

Saratoga County Reopening Advisory Group Meeting
June 26, 2020 - 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone for taking time out of the day to be there.

Mr. Hellwig said there was not much to report. The religious gathering number has increased from 25% to 33%. There is still no news on malls, movie theatres and gyms. There was an article in the Times Union that stated these businesses would not be opening in Phase 4; but that was incorrect. They are being evaluated on a continuous basis. The State representatives in the control room have indicated that they are looking for a date sometime in Phase 4 rather than just saying it will automatically approved. A travel advisory went into effect at 12:01am 6/25. There is not a lot of details; but it is for states where they have a positive test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents over a seven-day rolling average, or positivity testing rate higher 10% over a seven-day rolling average. As of today, those states include Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Utah. There is no plan for a Phase 5 as we enter Phase 4. For activities not yet approved for reopening, there will be specific dates given.

Mr. Kinowski asked if there has been any discussion on going backwards; and, how that group is going to meet and control that. Mr. Hellwig said the conversations start every day with a review of what has occurred over the course of the last 24-hours and all of the numbers that include, testing, hospitalizations, etc. show the region is at a good place. The biggest concern now is the other states, how they are struggling and hoping it does not find a way back to New York.

Mr. Lawler asked Mr. Shimkus to comment on the communications between the Chamber and the County. Mr. Shimkus said he collects information/concerns and if there is an immediate response needed, he texts Mr. Hellwig. If the items can wait a bit, he groups them together and sends them at one time. Mr. Shimkus said this has worked out amazingly well. Mr. Shimkus said on email returns, as suggested by Ms. Duncan, the phase and day of the phase we are in is included. The website is also included.

Ms. Duncan said things have slowed down considerably. We are at 541 now. Today there have been four new cases. One case had sixteen contacts. This has been manageable so the staff has been cut in half. She is pleased this weekend part time staff will be used. Public Health regular staff will have the weekend off. There is only one person in the hospital right now. There are 14 active cases with many more in quarantine. The metrics are looking very good to move forward. She was on a call regarding the travel ban. Questions regarding this ban are coming to the Public Health agencies. Unfortunately, they have not received much information about the ban. There is no way of knowing or confirming who has traveled, so people will have to be on the honor system. Essential employees would be able to go from home to work and back home. The employee should wear a mask at all times and monitor their health. If they feel sick, they need to stay home. They should not be outside of the house other than to go to work.

Mr. Lawler asked if someone complains to the state that someone in Saratoga County is not adhering the travel advisory, is there a role for Public Health at that point. Ms. Duncan said they could let Public Health know and they would reach out and provide information. Mr. Lawler said Public Health continues to do a great job. Thank you and your fantastic group for all that they have done.

Mr. Pemrick asked Ms. Duncan if there was any additional information on the testing machine. Ms. Duncan said they are moving forward with conversations with the hospital. It does look like the machine

will be purchased. She said there is a possibility she could use grant money for this purchase. The hospital is hoping to put the machine in at Malta Medical. There are details that need to be ironed out; but they are moving forward.

Mr. Shimkus said he has spoken with Mr. Calbone from the hospital. Mr. Shimkus had a couple phone calls from businesses that wanted to test their employees. It would be a way for them to say they are safely opening. The challenge would be the ability to get a doctor's note. Without the note, the insurance companies will not cover the cost of the test. He thought perhaps there could be a "day at the testing site" for these businesses' employees, if there was a way to do this.

Ms. Duncan said she thought the campus in Albany was not as restrictive. These employees could be tested, as they are essential employees. Mr. Lawler asked if Ms. Duncan knew why Albany was less restrictive. Ms. Duncan said she thought it was due to the assignment of that site as a testing site by the State. That site would have been given an allotment of test kits. The State originally said all essential workers.

Mr. Lawler said we are well into Phase 3 and so far so good. Phase 4 is coming up. Mr. Lawler asked Mr. Hellwig and Mr. Shimkus what could be expected.

Mr. Hellwig said arts and entertainment would be limited to the amount of individuals that will be allowed in any one particular location. There is not a lot of guidance as to what this will look like. This is problematic for these businesses to plan because of the lead-time needed to schedule events. As an example there is a junior golf tournament planned at the Ballston Spa Country Club. The initial guidance was this event is fine as long as the safety and health protocols are being followed. Golf is an allowed activity. The travel advisory came out yesterday. Kids from all over the country would be coming to this tournament. The planning is back to square one.

Mr. Lawler said all of the Phase 4 guidance has gone to Mr. Rose and Mr. Mauro for uploading to the website. He asked Mr. Hellwig about the opening of malls. Mr. Hellwig said the only exception right now is restaurants that have their own access to enter and leave. Beyond that, there has been no guidance or information given.

Mr. Shimkus said he has spoken with the malls. They cannot understand why they cannot open, as their air handling systems are the same as the big box stores. He said we are in Phase 3. The restaurants are reporting that patrons are choosing to sit outdoors. There is very little interest indoors.

Mr. Hellwig said the control room call that was scheduled for today was cancelled. The questions he and Mr. Shimkus had, he emailed. There is a contradiction on the State Liquor Authority's website that has a July 6th end date for the expanded outdoor dining. The Governor's Executive Order says July 18th. The greater interest is in dining outdoors so this date is important and they need to know which date is correct. The date needs to be extended to the end of summer.

Sheriff Zurlo said he has not received any complaints on the travel ban. Their course of action would be to determine if the person did come from the location the complaint is from and then they would work with Public Health to come up with a plan. Ms. Duncan said she would have more information to provide the Sheriff. Sheriff Zurlo said this was a health advisory and not an executive order.

Sheriff Zurlo said there were 57 complaints received. Most of these were complaints of people not wearing masks in retail shops and restaurants. Twenty-two of these complaints were for businesses that were open when they should not be in this phase. They should wait until Phase 4. He said they do the best they can do and either send a patrol car or make a phone call. Mr. Lawler asked if any of the

complaints were repeats. Sheriff Zurlo said there were a couple. He said they give verbal warnings and then they could refer them to the zoning office. There are also penal law charges that could be issued but due to the bail reform, the Sheriff does not want to do this.

Mr. Shimkus said Supervisor Connolly worked with the Sheriff and him on a video. The video is under three minutes long; and is about the complaints the Sheriff is receiving; and how the complaints are being handled. The video is encouraging everyone to wear masks. This video will be out on Monday as part of a campaign about masks.

Mr. Kinowski said he called Mr. Zeilman. Mr. Zeilman had received a shipment of masks. This shipment may be the last one we will receive from the State/Federal coffers. Mr. Kinowski said the County or the townships could elect to purchase masks. Mr. Veitch suggested a portion of the masks be donated to the buckets that are being put together by the Chamber. These buckets are for small businesses to help with the reopening efforts. Mr. Kinowski said to date 100,000 masks have been distributed throughout the county. He said he would like to continue with the distribution but the demand is going up and the price is going up. He asked Mr. Zeilman to provide a list of vendors so businesses could purchase them directly. Mr. Veitch said he has the donators of the masks for the kits that are being assembled by the Chamber at the City Center. The donators are Momentive and Uni-First.

Mr. Lawler thinks making the masks available at the City Center is a great idea. He asked if buckets could be available at the townships for the businesses to pick up there. He said it is fine if they are available at the City Center. As a matter of convenience and having the best distribution plan, perhaps a supply consistent with the size of the business community in their town, would be available at town hall in each town. Mr. Kinowski said they have distributed these in Stillwater and Mr. Richardson has distributed them in Mechanicville. He thinks the volume is going to get greater than the supply. Mr. Lawler asked Mr. Kinowski and Mr. Veitch to research the distribution plan.

Mr. Rose provided an update on the website. Mr. Lawler thanked Mr. Rose and Mr. Mauro on their work. This site has come a long way. Mr. Shimkus said this website has been very helpful. Mr. Kinowski asked for this site to provide links to other sites such as Public Health Nursing.

Mr. Shimkus reported approval had been given for the digital component and the TV plan. Collection for the video assets has been completed. There will be drone coverage as well as interviews. There will be boosted posts on social media. There will be two from each town and city over the course of the month. It is a mixture of attractions. A company has completed over 3,300 interviews. The people interviewed have been to the County. They were asked what they liked and what would bring them back.

Mr. Lawler asked for an update on the contract that the Board approved. Mr. Hellwig said everything is in order.

Mr. Kinowski said the Town of Stillwater will be having 4th of July fireworks at Brown's Beach. There will be advertising and signs for social distancing. It is their hope people will manage themselves with social distancing and wearing of masks. There have been horse shows. The Sheriff has been there. There are people from all over that attend and there have not been any problems. He said the town gets the word out to stay safe, social distance and wear masks.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 1st at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Wright, Clerk of the Board