

Message from First Selectman Bindelglass



Update for 11/13/2020

Good afternoon,

My focus again this week is COVID-19. We received some wonderful news this week on the progress that is being made with a vaccine. It is American ingenuity at its best on display and will hopefully provide some daylight at the end of the tunnel.

However, it is clear that it will be a number of months until the final approval and distribution take place and a meaningful difference in our lives will take effect.

Meanwhile, the rate of infection, hospitalization and death are escalating rapidly throughout the country.

Connecticut and Easton have seen steep increases, as well. Easton is now red with a case rate of 18.1 per 100,000. We have already had to dial back and increase restrictions, and a worsening of the infection rate will lead to a further restriction if not total lockdown. Colder weather and the increase in cases in colleges in our area are working against us. A number of school districts have already gone full virtual until after Christmas.

As has been the case in much of Europe, and I believe will also happen in a number of states, cancellation of in-school learning or even total lockdown may be inevitable. The governor is trying to avoid this at all costs, and in regard to our schools, we are trying to maintain a more targeted approach to contact trace and quarantine rather than go all virtual.

If it is going to be possible to avoid the economic harm of total lockdown the onus will be on us to help slow the spread of the disease. Without a doubt, we are all just tired of this. If the duration of these restrictions seemed like they might last indefinitely, our fatigue would be understandable.

I believe that the potential for a vaccine gives us real hope that life can return to more normalcy, maybe as early as next summer. With that in mind, we are really trying to figure out what we can do to bend the curve and save lives in the next few months. Further, I believe that this is a reasonable ask.

In Easton, we need to do the following. First, we must do what we have been doing in terms of mask wearing, social distancing and hand washing. For a few more months we must avoid the temptation to gather with friends and families in ways that are unsafe. This is especially true for our young people and for our Thanksgiving plans.

Second, testing is now widely available. While not a failsafe, if you have any symptoms, or believe you may have been exposed, do not wait. Get tested, and stay home. Faster diagnosis leads to faster isolation of those infected.

Third, please cooperate if you receive a call from our contact tracers. If you are told that you fit the criteria where you need to quarantine, please take it seriously, and follow the rules as they are given to you. Failure to do so puts the community at risk.

If individuals have the power to allow our community to avoid a total lockdown it would be tragic not to take advantage. Also know that with hospitalizations and death rates

rising, please do not fall prey to the argument that this is now just young people getting infected, and they will be minimally affected so we should not be so concerned. The pandemic continues to affect all of us. Please do the right thing. Hopefully, it will not be necessary for too much longer.

Also, please know that the increase in cases is effecting several departments in town government. The worry is that it has the potential to affect our essential services. I also want to reinforce the limits on entry to Town Hall. The Center Road door will now be locked. If you have business in Town Hall, call ahead, and we will accommodate you.

See the red alert banner on the town website for more information. Athletic fields were due to close now anyway so they will be closed for the season. We will closely monitor activities at the Easton Library and Senior Center.

A number of people have commented on the remaining graffiti on the streets post-election. We are working on removing it, but it is more difficult to remove than you might think. We will continue to work on it, and get the graffiti removed. For the future, I hope all will consider that the town will spend significant resources on the cleanup which should never have been needed.

A significant amount of tree work is being done by UI in town as many of you have noticed. The work continues, and we have also filed formal testimony in the regulatory hearings into UI's storm response. In some cases, I know there is disagreement where trees were tagged by UI for removal but disallowed by the town's tree warden. Please contact me if you have issues.

In one of the nicer parts of my job I got to speak in Monroe at the local ceremony for Veterans Day. While the festivities were limited due to the virus, we had a wonderful ceremony. Generations of Americans have given their lives to protect our way of life. Many stand guard today to do the same.

The men and women of the armed forces do their jobs as a unit regardless of their individual backgrounds or beliefs. This is a time to remember that as Americans we have far more in common than we have differences between us.

Connecticut residents can now take advantage of a new notification app that will help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 throughout their communities. COVID Alert CT will notify users on their smartphones if they may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 without sharing any personal information. The app is free and available now for Apple and Android users.

In closing, I urge you to be smart and be safe and stick together to do the right thing for Easton.

Dave Bindelglass