

Pamela S. Ulmer

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Name: Anne Lorimer
Type of Meeting: Harrisonburg City Council
Date of Meeting: Tue, 05/12/2020
Agenda Item Number: 8(a)
Comment:
Dear City Council,

With regard to COVID-19 safety, I am writing in hope that Harrisonburg can delay moving from the Stay At Home order to Phase 1. Other Virginia localities are doing this, despite having considerably fewer cases per capita and deaths per capita, and generally not having poultry processing plants.

Harrisonburg has the 5th highest number of cases of coronavirus per capita, as well as the 5th highest number of deaths. These numbers are higher than those of the localities which are keeping the Stay at Home order in place until May 28th: Arlington, Prince William, Loudon, and Fairfax Counties, as well as Alexandria. Of those communities, Arlington is the highest in both metrics, being 10th and 11th respectively. When measured in absolute terms, their numbers are higher, but Harrisonburg comes in at eighth place.

These counties also do not generally have poultry plants, unlike the Shenandoah Valley and the Eastern Shore, where Virginia's highest rates of cases and deaths are found. The plants allow for infections which then explode into surrounding communities. And so we need to compensate by keeping infections elsewhere down as much as possible, so that the healthcare situation remains manageable.

Currently over 1% of Harrisonburg's population has tested positive for coronavirus. Given lack of access to testing, even for symptomatic people, it seems safe to assume the actual number is far higher.

Thank you for the work that you are doing.

Anne Lorimer

Contact: Yes
Contact Info: hybridgoldfish@gmail.com

(540) 746-1230