

Mayor Mason: Statement after the announcement of Forward Racine Plan

Posted on Friday, May 22, 2020

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City of Racine – After the release of the “Forward Racine” plan to reopen the economy at 8:00am on Tuesday, May 26th, Mayor Cory Mason released the following statement:

“Today, our Public Health Administrator issued new Public Health orders which allow a reopening of the economy to begin in the City of Racine. However, I want to be crystal clear on this: this is not a green light to slack off. Racine’s coronavirus cases continue to increase at an alarming rate. Healthcare systems have indicated that they are concerned about their hospital capacity. Racine residents are falling gravely ill from this virus, and some in our community are mourning the loss of loved ones. Our residents and our local businesses must continue to take all possible precautions to protect our community from this virus.

The City of Racine cannot be an island of protections amidst a sea of chaos.

The City of Racine has been put in an untenable position by failures at the state and national level:

- Wisconsin’s Supreme Court’s irresponsible decision last week which lifted all statewide protections jeopardized the public’s health and eliminated the ability for the state to have a unified reopening plan.
- Wisconsin’s Republican legislators have refused to come to the table with the Governor to agree to common-sense, statewide protections and is a failure of leadership that endangers the lives of the residents they are supposed to serve.
- And the failure of national leadership to guide our country through this crisis has also put the entire country at risk and certainly led to far more deaths than

otherwise had to occur.

As Mayor of Racine, I do not have the legal authority to override the state Supreme Court. I cannot make the state's legislators work with the Governor. However, I can, and will, use my position to encourage our residents to use common sense, to listen to the public health experts, to follow guidance from the CDC, and to stay home whenever possible.

As we move into this first phase of reopening, let me be clear: to all who have been clamoring to reopen our local businesses, you now have a heightened obligation to keep your employees and customers safe. And to the residents who have been anxiously awaiting the reopening of their favorite bar, restaurant, or hair salon, I call on you to remember that what makes that business special are the people who work there and serve your drinks, prepare your food and wash your dishes, and cut your hair. If you enter our local businesses without taking proper precautions like wearing a mask, you are putting those employees and all the customers around you at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Our residents need to continue to make sure they are safe, and that they are protected from this virus. And our local businesses have the same obligation as they reopen to make sure their employees and their customers are safe from this virus.