



TOWN OF SOUTH KINGSTOWN

PRESS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

UPDATE ON MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS, PUBLIC MEETINGS, AND PLAYGROUND CLOSURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

MARCH 20, 2020: The Town of South Kingstown is monitoring the ongoing COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, is following State and Federal guidance to help promote the health and safety of our community, and is implementing additional precautionary measures to reduce opportunities for COVID-19 transmission in South Kingstown.

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Emergency declared by the Governor March 9th, 2020, the Declaration of Emergency by the Town Council March 15th, 2020, and Executive Order by the Town Manager March 16th, 2020 the Town is providing notice of the following:

The following municipal buildings will remain closed to the public, until further notice: Peace Dale Library, Kingston Free Library, Robert Beverly Hale Library, the Senior Center, the Neighborhood Guild, the Recreation Center, and the South Kingstown Animal Shelter. During this time, staff continues to work, however the facilities will be closed to the public, with no exceptions. Please look for virtual programming opportunities in the coming weeks from the Libraries and the Guild; staff is working hard to be creative with offerings. The Senior Center continues to offer its Title III Congregate Lunch program by providing boxed meals for pick up or delivery, and is taking calls from the public referring seniors who may be in need. Please call (401) 789-0268 to make a referral or to order a meal.

Town Hall and all other municipal offices will continue to restrict walk in service, until further notice, and will remain open to the public by appointment only. During this time, staff continues to work, many questions can be answered by phone or email, and many services are available on the Town's website – an in person appointment may not even be necessary. Members of the public can use the Drop Boxes at Town Hall and the Department of Public Services to submit items that do not require face to face interaction, these Drop Boxes will be checked throughout the day. If an in person appointment is necessary, please call (401) 789-9331 and use the department directory; the staff directory is also available as a link on the Town's homepage.

The South Kingstown Police Department announced earlier this week they have closed the lobby at the Public Safety Complex to all visitors. This will remain in effect until further notice. An intercom system is now located in the vestibule at the front door of the Public Safety Complex, in order for members of the public to speak directly to Dispatch. A mailbox has been set up in the vestibule so mail and important documents can be dropped off; this mailbox will be checked throughout the day. Members of the public are strongly discouraged from going to the Police Department in person to file complaints, instead members of the public are encouraged to call for guidance and assistance, as many complaints can be filed over the telephone. Please be advised that all VIN checks, car seat checks, background checks, and burn permits have been postponed until further notice. The South Kingstown Police Department can be reached at (401) 783-3321 for general inquiries, and in an emergency please dial 9-1-1.

The Town has made the difficult decision to close all playgrounds at municipal parks, effective immediately and until further notice, due to concerns regarding transmission of COVID-19. Signage will be posted shortly. We appreciate the public's understanding and cooperation during this difficult time. At this time, municipal parks remain open, however please be sure to practice good social distancing. The public is also advised that surfaces at municipal parks, such as park benches and picnic tables, are not sanitized. Please note it was also recently announced that until further notice, all field use permits are void and all leagues, teams, groups of 10 or more, and athletic clubs are prohibited from using municipal athletic fields. Please refer to the Town's March 19th, 2020 Press Release for further detail.

All Public Meetings will remain cancelled until further notice, with the exception of the Town Council meeting scheduled for March 23rd, 2020 which includes the FY 2020-2021 Preliminary Budget Adoption, the Planning Board meeting scheduled for March 24th, 2020, and the Zoning Board of Review meeting scheduled for April 22nd, 2020, as well as any emergency meetings of the Town Council that may be required. For those meetings that will be held, meeting agendas will continue to be posted at least 48 hours in advance, with the exception of any emergency meetings that may be required. For information on how the public can participate virtually in these public meetings, please refer to the respective meeting agenda, available online at <https://clerkshq.com/SouthKingstown-ri>. Per the Governor's Executive Order 20-05 dated March 16th, 2020, public meetings are permitted to be conducted virtually. The full Executive Order is available online at www.governor.ri.gov/documents/orders/Executive-Order-20-05.pdf. The Town will continue to review the need to conduct public meetings over the coming days and weeks, and should the decision be made to hold additional meetings, this will be announced.

Guidance for Members of the Public:

During this pandemic, all residents are strongly advised to minimize their risk through the use of social distancing. The Town echoes the guidance issued by the Governor that residents should please stay home, except for running essential errands such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, and avoid crowded places. The State and the Town have limited all gatherings to 25 people, though it is noted that current guidance from the CDC is to limit gatherings to 10 people. Please be advised that even when gathering in small numbers, social distancing guidance is to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other people. Residents are strongly advised to follow proper handwashing techniques, and proper cough and sneeze techniques. Residents are strongly advised to remain home if you are sick (with any symptoms). Residents are strongly advised to self-quarantine for 14 days if you have traveled anywhere internationally in the last 14 days, and to contact RIDOH. Residents should be aware of potential COVID-19 symptoms including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Residents are advised to contact their healthcare provider if they believe they may have COVID-19, and per RIDOH guidance, please do not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling, unless you are experiencing a medical emergency.

Residents are strongly advised to stay up to date on the Federal, State, and local response to, and guidance on, the evolving COVID-19 situation. Please visit the Town's COVID-19 webpage for up to date information and links to Federal, State, and local resources www.southkingstownri.com/998/COVID-19.

Because of the evolving nature of this ongoing community health situation, the Town may implement additional mitigation measures with short notice, and the information provided here is subject to change. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. For additional updates from the Town, as well as information and resources related to COVID-19, we encourage residents to visit www.southkingstownri.com. Updates and information will also be shared via the Town's official Facebook page, www.facebook.com/southkingstownri. Questions can be referred to the Town Manager's Office at (401) 789-9331 x1201.