insuring City services continue without interruption. The decision was made to close City Hall and the Senior Center to the public, beginning March 17, until further notice. A notice of the closure is on the main entrance door advising of the closing and listing the phone numbers for each department so that individuals that have an authorized appointment with a particular department can call to be let into the building.

This decision will immediately impact City services provided by the Building Department, Mayor's Court and the Senior Center. Despite this impact, these departments will continue to provide services to our residents and other members of the public as follows:



1. Building Department. The Building Department staff will still be required to report to work. Plans are in the works to handle permits and registrations via regular mail. In addition, Economic Development Director Grogan-Myers and staff will be working on updating Building Department forms to make them fillable PDFs and exploring the possibility of online payments.

2. Mayor's Court. Last Thursday, March 12, the Law Director ordered the Mayor's Court hearings for March 17 and March 31 to be continued to April 14 and April 28, respectively and notice to be mailed to defendants. (These dates may have to be continued further and the Clerk will give notice to defendants as needed.) With the closure of City Hall access to the Mayor's Court payment window will not be possible. Accordingly, a notice is posted on the City Hall entrance door advising individuals to drop cash or check payments into the lock box outside the door. Individuals are also advised that credit card payments can be made online at www.ohioticketpayments.com/MapleHeights/DocketSearch.php

3. Senior Center. As some of you may know, many area senior centers have closed. The City Senior Center differs from those, however, because it has a contract with the State and County mandating that it stay open and provide meals. Although we believe the Governor will shortly be ordering all senior centers closed the decision was made not to wait any longer. Accordingly, the Senior Center is closed to members of the public effective March 17. The Mayor is greatly concerned with seniors, some of the most vulnerable to COVID-19, being together in a public space. This is even more concerning given the Federal Government's recommendation on March 16 to limit gatherings to less than 10 individuals. On March 16, Human Services Director Linda Vopat and her staff contacted all seniors who regularly come to the Senior Center for meals and advised them of the closing. Those seniors, however, will still be provided meals. Staff along with Building Department employees will deliver their meals to their homes and hang on their door knobs. Of course, meals for the home-bound seniors regularly serviced will continue as usual. All transportation has been halted except for Dialysis patients. We will advise you when this situation changes. The Mobile Farmer's Market will be open on Thursday, March 19 from 9:30-11:30 a.m., with some modifications for your safety. (The HEAP office located in the Senior Center previously made arrangements to close.)