



A Statement from Mayor Chris Koos

Nov. 2, 2020

Region 2 Mitigation Measures



Tonight, I want to speak to changes that have taken place since the last time we met. Specifically, I'm referring to the state's recent actions restricting indoor dining and reducing the size of gatherings from 50 to 25.

I've heard from citizens on all sides of this issue. Some want tighter controls and others want fewer restrictions. The reality is there's no singular approach that will be widely supported or satisfy everyone.

I believe I speak on behalf of the entire Council when I say we are concerned for our restaurants and businesses. The current restrictions will make it difficult for some to survive. Since the start of the pandemic, our challenge has been balancing the health of our community with economic realities.

Even though the positivity rate in McLean County is among the lowest in the state, we are part of a much larger region where the rates are higher. We understand the positivity rates were the only factor used by the state when deciding to shut down indoor dining.

I do not necessarily agree with how these mitigation decisions were made, and we want local businesses to survive and continue to be a strong part of our economy. To that end, I am taking a multi-pronged approach:

First, I am working with mayors across the state and the Illinois Municipal League to encourage the state to use broader metrics for evaluating COVID shut downs.

Next, we believe locally a large source of COVID exposures comes from private gatherings. I encourage people to continue limiting these exposures.

Finally, we all need to support our local businesses. During these shutdowns, order delivery or pickup curbside. Dine local. Spend local. Personally, I am reaching out to state and federal legislators encouraging additional stimulus packages to help our businesses. We want our restaurants to continue to be successful.

As a leader, the Mayor and a seasoned businessowner, I will not encourage anyone to violate state or federal regulations. After conversation with the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Council and other community leaders, I believe the best course of action is to focus on actively working with state and federal leaders to implement change that allows businesses to remain open. Any complaints received by the Town of Normal will be forwarded to the McLean County Health Department who will respond accordingly.

The proper response to this is not political grandstanding but a focus on finding solutions that help our businesses remain viable. In August and September when our community faced high positivity rates, the community worked together. That's what we need to do now ... protect the health of our community and help small businesses by working together to find solutions that will keep them viable into the future.