

Saratoga County Reopening Advisory Group Minutes
June 19, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance in person and on the phone.

Mr. Lawler said that the 11am Saratoga County Ribbon Cutting event was held today. Mr. Lawler said that the business owners that participated were very appreciative of the recognition. Mr. Shimkus said that he anticipates signing off on the video this afternoon.

Mr. Hellwig gave a control room update. Mr. Hellwig said that during today's control room call, a spike in the number of positives yesterday was noted. On June 15th, there were 2,100 tests with 16 positive, June 16th, 2,200 tests with 17 positives, June 17th, 2,912 tests with 11 positives and yesterday, 3,761 tests with 37 positives. Mr. Hellwig said that obviously with an increased number of tests there will be an increase in the number of positives, but it is important to note that the severity of the infections is measured by the number of hospitalizations and that number continues to decline. They continue to keep an eye on it and there is no concern at this point that the reopening is going to be disrupted. It was also noted that no particular activity is causing the spike. They are advising everyone to continue to follow the established safety and health protocols. July 6th will be the resumption of youth sports with only two spectators per player on the field. Indoor access to restaurants in malls is now permitted, but the restaurants must have their own entrance. No guidance yet whether the rest of the mall stores and activities will be allowed. No guidance yet on the additional number of guests that will be allowed in restaurants and bars in Phase 4 beyond the 50%. Phase 4 is still on track, activities in this phase include entertainment and recreation. Some portions have been moved up sooner rather than later. For July 4th, fireworks are permitted however no specific guidance on large gatherings related to these shows. Recognition of social distancing should be followed. Mr. Lawler said that fireworks shows draw a large number of people and hopes that guidance will be provided. Mr. Lawler noted that it is up to each municipality to decide how safe a gathering like this will be. Mr. Lawler said that his Town's fireworks draws a huge crowd but is held in a confined space where people are shoulder to shoulder and 10 deep. He is unsure of how they could have fireworks and do it safely. They probably will not hold fireworks this year. Mr. Veitch noted that if Stillwater is the only venue in the district holding fireworks, there will be a much larger crowd wishing to attend.

Ms. Duncan gave a Public Health Update. Ms. Duncan said that things are slowing down however they are still getting cases daily. The number is up to 533. There are 132 individuals in quarantine at this time. One case on the 16th had 16 contacts to one case. Another on the 17th, a doctor tested positive with 31 contacts that were put into quarantine. Ms. Duncan said that they have been finding individuals in large businesses and having to shut down the business. While the numbers may be small, it can mushroom out depending on the number of contacts per case. The test totals are up to 22,134 for Saratoga County. Ms. Duncan said that they have had issues with compliance. One Town's road crew were refusing to wear their masks due to the fact that it is too hot. Ms. Duncan said that special masks can be purchased by the municipalities that are cooling masks. Ms. Duncan said that the guidance must be followed. If you are within 6 feet of another person, you must wear a mask.

Mr. Lawler said that he went out to dinner for the first time in months last night. A question posed to him was what happens if one of the cooks tests positive. Mr. Lawler said that the County would be notified, and all contacts of that cook would be quarantined for 2 weeks. Mr. Lawler reiterated with the business owner that this would shut down his business for 2 weeks. It shows the impact on what a small business is facing. Ms. Duncan said that some people are sick, and in denial, that do not want to go to their provider to find out if they have Covid. Rather, they are staying at home and riding out the storm, without contact tracing being done.

Mr. Connolly said that when the new machine is received, they need to advertise that quick, mass testing can be done. Ms. Duncan said that they are still negotiating the purchase of the machine. Ms. Duncan said that the Public Health website also listed the multitude of testing sites in the area where testing can take place. Ms. Duncan said that pharmacies are now also providing self-tests, however she questions if the sample is as good as a test performed by a nurse.

Mr. Zurlo said that they received 50 complaints since last Sunday. 33 of the complaints are regarding social distancing or not wearing masks, whether it's a customer or an employee of a restaurant, retail store or car dealership. The remainder of the complaints are regarding businesses opening out of their phase, i.e. gyms. Mr. Zurlo said that these complaints are not in any specific area, it is all over the county. Mr. Zurlo said that they have visited some places twice to advise them to comply. Mr. Zurlo said that there was recent Executive Order whereby if there are repeat offenders in restaurants and bars, that the Liquor Authority could revoke their liquor license. Mr. Lawler suggested that this information be included on the website. Mr. Zurlo said that it's frustrating as the message is simple, wear a mask, follow the rules. Mr. Hellwig said that each business must have a plan on premises, the plans lay out the details related to PPE and protocols. It's as simple as reminding businesses that they need to comply with their own plans. Mr. Connolly suggested that videos highlighting how businesses are reopening well, combined with some provided graphics, may also be helpful. Ms. Duncan said that she has graphics from the CDC that shows how to wear masks correctly. The graphics are on the Public Health website and are available for anyone to use. Mr. Lawler suggested coming up with a constructive positive message on following the rules, that complaints are being received, and they could be putting their liquor license in jeopardy. Mr. Shimkus suggested having an update from the Sheriff on the website that includes links that could be shared by the Chamber. Mr. Connolly offered to shoot a video with the Sheriff and the Chamber, an interview setting, talking about the biggest challenges being encountered right now. The video would highlight the challenges of compliance and the cost of non-compliance in a way that is more collegial than threatening. The video could be linked directly to the reopening website.

Mr. Richardson said that he has delivered approximately 35 buckets to local small businesses. These buckets are supplied by the Chamber. Mr. Shimkus said that they are being assembled as needed by the Chamber and include hand sanitizer, masks, cleaning liquid, signage for floors and posters. Mr. Lawler requested that Mr. Hellwig draft an email to all Supervisors to place orders for these buckets if needed. Mr. Connolly suggested that something be put on the website for businesses to request the kits also. Mr. Shimkus said that it will be pushed out in an email from the Chamber later today.

Mr. Veitch said that Mr. Kinowski had put an order in with Mr. Zeilman for 50K of masks from the State and/or Federal stockpile. Mr. Veitch said that he believes sanitizer may also be available from this source at no charge. Mr. Veitch said that currently all of the supplies in the kits from the Chamber is being donated. Mr. Shimkus said that masks have been donated by UniFirst, Death Wish Coffee, Momentive and National Grid. Mr. Shimkus said that the most difficult item to procure is the disinfectant cleaner. They had to pay for this. Ball Inc. paid for the first 500. Mr. Veitch said there may be a point where some of the suppliers may not be able to donate anymore, and where can the county help to supplement the supplies. Mr. Lawler said that this would check two boxes, help keep people safe and secondly help the businesses in their recovery. Mr. Lawler questioned the group if it was appropriate and if they supported the County procuring supplies on behalf of the Chamber's effort to distribute them. Mr. Lawler questioned if this is a role that the County should be involved in, providing PPE to the chamber to continue with the small business reopening kits. Mr. Veitch said that the quantity and cost is all up for debate later but in principle he believes it is a good idea. Ms. Gaston said that she would support this, especially if the county has potential to get items from sources that other people cannot. Mr. Connolly said that he believes the County should support small businesses with masks. Mr. Zurlo, Mr. Richardson, Ms. Duncan, Mr. Pemrick all agreed. Mr. Pemrick added that it would be good to procure the items locally. Mr. Shimkus said that the cloth masks donated by National Grid were locally sourced. Mr. Shimkus also said that Mr. Kinowski had large signs made that sit on the floor. Mr. Lawler said now that the group has a conceptual agreement for the County to explore the procurement of PPE, that Mr. Veitch and Mr. Kinowski can explore this further. Mr. Veitch said that he has asked Ryan McMahon for the contact info of the current suppliers. Mr. Veitch said that he would like to find out the cost of each bucket if nothing was donated. Mr. Veitch said that it would be important to sources the items locally as this would put money back into the local economy. Mr. Shimkus said that the hand sanitizer is made in Clifton Park, cloth masks can be done in South Glens Falls and Ballston Spa, buckets came from a company in Moreau.

Mr. Rose and Mr. Mauro displayed the current website and gave an overview of the most recent updates and changes. The website can be found at www.saratogacountyny.gov/county-reopening. Updates are continuously being added. The website has had 27,721 hits since it was created, 303 views today.

Mr. Lawler said that the Governor is giving guidance for each phase, and the guidance for Phase 3 came out 1-2 days before the phase opened. At this point there is no guidance for Phase 4. Mr. Hellwig said that the representatives in the Control room voiced that they want to provide support toward the effort as it is very difficult to plan a reopening when guidance is not there to reference. Mr. Hellwig said that they are currently filling in the blanks on Phase 3. Mr. Lawler said that once the information is received from the control room it is immediately passed on for upload to the County reopening website. Mr. Connolly said that once we reach Phase 4, he has heard it will be broken into several segments and suggested that the website graphics also break down the phase into different segments. Mr. Hellwig said that although Phase 4 is scheduled to start July 1st, they have already set July 6th as the beginning of Youth Baseball.

Mr. Lawler said that the \$50K has been approved by the Board. Mr. Shimkus said that he will be meeting with his team on Monday morning. Folks have been tasked with coming up with a script for the video and a shot list of what is needed from each community. They are committing to at

least 2 sponsored posts on social media for every Town, City and Village in the County. It will be a mixture of small business, destinations, attractions, things to do. They are getting ad buy amounts from TV and seeing if there are any special packages out there. Mr. Shimkus said that Lake George and Hudson Valley are also doing TV ads. Mr. Shimkus said that the travel coming to the hotels right now is not from out of state, it's from the south. They may redesign the digital campaign slightly to get this area too. The campaign will begin next week. Mr. Shimkus said that April occupancy was 26% vs approx. 60%. May was a little better. Mr. Shimkus said that people from the Navy projects and National Guard have been staying in the area. Mr. Shimkus said that hotels like the Residence Inn and Homeland Suites have been doing well, but others have not. For example the Hampton Inn recently had double digits, in terms of hotel rooms booked two days in a row, for the first time in several months. The Gideon and Hilton hotels are still closed.

Mr. Shimkus said that SPAC is looking to use their outdoor space, the lawn outside the Hall of Springs. They have designed a set up for health and wellness activities. Using squares or circles and a stage area, everyone would be socially distanced, and they are looking to do this ASAP as opposed to waiting for Phase 4 as it is outside. Mr. Shimkus said that once they come up with a diagram, this template/design could also be used in local parks and fitness facilities.

It was decided that the group would continue to meet weekly at this point. The next meeting was scheduled for Friday June 26, 2020 at 3pm.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board