

Duane “Mike” Smith

Groveland City Council Member, District 4

Newsletter

April 9, 2020

Welcome to my second newsletter. My apologies for this not quite making it out earlier but the city has been redoing its web site to make it compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and they asked that we not post a new newsletter while the system was being revised and redeployed. Then the coronavirus decided to come and I, like all of you, have found myself busy trying to prepare the city, my family and myself.

This newsletter will focus on efforts the city has been taking to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key City Actions

City Offices Closed - City of Groveland offices were closed to the public as of Monday, March 23, 2020 and will remain closed until further notice. Essential city employees are working from their office or field locations and the other city employees are working from home.

The city encourages citizens to utilize online bill pay or the drop box outside of City Hall to pay their utility bill.

Should you need assistance the telephone numbers below are being provided:

Utility Billing:	(352) 429-2141, Option 1
Permitting:	(352) 429-2141, Option 2
	(352) 424-0281
	(352) 536-4481
Planning:	(352) 557-5196
	(352) 250-7578
Code Compliance;	(352) 434-7184

Additionally, the city has placed the popular appliance Ring Video Doorbell, at the entrance of City Hall, to assist customers who may stop by with questions. A live city representative will be able to answer questions from the application, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, once residents press the doorbell.

City of Groveland Meetings Cancelled - The city, in an effort to reduce public gatherings in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), has cancelled all City of Groveland meetings, i.e., City Council; Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA);

Planning & Zoning Board, and Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC) until further notice. The city is currently working to develop a system for conducting virtual meetings.

State of Emergency – The City of Groveland declared a State of Emergency on March 20, 2020. This was consistent with the State of Emergency declared by the Governor and the Lake County Board of County Commissioners.

Operation Reach Out - Operation Reach Out is a multi-faceted city designed campaign that encompasses several initiatives created to support Groveland Residents. The “Safe Hands”, “Citizen Check-In”, “Let’s Eat” and “Ring and Response” initiatives are geared towards improving the overall welfare of the community, and our citizens who have felt the effects of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), in some portion of their daily lives.

Safe Hands – **This program is currently suspended as the city awaits additional hand sanitizer.** The Safe Hands initiative consists of free hand sanitizer bottles being distributed to citizens, to assist in meeting the community’s needs for extra sanitary resources. In preparation for a shortage, the city purchased 540 gallons of hand sanitizer to disseminate throughout the community. Residents are encouraged to bring their clean and empty hand sanitizer or water bottles, to the Groveland Police Department Trailer at 408 W Orange St, where they will be able to “swap a bottle, for a bottle”, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. while supplies last. All residents are asked to take one bottle per day to allow others a chance to participate.

Citizen Check-In - Citizen Check-In was created to have City of Groveland employees, dial residents for welfare checks and provide some friendly conversation during this current emergency. Residents can expect phone calls Monday through Friday between the hours of 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM and may contact the city at 352-557-5331 for any city related general questions.

Let’s Eat - This outreach program is focused towards assisting residents with ways to acquire meals more easily during this current COVID-19 emergency. The city has partnered with local restaurants, food trucks and farmers, that are willing to deliver to residents and communities within Groveland.

Additionally, the city has worked with Lake Catherine Blueberry Farm, who have has now opened an online store . All orders will be available for curbside pickup on the farm in 3 business days. They have a tent adjacent to their parking lot where you pick up your order. There are be signs set-up to guide you. If you see that they are not offering an item that you need, please let them know. They will be more than happy to try to source it for you. Here is the link to the store. In addition to food, it has household items like soap, bleach, gloves, toilet paper, paper towels, etc. <https://lake-catherine-farms.square.site/s/order>

Ring and Response - The city has placed the popular appliance Ring Video Doorbell, at the entrance of City Hall, to assist customers who may stop by with questions. A live city representative will be able to answer questions from the application, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, once residents press the doorbell.

Stay at Home Order – On April 1st, Governor Desantis issued Executive Order 20-91, which requires all persons to “. . . limit their movements and personal interactions outside of their home to only those necessary to obtain or provide essential services or conduct essential activities”. This applies to the residents of the City of Groveland. Residents are still allowed to leave their home for certain activities. More information on these activities can be found at:

https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/news_releases/news_release.aspx?id=3566

Utility Shut Offs – The city has suspended utility shut offs for the duration of Governor Desantis’ State of Emergency declaration as contained in [Executive Order 20-52](#). While shut offs are suspended, the city is also suspending the assessment of late fees.

Job Postings – The city has suspended the job postings and hiring of all non-essential personnel. If you filed an application, that application will be retained. If you were trying to file an application, the system will not take any new applications at this time. However, the city will reopen the positions for new applications at a future date.

Small Business Support

The city’s Economic Development team has been working with Elevate Lake, the Small Business Administration, the Florida SBDC, local banks and others organizations that support small business. If you are a small business and have any questions or need support, you can contact Dan Murphy the city Economic Development Coordinator and the Community Redevelopment Agency Manager. His email address is dan.murphy@groveland-fl.gov

Below are some links to small business updates and resources. Each of these pages has additional links for various programs and support.

City of Groveland - <https://groveland-fl.gov/498/Coronavirus-Update>

Elevate Lake - <https://www.elevatelake.com/COVID-19>

Florida SBDC - <https://sbdcorlando.com/coronavirus/>

Garbage and Recycling

Garbage and recycling remain on normal schedules. However, with more people staying at home, the amount of garbage and recycle materials has increased. This increase has caused the trucks to have to make more trips to the dump and may impact the time of day that your garbage or recycle materials gets picked up. If you believe you have been

missed, or have a question on your garbage/recycling collection you are asked to please call 407-261-5000.

Water – Wastewater – Reclaimed Water

The city continues normal operations at its public works facilities with personnel working remotely or from their vehicles. Below are the answers to some questions people have had about their water supply. These answers and more can be found on the EPA website at: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/frequent-questions-about-coronavirus-covid-19>.

Is my drinking water safe? - YES. The EPA has established regulations with treatment requirements for public water systems that prevent waterborne pathogens such as viruses from contaminating drinking water. These treatment requirements include filtration and disinfectants such as chlorine that remove or kill pathogens before they reach the tap.

Do wastewater treatment plants treat for COVID-19? - YES. Wastewater treatment plants treat viruses and other pathogens. Coronavirus, which causes COVID-19, is a type of virus that is particularly susceptible to disinfection.

Is my reclaimed water safe? - YES. Reclaimed water involves taking what was once wastewater, which was previously treated to remove viruses and other pathogens, then conducting additional treatment and further disinfecting it

Will my septic system treat COVID-19? - While decentralized wastewater treatment (i.e., septic tanks) do not disinfect, EPA expects a properly managed septic system to treat COVID-19 the same way it safely manages other viruses often found in wastewater. Additionally, when properly installed, a septic system is located at a distance and location designed to avoid impacting a water supply well.

Parks and Community Services

The City of Groveland parks remain open for use; however, all restrooms are closed. While residents are welcome to use the parks, they are reminded to maintain social distancing at all times. While the city does clean the equipment in the parks, it is done on a periodic basis, so residents are encouraged not to use any park equipment.

Safety Reminder

It will take the actions of everyone working together to slow the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, it is not just one thing that will slow the spread and allow us to return to something close to the life we knew before this pandemic. It will take a combination of actions by all of us. I would ask everyone to take these three actions - **Stay, Stop, Save**.

STAY home. Avoid public gatherings if you have to go out. Shop at non-peak times and consolidate your trips so you make fewer of them. Take advantage of home delivery or curbside delivery.

STOP the spread. Make sure that you wash your hands frequently. If you are sick or think you may be sick – stay home. Maintain social distancing by staying at least six (6) feet from other people. Cover your mouth with a mask if you are going out. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw it away and wash your hands. Avoid touching your face.

SAVE Lives – Remember that the actions you are taking are not only designed to prevent you from catching the virus, but also others. Preventing the spread and following good hygiene will all work in partnership to help prevent the spread and by doing that you are saving lives. As someone once said, “The life you save may be your own”.

Questions? - If you have additional questions, the Florida Department of Health’s call center is available 24 hours a day. Their number is 1-866-779-6121. You can also email questions to COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

COVID-19 Survey – The Florida Department of Health recently launched a new public website, StrongerThanC-19. The website is a community action survey designed for Florida residents to anonymously answer a brief series of questions which the Department will use to help inform and improve the state’s response to COVID-19. Please take two minutes to answer the survey questions at: <https://www.strongerthanc19.com/start>.

Some Additional Websites:

- VA Public Health – publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/index.asp
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html
- Florida Health Department - <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>
- Lake County - <https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/COVID-19/>
- City of Groveland - <https://groveland-fl.gov/498/Coronavirus-Update>

Subscribe to Newsletter

If you would like to receive future copies of this newsletter, please subscribe for notifications by going to the Notify Me page on the city website at <http://groveland-fl.gov/list.aspx>. When you get to the website, enter your email address in the box and click “Sign In”. Next click the envelope icon next to Councilman Smith’s Newsletter. You will get a verification email and then a confirmation email after you have subscribed. Once subscribed you will get notification any new newsletters or news bulletins I post. The current and past newsletters are also available online at <http://groveland-fl.gov/468/Councilman-Smiths-Newsletter>.