



MAYORS FOR "MAIN STREET"



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Local Mayors Take Action to Ease Restrictions on Local Businesses in Preparation for Re-Openings and Additional Mayors Join Alliance

Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union/Warren County, NJ - Last week, Mayors for "Main Street" sent a letter to State and County officials. This letter outlined several key steps that need to be taken for their local business community and residents. In the wake of this, Mayors were pleased to see a timeline established for the partial re-openings of several aspect of the business community to include daycare, outdoor dining and some "non-essential" retail. This is a step but more needs to be done. Now, several of the Mayors have taken steps in their own towns to ease various restrictions in preparation for these re-openings, and more Mayors will act in the upcoming week.

In Bernardsville Borough, the Council will be temporarily relaxing the enforcement of certain regulations whenever the state allows local nonessential businesses to reopen. These eases of restrictions include rules regarding outdoor dining, sidewalk sales and the outdoor display of merchandise.

"We're not going to go back to what we had, so we have to find ways to recreate a sense of a commercial district, of commerce, and activity downtown," said Bernardsville Mayor Mary Jane Canose. "I think this is a great start to let everyone know that we're trying to help, we're trying to do what we can...When we get the signal, we're ready to go, everything's in place."

Warren Township and Bedminster Township are moving similar actions to help their small business by allowing special permits to allow outdoor dining at all restaurant and food establishments, allocating parking spots/drive aisles to accommodate curbside pickup, temporary signs, that will indicate the business status – closed, curb-side, fully-open and sidewalk sales, outdoor displays and outdoor transactions.

"We need to do everything we can to give our business community the tools that they need as they begin the process of re-opening their establishments," said Bedminster Mayor Larry Jacobs. "These are just the first steps in doing so."

Warren Mayor Michael Marion added, "We need to be well positioned to allow our business to hit the ground running and have the ability to be dynamic as we enter this new normal."

"We will be implementing similar steps in our town," said Mayor Jason Cilento of Dunellen Borough. "A critical piece of Mayors for "Main Street" is the cooperative effort by all the Mayors to share ideas and best practices so that we can provide consistent and effective governance to our business owners and residents."

Several other members of Mayors for Main Street are working to amplifying these efforts.

"Our Township Committee is working hard along with staff on identifying specific measures to help our local businesses as soon as they are cleared to open and we'll be able to release more details in the next week," said Bernards Township Mayor Jim Baldassare.

Founded in May of 2020, Mayors for "Main Street" is an alliance of Mayors representing towns spanning several New Jersey Counties. The group mission is to advocate for the swift and safe reopening of businesses within their communities. Businesses that have been drastically and negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also serves as a platform for local elected officials to share experiences, ideas and best practices. Recently Mayor Al Smith of Scotch Plains and Mayor Gregory Skinner of Peapack & Gladstone have also joined the alliance, along with the existing mayors.

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