

A LETTER FROM MAYOR MICHAEL BRUNO IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNOR PRITZKER'S TIER 1 MITIGATION ORDER

This week Governor Pritzker issued an executive order prohibiting indoor restaurant and bar service throughout Region 9 (Lake and McHenry Counties) in response to an increase in COVID-19 numbers. This order is to take effect at 12:01 p.m. on October 31st. While taking advantage of a crisis some in our community have issued statements as to what our response should be. As your Mayor I have chosen to be more deliberate and gather as much information as possible before making a statement. Between yesterday and today the Village Administrator has met with business owners and I have been in discussions with key Village staff, our Village Attorney, our insurance provider, members of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and the Lake County Municipal League. It was important for me to determine our legal obligations, potential liability, economic impact and most important the impact on public health and safety. The information received was irreplaceable in helping come to a decision.

The Governor's orders carry the force of state law. Defying the Governor's order can have consequences. For example, the Governor has considerable statutory power over local units of government including items that effect the Village's financial well-being. Also, it is our understanding that the Governor has apparently directed the Illinois State Police to close establishments in defiance his order, revoking their state liquor licenses in the process. Such a revocation would result in immediate closure of the business with an uncertainty as to the businesses ability to reopen. This, I would not want to see and is why we will reluctantly carry-out the Governor's order while preparing a resolution calling on the State of Illinois to reevaluate their collection, analysis and benchmarks of regional data.

The experiences with the businesses here in town coupled with communication received from other Mayors, including Pritzker ally Chicago's Lori Lightfoot, provide me with the opinion that though there is clearly a resurgence of COVID-19 through the country and the State of Illinois our restaurants and bars may be unreasonably targeted.

For clarity the Village of Winthrop Harbor will take an incremental approach with regard to the Governor's order and mitigation efforts. The Village will provide outreach and education informing residents, visitors and businesses about mitigation efforts. Complaints received by the Village Administration, Code Enforcement or Public Safety Departments will be limited to verbal counseling to a business owner/manager on **observed** violations. If

compliance is not obtained, the complaint will be forwarded to the Lake County Health Department for further investigation and/or enforcement and no further action will be taken by the Village. The Village will not be issuing citations for liquor, gaming, or other business violations under the Governor's orders. Enforcement methods may be implemented by state level organizations at their discretion.

I am your Mayor, but I am also a small business owner and a neighbor who shares the concern about this disease and its various impacts on our daily lives. I also understand the injury and devastation COVID-19 has caused to our local business community. We brag about being Winthrop Harbor Strong. Now we have to stop the talk and do the walk. We have to do this together without personal agendas. If you are not comfortable being in public settings, then please do what is best for you. Choosing to shop or dine out please continue to wear your mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance. **Patronize our local shops, restaurants and bars first and often.** Let's respect one another. What we do today will determine our tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Bruno
Mayor
Village of Winthrop Harbor

