

Dear Quogue Residents,

I am sure that since the middle of last week you turned on the television, listened to the radio, read a newspaper or had a conversation with someone. If you did, you know that Governor Cuomo issued an executive order that requires bars, restaurants and liquor stores to close at 10:00 pm, except for takeout food orders, and gyms and fitness centers to shut down between the popular hours of 10:00 pm and 5:00 am. There is not much of an effect in Quogue because most of us were already planning to be asleep for all or most of that time anyway. The bigger impact comes from the provision in the same executive order that limits the size of any non-essential gathering in a private residence to a maximum of 10 people. I am not sure precisely what “non-essential” means in this context, but the term definitely includes “parties, celebrations and other social events.” There went the Thanksgiving plans of many. For some, this order will be regarded as a welcome excuse to cancel plans that, increasingly, were looking like a bad idea anyway. There is next year after all, and indications are that things will be better then. You can read the details here: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-20274-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency>.

The limitation on gathering size in private residences stems from evidence gained from contact tracing that the spike that is occurring in Suffolk County and elsewhere is emanating chiefly from small private gatherings. Halloween parties were big contributors. In contrast, protocols put in place at schools and nursing homes have been effective, according to Information from County Executive Steve Bellone on Friday. In all likelihood more pronounced spread in private settings is because people tend to lower their guard there. Without a doubt, however, there is an accelerating increase in cases in Suffolk County. In October the daily average of new cases was about 100. More recently, in the second week of November the seven-day average was greater than 300, and the latest daily count was over 400. There are two new reported cases in Quogue in recent days. We have to be very careful particularly because we are likely to see another migration from New York City. For those who are interested, the tracker map for Suffolk County is available here: <https://suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Health-Services/Health-Bulletins/Novel-Coronavirus>

The review of policing in Quogue and elsewhere required by the Governor’s Executive Order 203 issued last June is proceeding. A committee consisting of me, Police Chief Chris Isola, Police Lieutenant Dan Hartman, and residents Joe King, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (and a Quogue Firefighter), Rev. Gale Williams, pastor of St. Paul’s AME Zion Church, Mary Malhotra, former Senior Warden and an officer of the Vestry at St. James’ Church in New York City, David Rowe, Convener of the Executive Committee at Church of the Atonement in Quogue, and Lynn Lomas, president of the Quogue Association, has been meeting and talking with police officers, prosecutors, public defenders and others. A report for public comment will be forthcoming. In the meantime, feel free to contact me with any observations or comments. The State’s handbook of the background of this mandate is on the Village website at <http://www.villageofquogueny.gov/polAnnouncements.cfm> (August 19 posting).

The Quogue Market, which you have probably heard is planning to be open all winter, has a new chef, Michael Nicholson, who is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and has more than 30 years of experience. The Market has started offering “gourmet-to-go” meals. Check them out; I have, and they are good. You can also order a full Thanksgiving meal for one—perfect for 2020—or for groups. You must order by November 20.

Be smart!

Peter Sartorius
Mayor