



CITY OF BURLINGTON

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BURLINGTON – COVID-19 (Update #8)

#Stay at Home Order
Badger Bounce Back

On April 16, Governor Evers Extended the #Stay at Home order mandating Wisconsinites to stay at home until May 26, 2020 due to the public health crisis of Coronavirus (COVID-19). As Governor Evers issued this extended mandate, he has also issued a # Badger Bounce Back Program to begin a phased approach of re-opening the state safely and responsibly to reduce the spread of the virus.

The City has been advised that a peaceful protest will take place in Echo Park on Saturday May 2, 2020 and has been asked to participate and support the “Re-Open Burlington” campaign. We are also aware of other communities protesting the Governor’s phased approach to the re-opening of the businesses and communities throughout our State. As your Mayor, I want to open Burlington as soon as possible, and I recognize the financial struggle that the citizens and the businesses in our community are going through.

What I do know, though, is that the health and safety of all of our citizens is the paramount concern. Presently, (i) there are needs for further COVID-19 testing kits, (ii) there is not yet a cure or vaccine for this virus, and (iii) the complete number of the COVID-19 victims in our community is still being determined. The City has been working closely with Racine County, the Central Racine Health Department and all the other Racine County communities throughout this entire pandemic. Racine County is presently heading a Task Force, in which one of our very own business leaders is participating, to identify how to safely and responsibly re-open all of our Racine County communities.

We will re-open in Burlington in coordination with the Governor’s orders and the Racine County Task Force. It is important that our City Government be compatible with, and following, these COVID-19 planned procedures. Further, in seeking legal advice from John Bjelajac, our City Attorney, he has stated, from just a legal vantage point, that to do otherwise (i) would make the City of Burlington an effectively required defendant in future litigation brought by COVID-19 victims, (ii) legitimately be deemed illegal conduct on the part of the City, (iii) very potentially subject the City to damages and extensive attorney fees, and (iv) jeopardize, if not outright terminate, our insurance coverage for this entire panoply of legal fronts on the City.

Although we fully understand the concerns leading to the up-coming event, the City of Burlington will not be participating in this planned peaceful protest. We do respectfully ask that persons attending this event adhere to the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control for appropriate social distancing and the use of protective masks. The City of Burlington Police Department will also be available, on a standby basis, to assist the organizers of this event with their plans for an orderly demonstration.

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