

NASHUA

Health officials say indoor barriers could create more risk

By Kimberly Houghton
Union Leader Correspondent

Outdoor dining is coming to an end and restaurants are facing challenges on how to keep their patrons safe from the coronavirus.

"We know that the six-foot distancing rule is not a sure thing," said Dr. Stephanie Wolf-Rosenblum, a member of the Nashua Board of Health.

During a meeting Wednesday, Wolf-Rosenblum said she worries about the enclosed plastic barriers that restaurants are implementing to allow for additional dining inside their establishments.

Creating small cubicles inside a restaurant may actually inhibit aerosols from being dispersed by ventilation systems within the

COVID-19 update

Wednesday's statistics from the state Department of Health & Human Services:

New cases: 120 (1%*)

New deaths: 1

Current cases: 1,454

Now hospitalized: 42

Being monitored: 4,750

Cases to date: 11,563

Deaths to date: 484

Recovered: 9,625

Hospitalizations: 787

* New cases as a percentage of daily PCR tests.

buildings, explained Wolf-Rosenblum.

"We now know that COVID-19 is predominantly transmissible by aerosol. It is also transmitted by droplets, which are larger

particles which can spray towards someone," she said.

The state's guidelines for distancing of indoor dining tables does not meet the guidelines recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, according to Wolf-Rosenblum.

Wolf-Rosenblum also voiced concerns about entertainment inside of restaurants. Loud talking, singing and shouting can spread the virus beyond 25 feet and maybe as far as 45 feet.

"My concern is that this does not follow the science and will lead to more and more outbreaks throughout the season," she said.

Potential exposure

On Saturday, the Nashua

Division of Public Health and Community Services announced an investigation into potential exposures related to a person with COVID-19 who worked in the bar of Texas Roadhouse, 580 Amherst St., from 3 to 10 p.m. on Oct. 22 and from 11 a.m. to close on Oct. 23.

This past weekend, city health officials urged anyone who visited the restaurant during those times to self-quarantine because of possible exposure, and to get tested.

"The health and safety of our staff and customers is our top priority. We have been following CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting our facility," Eric Martin, Texas Roadhouse director of food safety, said in a statement. "We follow all reopening guidance for

food service establishments from the state."

Ren Beaudoin, deputy health officer for the city, said the state's new requirement to collect contact information for people dining at New Hampshire restaurants is a positive step.

While this will not mitigate the spread of the virus, it will make it easier for public health nurses to conduct contact tracing related to potential COVID-19 cases at restaurants, he said.

Wolf-Rosenblum suggested that the Board of Health create a graphic to be displayed at Nashua restaurants highlighting the risks associated with indoor dining, including what is safe, safer and safest. She also recommended that a letter be sent to state officials respectfully asking

them to provide information in a timely manner to the city's public health division so that those details can be appropriately disseminated to the public, noting the governor's decision on Friday to implement the restaurant sign-in and dine-in changes during the weekend.

"I don't have confidence that changes could be affected in a time frame that would save lives," added Rosenblum. "... I feel like something different than what we are doing now has to be done."

A meeting between the governor's reopening committee and the Nashua Board of Health was also being planned to further address some of the concerns.

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HUDSON

Gov. Sununu expresses support for Amazon project

■ Sununu also offered help with roadway project near the proposed development.

By Ryan Lessard
Union Leader Correspondent

Calling the proposed Hudson Logistics Center "beneficial" for the town and New Hampshire, Gov. Chris Sununu has told selectmen the state is committed to a "working partnership" to build a new two-lane roadway called the Hudson Boulevard.

Members of the Hudson Planning Board have expressed concerns about how the 2.6-million-square-foot warehouse and distribution campus would affect traffic. The tenant for the majority of the logistics center would be Amazon.

The Hudson Boulevard is the first phase of the long-proposed Circumferential Highway. And as Sununu stated in a Sept. 9 letter to Selectmen Chairman David Morin, the town has struggled to get additional funding for the project despite being included in

the state's last two 10-Year Transportation Improvement Plans.

Sununu said he would pursue funding for construction, potentially including it in his budget proposal for the 2023-2032 Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan, which would need to be approved by the legislature.

Morin said Wednesday the governor made his offer unbidden, and the town reached out to the state only about Hudson Boulevard more than a year ago.

"Governor Sununu made the offer to assist with the preliminary design and engineering phase of the project and committed to pursuing funding for the construction of Hudson Boulevard," Morin said. "The town made no request for this assistance to his office."

Morin said selectmen took no action in response to the letter, aside from placing it in the public re-

cord, since the project is still being reviewed by the planning board.

According to the letter, town officials reached out to the state Department of Transportation to see if it would allow the creation of just the Hudson Boulevard portion of the highway, which would connect Sagamore Bridge to Route 111.

Hudson officials decided not to include a bond in last year's warrant articles to fund the \$45 million Hudson Boulevard project, after it learned that the town was not awarded a \$25 million federal grant to offset the costs. The plan then was to build one lane of the highway with room to add a second lane in the future.

It's hoped the new roadway will alleviate heavy traffic on Lowell Road, to which the proposed development, located at Green Meadow Golf Club, would be directly connected.

Hillwood Enterprises plans to present its traffic study and proposed roadway improvement plans to the planning board at its next meeting on Nov. 18.

MANCHESTER

New chief starts to put his mark on MPD; assistant chief resigns

By Mark Hayward
New Hampshire Union Leader

Less than two weeks after Allen Aldenberg took over as Manchester police chief, an inevitable reshuffling has begun within the department.

That became clear Wednesday at the monthly meeting of the Manchester Police Commission, the civilian board that advises the police department.

• Ryan Grant, the outspoken assistant police chief, will resign as of Nov. 30, he announced. Grant has been with Manchester police for 24 years and has spoken bluntly on topics such as bail reform and outgoing county prosecutor Michael Conlon. In August, he said the city had become the dumping ground for the state's problems.

• Brandon Murphy, a

lieutenant in the special enforcement division, was promoted to captain and assigned to Aldenberg's job as commander of the Patrol Division. The single largest division, Patrol includes uniformed patrol, the traffic unit, K-9 unit and animal control.

• The two-officer Gang Prevention Unit has moved from the Community Policing Division to the Patrol Division. Street gangs have been associated with recent spikes in gun-related violence in the city. "It is just a better fit. The work that they do fits with anti-crime, making the patrol division a good place for the unit," said police spokeswoman Heather Hamel.

• Aldenberg released a two-page vision statement that focused on resilience, an engaged leadership, excellence, investment in

employees and innovation.

Normally, the top ranks in the Manchester Police Department undergo a reshuffling once a new chief takes over, in part because in Manchester the new chief is usually promoted from within.

Members of the Police Commission complimented Grant on his career with the department. When Capano was named chief, he promoted Grant, who was the detective division captain, to assistant chief. Grant served as acting chief for several weeks after Capano's departure.

Grant said he's not sure what he will do next, but he said his departure gives Aldenberg a chance to pick his new command structure.

"I've been here half my life, so it's kind of hard to walk away. I love this job. I love this city," Grant said.

NEWPORT

Classes canceled after students and staffer are sickened by fumes

By Damien Fisher
Union Leader Correspondent

Five students and a staffer at Newport Middle High School became ill from fumes in the building on Wednesday, leading to classes being canceled for the day.

Superintendent Brendan Minnihan said it is believed that the fumes that caused the light-headedness and nausea experienced by students and staff came from the automotive program on campus as part of the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center located on

campus.

"We're going to have the (New Hampshire) Department of Environmental Services check the building," he said.

When a handful of students reported feeling unwell and smelling an exhaust-type smell in the building, Minnihan said part of the building was evacuated, but as more students reported smelling the fumes, the whole school was soon out of the building.

Newport's Fire and Rescue Department responded.

Four students and one staffer were taken to the emergency room with light-headedness and nausea, and one student got a ride to the ER from a parent, Minnihan said.

Minnihan said the emergency room trips were a precaution.

Rather than continue to deal with the fumes, Minnihan said administrators decided to cancel school for the rest of the day and find the source of the fumes.

Minnihan said he expected to be able to reopen the school on Thursday.

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