

Debra Thompson

From: lynch1@gci.net
Sent: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 9:14 AM
To: Assembly
Subject: Brian Lynch Mask Mandate Elimination
Attachments: Brian Lynch_Mask Mandate Elimination Letter to Assembly 1_3_2021.docx

Mayor Jensen and Assembly Members,

I am disappointed to see that the Assembly will consider rescinding Petersburg Public Health Mandate #8: Face Coverings. I urge the Assembly to, not only reject this action, but to increase enforcement of this mandate as provided in Petersburg Municipal Code §3.72.070. With the increased spread of the deadlier British variant of Covid-19, that epidemiologists predict will become the dominant strain of the virus in the U.S. that could “hit the country like a hurricane”, (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/31/us-covid-uk-variant-strain-spread>) this is no time for the Assembly to promote reducing Covid-19 safeguards within our community. And, until the majority of people are vaccinated, not only in the U.S. but throughout the world, and until there is a better understanding of the mutations and variants of this virus, we can ill afford to let down our guard.

Although Petersburg has had relatively few known positive cases of Covid-19, our record thus far should not be considered predictive of things to come. We have basically been lucky up to this point mainly because of our lack of road access, testing requirements implemented for incoming travelers and the adherence to Covid-19 mandates by most of our residents. While most of us fully understand the need to mask up and social distance to protect our fellow citizens, an incautious minority continue to ignore public health and safety guidelines and mandates for reasons I simply do not understand. Do these people have a have a cynical desire to see people get sick and die? Again, I am at a loss to understand. Unfortunately, some Assembly members are apparently listening to and adhering to the advice of their “constituents” who suffer from moderate to severe pragmaticolopia* rather than taking the advice of bona fide experts and are considering taking an action that borders on negligence by intentionally refusing to provide for the public health and welfare. A full rational explanation and justification for the impetus for such an imprudent action needs to be provided to, not only the ordinary residents of Petersburg, but especially to the frontline first responders and medical personnel who could be unnecessarily exposed to COVID-19 infection because of this irresponsible action.

As I initially stated, I not only oppose rescinding the face covering mandate, but I also encourage you to initiate active enforcement of the mandate. I also encourage you to modify Health Mandate #8 by changing the second sentence in #2 under “This Directive does not apply to” to read “Are required to wear a face shield.” The reason being that, regardless of a medical excuse for not wearing face covering, a person with a medical excuse could still be a carrier of the Covid-19 virus and should be not be frequenting local businesses without a face covering or shield. Allowing the current exemption literally has the unintended consequence of negating the entire mandate. I have personally observed couples in local grocery stores where one was wearing face covering while the other was not. I assumed that the unmasked person had a medical excuse. However, my thought at the time was “why was it necessary for both people to be shopping?” Local businesses have options for online and contactless shopping and if someone cannot shop while wearing a face covering then they should utilize these services or have someone who can wear a mask, do the shopping for them.

In conclusion, I again urge you to not rescind Health Mandate #8 and implement full enforcement of and amend that mandate as I have requested above. I also urge you to read *Implementation and Evolution of Mitigation Measures, Testing, and Contact Tracing in the National Football League, August 9–November 21, 2020* (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/pdfs/mm7004e2-H.pdf>) to gain greater insight into the complexities associated with determining appropriate Covid-19 prevention protocols, including testing and face covering and social distancing in specific environmental settings.

Thank you for consideration of my concerns.

-Brian Lynch

*“An inability to see, perceive or accept facts”. Created by Suchitra D. Gopinath, Pediatric Biology Center, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, NCR Biotech Science Cluster, Faridabad, Haryana, India.

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