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Denton City Council Extends Declaration of Disaster

Council Adopts New Order of Council That Aligns With GA-18 and Supersedes Previous Orders

DENTON, TX, April 30, 2020 – On Thursday, April 30, the Denton City Council voted to extend the Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency first executed by Mayor Chris Watts on March 13. The new declaration shall be in effect beginning at 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, April 30 and continue through 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, May 31 or until otherwise acted upon by the Council.

Additionally, at Thursday's special-called meeting, in accordance with Gov. Greg Abbott's Executive Order GA-18, issued on April 27, 2020, a new Order of Council was adopted to supersede previous orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Order shall be in effect beginning at 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, April 30 and continue through 11:59 p.m. on Friday, May 15.

Under the Order of Council:

- All individuals currently living within the city of Denton are **recommended** to stay at home or their current place of residence, unless leaving their residences to participate in Essential or Reopened activities or businesses;
- Essential Businesses are those defined by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and TDEM shall maintain an online list of essential services at www.tdem.texas.gov/essentialservices;
- All reopened businesses operating within the city of Denton shall abide by the regulations set out in Gov. Greg Abbott's Executive Order GA-18, including limiting in-person access to 25% occupancy;
- To the greatest extent possible, all essential businesses and reopened services shall comply with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Social Distancing Guidelines, which include maintaining six-foot distancing for both employees and the general public;
- Bars, gyms, public swimming pools, interactive amusement venues, cosmetology salons, and other operations prohibited by Gov. Greg Abbott's Executive Order GA-18 may not operate at this time;
- All elective medical, surgical, and dental procedures shall comply with the requirements set out in Gov. Greg Abbott's Executive Order GA-19;
- All non-essential in-person City of Denton Municipal Court proceedings are postponed until after May 15, 2020;
- All City of Denton utility non-payment shut-offs are suspended, without penalty or interest accrual, through May 15, 2020;
- Up to \$850,000 of funding is authorized to be spent for COVID-19 response activities;
- Up to \$50,000 of funding is authorized to be spent to increase utility assistance; and
- A total of \$100,000 of funding is authorized to be provided to the United Way of Denton County to assist individuals and families living in the city of Denton, who have experienced income or job loss directly resulting from COVID-19, in eviction avoidance.

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At this time, all City of Denton facilities will remain closed until further notice as City staff works to build a reopening plan based on the safety of the public and City employees as well as operational needs. The Council is expected to discuss plans to reopen facilities at their May 5 meeting. Additional information is expected to be made public in the coming weeks.

Once final signatures have been received, the amended Declaration of Local Disaster and Order will be available online at www.cityofdenton.com. Visit www.cityofdenton.com/coronavirus and www.dentoncounty.gov/coronavirus for additional updates.

Information and guidelines for Denton businesses, including the Governor's Report to Open Texas and water safety steps for reopening buildings, can be found online at www.cityofdenton.com/covid19businessguidelines.

Information regarding community resources and volunteer and donation opportunities can be found online at www.cityofdentoncoronavirusresources.com.

Information regarding the United Way of Denton County's COVID-19 Relief Fund for housing assistance for those at risk of experiencing homelessness as a result of COVID-19 can be found at www.unitedwaydenton.org/crf-partners-eligibility.

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