

Resolution of the Ellsworth City Council Regarding Non-Resident Visitors During Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

WHEREAS, there is currently an outbreak of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), a respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan City, China, which has expanded throughout the world, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 health crisis as a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is easily transmitted, especially in group settings, and it is vital that the spread of the virus be slowed in order to protect public safety, as well as preserve the ability of health care providers to handle the influx of new patients resulting from the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2020 the Ellsworth City Council held an emergency meeting to discuss the City's response to the COVID-19 crisis, including restricting public access to City facilities, and implementing safety protocols to help protect city employees and the public through social distancing, encouraging proper handwashing, use of remote technology and teleconferencing, managing group size, and early recognition of the symptoms of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2020 Governor Mills issued further guidance to businesses and organizations, closing non-essential businesses from the public; and

WHEREAS, there have been numerous sightings among Maine residents of out-of-state license plates, and reports of an influx of non-residents coming into Maine to stay at Air BNBs, hotels or rentals, and opening their summer homes early, seeking refuge from the coronavirus outbreak; and

WHEREAS, Hancock County is home to Acadia National Park, a major tourism industry, major coastal and lake access, and a large and disproportionate number of seasonal homes and short-term rentals, and hotel rooms, with the City of Ellsworth serving as the center for goods and services; and

WHEREAS, Maine has one of the oldest populations in the United States, and Hancock is among the oldest counties in Maine, a demographic that is extremely at-risk for COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the healthcare facilities in a county of 60,000 people will be greatly strained just taking care of local residents in the COVID-19 crisis, and could be easily overwhelmed by an influx of visitors; and

WHEREAS, the continued influx of non-residents threatens to spread the disease to the resident population, as they travel through the state and particularly with no assurance of self-quarantine on their part when they arrive;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Ellsworth City Council**;

1. Encourage non-residents to stay in place and not travel to Maine and our region in order to help slow the spread of the disease and preserve vital and limited local healthcare facilities;
2. Recommends visitors who have already arrived in Maine submit to a 14 day self-quarantine;
3. Recommends that for the duration of this crisis persons not advertise or encourage the use of rental of short-term rentals; and
4. Strongly encourages Governor Mills to continue to do all within her powers to discourage visitors to the State of Maine during the COVID-19 crisis, particularly from high risk states such as New York and New Jersey, and encourage recent arrivals to self-quarantine for a 14 day period.

Given under our hands and seal at Ellsworth, Maine this second day of April, 2020

Ellsworth City Councilors

Dale Hamilton, Chair

Marc Blanchette

Heather Grindle
Heather Grindle

Michelle Kaplan
Michelle Kaplan

Robert Miller
Robert Miller

John Moore
John Moore

John Phillips
John Phillips