

Dear Quogue residents,

Last Friday, Governor Cuomo delegated the decision whether to allow high-risk winter sports and recreation activities back to local health departments. On Monday, Suffolk County, despite being in the region (Long Island) that has the highest COVID-19 positivity rate in the State, announced that officials in the County Health Department, schools and athletic organizations had conferred and in fact these sports and activities could resume as of February 1. The specific Suffolk County Health Department guidance can be found at <https://suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Health-Services/Health-Bulletins/Novel-Coronavirus/SCDHS-COVID19-Guidance-and-Services>. If you are the parent of a basketball player, cheerleader, lacrosse player or even a wrestler, you may have mixed feelings about this development, but the mental health of your child should improve and, as a result, probably yours as well. Consider also that the metrics in Suffolk County seem to be going in the right direction. In a conference call earlier in the week, representatives of our local hospitals reported that coronavirus cases in their institutions had declined significantly, and they seemed confident that the post-holiday surge has run its course. Meanwhile, the total of reported cases in Quogue has elevated a little to 46. Let's be vigilant, everyone.

By the way, the County has a new page on its website, <https://suffolkcountyny.gov/vaccine>. It has links and information on it that you may find useful, including a listing of the items you may need to prove your age, employment status or residency in New York State when being vaccinated.

As anyone who has tried to get a vaccine knows, the rollout has been very messy. The shortage of vaccines has been well publicized along with websites that crash and phone numbers that don't answer. All I can say to those who are currently eligible to be vaccinated is keep trying as often as time allows, and get on every list that you can. Unfortunately, at this point you must have a little luck to complete the process. I believe that the program will improve substantially in the coming weeks.

Here are a couple of links that I have not seen before for people who might want to pitch in to fight this virus: if someone would like to volunteer at a NYS vaccination site, please visit this link: <https://apps.health.ny.gov/pub/servny/>; if someone would like temporary work at a NYS vaccination site, please visit this link: <https://health.ny.gov/employment/index.htm>.

On another subject altogether, you may not have heard that the Pine Barrens Commission voted 3-1 last week to approve Discovery Land Company's long-standing proposal for development of a residential community and golf course in East Quogue. That is the last significant regulatory hurdle. I have followed this project for a long time. In my opinion, the development will be a big plus for East Quogue and the area.

I have had a number of inquiries concerning the warehouse proposed to be built for Amazon on the former Bob Stevens site at the industrial park adjacent to Gabreski Airport. While airport noise is certainly something to watch, this project does not involve air traffic. It is a so-called last-mile warehouse. Packages will be trucked in overnight via tractor trailers from an Amazon facility to our west, unloaded and sorted and then loaded onto delivery vans that go to our houses and elsewhere on the east end. Since the park is in an unincorporated area of Southampton Town, the project is presently before the Planning Board of Southampton Town. You can read about it at: <https://www.27east.com/southampton-press/southampton-town-planners-eye-traffic-study-for-amazon-hub-in-westhampton-1749004/?highlight=amazon%20and%20gabreski>.

If you are wondering what to do with yourself these days, you may be interested in learning that Governor Cuomo's State budget includes proposals to legalize marijuana and allow online sports wagering. Doing both at once probably will not be recommended.

Good luck,

Peter Sartorius
Mayor