

A RESOLUTION NO. 20-22

Requesting the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia to seriously consider modifying Executive Orders Fifty-One, Fifty-Three, and Fifty-Five so as to allow for the reopening of Virginia's society and economy no later than May 25, 2020.

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, The Honorable Ralph S. Northam, Governor of Virginia, issued Executive Order Fifty-One, a "Declaration of a State of Emergency Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)"; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Fifty-One is to remain in effect until June 10, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, Governor Northam issued Executive Order Fifty-Three, entitled "Temporary Restrictions on Restaurants, Recreational, Entertainment, Gatherings, Non-Essential Related Businesses, and Closure of K-12 Schools Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)"; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Fifty-Three, among other actions, halted all in-person instruction at Virginia's K-12 public and private schools for the remainder of the current school year; and prohibited, through April 23, 2020 (1) all private and public in-person gatherings of 10 or more persons, (2) dining and congregating in dining establishments, food courts, restaurants, microbreweries, breweries, wineries, tasting rooms, distilleries, and farmers' markets, (3) operating numerous types of recreational and entertainment businesses, and (4) operating any brick and mortar retail business not closed by the Executive Order unless the retail business ensures that no more than 10 patrons are present at a time; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Fifty-Three also provided that all businesses shall follow enhanced sanitizing practices, adhere to social distancing, and obey workplace guidance that State and federal authorities provide; and that all businesses offering professional rather than retail services should use teleworking to the extent possible; and

WHEREAS, on April 15, 2020, Governor Northam extended Executive Order Fifty-Three

for two weeks, through May 8, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on March 30, 2020, Governor Northam issued Executive Order Fifty-Five, entitled “Temporary Stay at Home Order Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)”, mandating that all persons in Virginia shall remain at their place of residence, except as that Order and Executive Order Fifty-Three provide; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Fifty-Five also provided for the closure of all public beaches, except for fishing and exercising; and further provided that if individuals use outdoor or shared spaces, whether on land or on water, they must at all times remain a minimum of six feet from any other individual, excluding household members, family members, or caretakers; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Fifty-Five specified that violation of certain of its provisions shall be a Class 1 misdemeanor and that the Order shall remain in effect until June 10, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the restrictions that the Governor’s Executive Orders have imposed on Virginia’s citizens, while well-meaning, have negatively impacted – to a significant extent – the State’s economy, including the economy of the City of Colonial Heights, and have greatly diminished many citizens’ quality of life; and

WHEREAS, during the past six weeks, a huge number of Virginians have lost their jobs and filed for unemployment benefits, many other workers have had their working hours and wages significantly reduced, and a multitude of businesses have ceased operating entirely or have been operating at a reduced, less profitable level; and

WHEREAS, federal government efforts to provide relief to citizens and businesses, while well-intended, have been insufficient to prevent at least a partial shut-down of Virginia’s economy; and

WHEREAS, a person’s loss of a job often results in negative mental health changes, including greater alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, stress, depression, and domestic abuse; and

WHEREAS, the number of deaths from COVID-19 that prominent computer models

projected have proven to be greatly overstated; and the virus' negative economic effect has been, and will continue to be for some time, greater than its health effects; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the Governor's Executive Orders have greatly contributed to a situation in the Commonwealth in which "the cure is worse than the sickness"; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS:

1. Governor Ralph S. Northam is requested to seriously consider taking the following actions:

(a) Modifying Executive Orders Fifty-One, Fifty-Three, and Fifty-Five so as to ease the severe restrictions the Orders impose on Virginia residents and businesses and allow the Commonwealth's citizens to enjoy the freedoms they formerly took for granted;

(b) Enacting all appropriate measures to allow Virginians to return to work and fully reopen their businesses, so as to reignite the Commonwealth's formerly robust economy; and

(c) Modifying his Executive Orders so that the changes requested in Paragraphs (a) and (b) above are effective no later than May 25, 2020.

2. This resolution shall be in effect upon approval.

3. The City Clerk shall send certified copies of this resolution to The Honorable Ralph S. Northam, Governor of Virginia; The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, Member of the Virginia House of Delegates; and The Honorable Amanda F. Chase, Member of the Senate of Virginia.

Approved:

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Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

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I certify that the above resolution was:

Adopted on \_\_\_\_\_.

Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_. Nays: \_\_\_\_\_. Absent: \_\_\_\_\_. Abstain: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Honorable Michael A. Cherry, Councilman: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Honorable Kenneth B. Frenier, Councilman: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Honorable W. Joe Green, Jr., Councilman: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Honorable John E. Piotrowski, Councilman: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Honorable John T. Wood, Councilman: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Honorable Elizabeth G. Luck, Vice Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Honorable T. Gregory Kochuba, Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney