



Dear Leesburg Resident,

I hope everyone has a successful remote back to school on September 8th. Thank you for continuing to wear a mask, wash your hands and keep a physical distance. Together we will overcome this challenge.

Childcare Program and Libraries

I have received many emails of concern about, or in opposition to, the Board's decision to utilize Rust and Ashburn libraries, along with County community centers and privately leased space, for weekday childcare for Kindergarten through 6th grade students, who are too young to be left home alone and whose parents have to work outside the home.

Here are the decision points that led to the Board's decision:

1) Why can't the schools be used for child care?

This is the first question I and other Board members asked County staff in late August when we were briefed on the proposal to provide K-6 childcare in school buildings, community centers, recreation centers and libraries. In fact, several elementary schools are going to be used for K-6 childcare. This summer, Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) sent out a survey, asking parents whether they supported 100% remote learning, a hybrid model of 2 days/week of in-person learning with 3 days/week of remote learning, or 100% in-person learning. The vast majority of families did not want to send their children back into the schools. Over 92% of the respondents opposed using the schools for full in-person instruction. 53.59% or 44,119 of the over 82,000 responses favored 100% remote learning. 38.51% or 31,703 responses favored the hybrid system. Only 7.91% or 6,512 responses favored 100% in-person learning or did not have an opinion. Based on the community's responses to the survey, LCPS decided to close the schools for regular classes for the foreseeable future. That said, there are activities that will still be taking place in the schools, including special needs classes. Because the schools are still under a mandate from the Governor to maintain social distancing among students for all in-person classes, the schools will need extra space for those activities and will be unable to accommodate the return of all students 5 days a week. You can see the survey results [here](#).

2) Why can't the County leave Rust and Ashburn libraries as they are and use other facilities for K-6 childcare?

First, the Board of Supervisors and County staff are encouraging the Library Board of Trustees to work with the County to enable curbside pickup and library use for library patrons in the evenings after the end of the school day and on weekends. The County has done an inventory of all County-owned spaces and evaluated whether the number of children needing childcare can be accommodated. The advantage to County-owned facilities, like community centers and libraries, is that they are free to the taxpayers. But the County does not have enough space at other County facilities to accommodate all the children who will need to be accommodated. Why Rust and Ashburn? Why not other libraries? Some of the other libraries are too small (Purcellville); one is not owned by the County (Brambleton); the others do not have the small conference rooms that allow for small groups of students to work in isolation from other small groups of students. For better or worse, Rust and Ashburn libraries are configured in such a way as to enable the County to maintain social distancing for the students.

3) Why can't the County lease private space for childcare?

The County is negotiating leases with private venues, like out-of-business childcare centers; however, privately owned space costs money that the taxpayers have to pay. Why do we care if we use taxpayer dollars to lease privately owned space instead of using free space that the County owns? Because the County is facing a projected \$100 million shortfall this fiscal year due to the impact of the shutdown on our local economy. We are also very mindful that many of our residents and businesses cannot afford to pay taxes at the same levels they have paid in the past, so we don't expect that shortfall to disappear. The Board is trying to be mindful of the financial difficulties facing Loudoun's and Leesburg's families and businesses. Because of the shutdown, 10% of our residents are now unemployed and 20% of our businesses have gone out of business, including private childcare facilities that could have provided childcare for those who need it.

4) Why was this all done so late in the game without the chance for full public input?

The Board received individual briefings on this issue late in the game, because County staff was alerted to the problem of childcare needs late in the game. As soon as County staff briefed the Board of Supervisors on the problem, County staff reached out to the Library Board of Trustees to brief them. Pandemic response and the rules governing the shutdown are unpredictable and changing often and without advance notice to any of us. County staff has had to respond faster than it would like and the Board has had to respond much faster than we would like. In order to be ready to provide childcare in time for the start of the school year, County staff and the Board were under a very short deadline. Would we have preferred to have a community discussion? Absolutely. But pandemic and shutdown response times have been shortened drastically.

5) Will Rust and Ashburn libraries continue to provide any services?

We are working with the Libraries to ensure that services continue. The Board supports, and the libraries are trying to ensure that, curbside service at these libraries, along with evening and weekend library services, are offered.

6) Will any individuals, who rely on the libraries for computer access to do job searches, be able to continue to do that?

The County's Workforce Resource Center in Leesburg is still providing access to job-search computers and job interview facilities. Please go [here](#) for more information.

7) Are all families eligible for the County's childcare system?

Theoretically, yes. However, preference is being given to the children of first responders and other County employees, the children of teachers, children who qualify for free or reduced meals and special needs children, regardless of where their parents are employed. Are these children more important than your children? No. You and your children are essential to Loudoun County, but if we can't keep our first responders, teachers and other critical County workers on the job, because they have to stay home with their children, we will not be able to teach any of our children, even remotely, and the essential services, that County employees need to provide in person, will fail. Could the program be expanded to accommodate all families? Yes, but the cost would impose an enormous burden on the taxpayers. We are getting some money from the federal government, but not nearly enough to cover the cost of providing childcare to all who could use it. To provide childcare for all K-6 students whose parents want it, would cost \$34 million - the equivalent of about a 4% increase in the real estate tax rate. Not everyone can afford a tax increase in this economy. For more information on what the Board members have seen in reaching this decision, please visit the [action item](#) from Tuesday's Board business meeting.

Is any of this ideal? No. Is it fair? No. Is it asking a lot of you when you're already overburdened by the stress of the shutdown and the pandemic? Yes, it is. You are being asked to sacrifice again and again this year and I know how hard that is. I can assure you I wish we were able to come up with a solution that would make your life easier instead of asking you and our community to pull together once again.

Firearms Regulation at Public Buildings and Parks

At the September 1st Board business meeting, the Board voted (6-2-1) to draft an ordinance that regulates firearms in buildings owned or used by the County, public parks owned or operated by the County and in recreation or community center facilities operated by the County as authorized by the Code of Virginia. The 2020 General Assembly gave localities the authority to control firearms and you can get an overview of each piece of State legislation that went into effect on July 1, 2020 [here](#).

I supported the motion because when a gun issue comes up, I have many constituents who are afraid to speak because the Board room is filled with individuals who carry guns. I voted for the sake of County residents whose First Amendment Freedom of Speech rights are curtailed because they do not feel safe in the Board room.

Residents will have an opportunity to speak about the draft firearms ordinance at a Board of Supervisors public hearing which will most likely be scheduled in 2021.

Route 15 North

Below is a status update of the Route 15 North widening project from Battlefield Parkway to Montresor Road. A virtual public input meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 29th from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Materials will be available to review in early October on the project website link at the bottom of this article.

- In March 2020, the engineer updated the initial concept design and developed 30% design exhibits which includes phase I environmental site assessment and wetlands delineation.
- In May 2020, the Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure staff split the project into two phases. Phase I will incorporate the road widening between Battlefield Parkway and Whites Ferry Road. Phase II will incorporate the roadway widening between Whites Ferry Road and Montresor Road, the relocation of Limestone School Road, and construction of the roundabout at Montresor Road.
- The cultural resource investigation is ongoing with completion expected before the public input meeting.

[Route 15 North website](#)

Limited Rent Assistance Program

An online application for limited rent assistance was launched that allows residents to use a computer, tablet or mobile phone to complete their application. Residents who were current in their rent payments as of March 31st, and who now need help paying rent, may submit an online application as well as eligibility documentation, such as a current lease and paperwork that shows a job loss, reduced income or hardship due to COVID-19. This documentation will be verified to determine eligibility. Submitting an application does not guarantee financial assistance will be provided. Please visit the link below to apply. Thank you.

The terms of the program include:

- Income eligibility based on household size for households earning up to 80% of the area median income (\$79,600 for a family of four).
- Direct payments made to landlords or property management companies on behalf of residents who qualify for the program.
- Depending on funding availability, the program provides rent assistance for up to six months.
- The program will continue as long as the local emergency declaration is in effect and funding is available.

[Limited Rent Assistance website](#)

Thank you and have a nice holiday weekend.

Warm Regards,

Kristen C. Umstatt

Leesburg District
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
kristen.umstattd@loudoun.gov
703-777-0203

Valerie Suzdak
Chief Legislative Aide
Supervisor Kristen Umstattd, Leesburg District
valerie.suzdak@loudoun.gov

Laura TeKrony
Legislative Aide
Supervisor Kristen Umstattd
laura.tekrony@loudoun.gov

Business of the Month



Aviation Adventures: Our mission is to provide the best flight instruction value in the national capital region by conducting safe, professional flight instruction in well equipped, well maintained airplanes in a fun, club-like environment. Aviation Adventures is located in Leesburg Executive Airport's Terminal Building which has been instrumental in establishing it as the leader in Technologically Advanced Aircraft and the premier Flight School in Virginia. We would like the opportunity to show you our aircraft, meet our instructors and show you how we can start or advance your flight training. If you would like more information on our aircraft, training programs, or other services, we invite you to come out to the airport for a close-up view of what we can do for you.



Mayor Kelly Burk's Corner

The Town of Leesburg will continue its outdoor dining plan, every Friday and Saturday evening, now through the end of October. Since July, South King Street, between Market and Loudoun streets, has closed to allow downtown restaurants to create temporary outdoor dining areas. The program runs from 4 to 10 pm, weather permitting. The street closure begins at 3:30 pm and ends by 10:30 pm. During the closure, the street becomes the public sidewalk. Visitors are not allowed to congregate in the street and must maintain proper social distancing at all times. There are no live performances or other outdoor entertainment. Visitors are encouraged to visit our downtown shops while waiting to dine.



The 12th annual Dog Swim will be held at AV Symington Aquatic Center on Saturday, September 12th. The pool will be open for the dog-only swim for two sessions from 9 to 10:30 am and 11 am to 12:30 pm. The event allows local pups the opportunity to have fun in a safe, enclosed area while swimming off-leash with other dogs. All dogs must be six months old, legally licensed, vaccinated, and wearing a visible dog license. All exits will be gated and a veterinarian will be on-site as a precaution. Due to COVID-19, there will be a limit of 100 people per session with no more than two dogs per person. Those attending must be at least 10 years of age with dog handlers being 16 years or older. Masks must be worn at all times while maintaining a social distance of six feet from those not in their party, dogs excluded. The fee is \$5.00 per person. Registration is currently available through WebTrac or by visiting the front desk at Ida Lee Recreation Center. Walk-up registration on the day of the event is available but not guaranteed. For more information, please visit [here](#) or call 703-777-1368.



The Leesburg Department of Utilities Water Supply Division has once again been awarded with an Excellence in Waterworks Operations/Performance Award. This year marks the 16th consecutive time that Leesburg has received this annual award. Excellence in performance and operations involve setting and achieving goals well beyond the established regulations and making a commitment to customer satisfaction. To see the most recent annual water quality report, visit [here](#).

The Thomas Balch Library's Loudoun History Awards have been suspended due to COVID-19. Library Director Alexandra S. Gressitt said that after discussion and consideration of all other options the Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission realized it would be impossible to hold this year's event. The Loudoun History Awards honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the preservation of Loudoun's past through collection of county documents and memorabilia, preservation of historic landmarks, visual arts, writing, and long-term involvement in local history organizations. The Loudoun History Awards have been held for 26 years with only one other interruption when the Library moved back into its refurbished facility in 2000. The Commission looks forward to resuming this program. Any nominations already in hand for 2020 may be submitted next year.

The Town's annual airshow has been cancelled due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Town's Airport Director, Scott Coffman, cancelling this year's event was not an easy decision. With continued restrictions placed upon public events and gatherings, Coffman said it would be impossible to hold the airshow. Last year, approximately 7,000 people attended the six hour event.



Update from Beth Barts

Hello, Leesburg District! As the summer draws to a close, I know many families in our community are gearing up to start the 2020-21 school year. While this school year will not look like any other in terms of new backpacks and lunchboxes, we continue to move forward with unique ways to meet our community's needs with distance learning. I want to thank our teachers and administration for many hours of hard work over the summer and their continued commitment to meet the challenges that we will face on September 8th. Please know that the Loudoun County School Board is committed to getting back into our school buildings as soon as possible, as we know there is no substitute for the engagement of in-person learning.

As part of this commitment, we are taking a phased approach by returning around 2,500 students to in-person learning during the first quarter. As we move forward with our return to school plan, we will continue to be guided by County data in collaboration with the Loudoun County Health Department and the applicable local regulations to expand upon this start. We will be phasing in 900 Monroe Advanced Technical Academy students on September 8th and approximately 800 special education students by October 13th. We will also be working on our plan to bring some of our English Language Learner students back into our buildings by October 27th.

LCPS is also prioritizing a continued focus on raising racial consciousness and improving racial literacy through its Multifaceted LCPS Action Plan to Combat Systemic Racism. This includes professional learning and bias training for both staff and students. We are proud to note that LCPS will be one of 16 Virginia school divisions that will be offering a new high school course in African American History.

Thank you all for your cooperation and support during these unprecedented times. The manner in which we have come together as a village to protect one another as we plan for a strong future continues to impress me. I have no doubt that our children will come out of all of this stronger and better prepared to lead the world.

Community Information



Voters Encouraged to Apply Online Now to Vote Absentee in November:

Loudoun County election officials encourage voters to apply now to cast an absentee ballot by mail in the upcoming November general election. All registered voters are eligible to vote absentee in the November 3rd election. While some third-party organizations are distributing vote-by-mail application forms, Loudoun County election officials encourage voters to [apply online](#) through the Virginia Department of Elections. Applications may also be [downloaded](#) from the Virginia Department of Elections and, once completed, mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the Loudoun County Office of Elections and Voter Registration. The ballots will not be available to be mailed to voters until September 18th. Voters who have already applied for an absentee ballot do not need to submit a new application.

Expanded In-Person Services at the Workforce Resource Center: Now offering limited in-person services by appointment only, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm and Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Address for the Workforce Resource Center is 102 Heritage Way, NE, in Leesburg (first floor, rear entrance). To schedule an appointment, please call 703-777-0150. The following COVID-19 prevention measures are in place for visitors:

- Face coverings are required; if you do not have one, a face covering will be provided to you.
- Stay 6 feet apart from others.

During Workforce Development Month in September, the Workforce Resource Center will feature special virtual events at no cost for job seekers. Preview the event lineup [here](#) for detailed information about each event and how to register.

Leesburg District | 1 Harrison St, S.E., 5th Floor, Leesburg, VA 20175

[About our service provider](#)

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