

Charlotte County update for 5/6/20

County slowly, safely reopens some recreation facilities

By Hector Flores, Charlotte County Administrator

As Florida reopens restaurants, retail stores and state parks with some limitations, Charlotte County also is taking steps to slowly resume normal operations at county facilities. To date, we've opened beaches, sports fields, fishing piers, disc golf courses and park and beach restrooms. On May 8 tennis and pickleball courts will open for regularly scheduled hours.

Please continue to practice social distancing, good hygiene and personal protection. To reduce the potential for infection, when we resume collecting beach and boat ramp parking fees June 1, we will only have touchless methods and not be using the meters. For patrons without annual or seasonal parking passes or handicap tags, fees will payable via the ParkMobile website or app. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the Parking Information banner.

The County Commission passed an ordinance Tuesday to allow restaurants temporarily to expand outdoor dining. The order took effect immediately and expires June 4 unless extended.

Restaurants must comply with all social distancing, party size, and occupancy requirements under Gov. Ron DeSantis' Executive Order 20-112. They also must comply with relevant Department of Health and county fire regulations and the Florida Building Code. Outdoor dining areas in parking lots must be separated by physical barriers and kept clear of litter.

Restaurants must register with the Community Development Department before beginning operations permitted under the ordinance by emailing the restaurant name, location, contact information and a description of the outdoor seating arrangements to zoning@charlottecountyfl.gov.

For information, call 941-743-1964.

The Emergency Operations Center held its first Recovery Work Group conference last week. The group's mission is to set priorities and develop strategies to best position the residents of Charlotte County for the social and economic recovery associated with COVID-19. The group is comprised of local government agencies, public safety and law enforcement departments, business organizations, non-profits, schools and health-care providers. As Emergency Management Director Patrick Fuller told participants, this will be a long-standing working group facing an unprecedented challenge.

We will continue to explore opening county facilities, such as pools and recreation centers, and coordinate with neighboring communities on the timing, capacities, programs and other considerations. As we move forward, I want to assure you the health and safety of our residents and employees remains our top priority.

Hector Flores is the Charlotte County administrator. Readers may reach him at Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.