

As we know, the Governor has divided New York State into Regions and declared that the Regions will be allowed to open up depending on their success in meeting seven metrics. We are in the Capital Region and if you go to the [Regional Monitoring Dashboard](#) you can see how we stand. As of Wednesday we had achieved five of the seven metrics. We have not yet sufficiently decreased the number of hospitalizations or hospital deaths. But we are moving in the right direction.

Once we meet the seven metrics we will not be allowed an automatic and complete re-opening. As the Governor has said, it is not an “on-off” switch, it is more like a dial. We will be allowed to open up in phases.

Phase 1: Includes construction, manufacturing and select retail (with curbside pickup)

Phase 2: Includes professional services, finance and insurance, retail, administrative support, and real estate/rental leasing

Phase 3: Includes restaurants, food services and hotels

Phase 4: Includes arts, entertainment, recreation and education

Although I cannot predict when we will reach the seven metrics I am happy to say that Columbia County is preparing for that moment. This past Monday was the inaugural meeting of a new Committee called “Columbia Comeback”. The committee is chaired by Matt Murell, co-chaired by Jeff Hunt, President of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce and Michael Tucker President of Columbia County Economic Development. The Committee has representatives of the Columbia County Department of Health, the Columbia County Emergency Management Office, and the Columbia County Tourism Department. There are three members from the Board of Supervisors as well as other County representatives and numerous representatives of local businesses. The goal of the Committee is to help prepare businesses to successfully open up within the CDC guidelines. I am posting Notes from the first meeting as well as the Powerpoint which was shown at the meeting. I am very pleased that this well qualified Committee will spearhead our efforts to be ready to open as soon as we can.

As for Copake. This Board One of the first things we did this year was to create an Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee. In February we adopted a Mission Statement, we advertised for applicants and we were delighted with the large number of applicants and their obvious expertise and interest. And by the March meeting, Covid arrived, and we shuttered our doors and put our brand new committee on pause.

With the Columbia Comeback in full swing, I think we need a Copake Comeback too. Tonight I am scheduling a Special Meeting to be held in the last week of May, to interview our applicants for the Economic Development Advisory Committee so that we can appoint them and by mid June they can meet whether by Zoom or in person.

Already the Mission of this Committee- to support and promote the economic wellbeing of Copake, was critical to the Town. Now more than ever, we need their assistance and leadership as we get ready to open our doors- not hastily perhaps but carefully in a way which will insure the long-lasting safety of our community and the economic wellbeing of our Town.

It seems a lifetime ago that this Board sat down together for the first time. I am proud of what they have accomplished and the way they have worked together. This public health crisis has created challenges that no one could have imagined when we first met in January.

Now as we begin our May meeting, it is our duty to remember all those in Columbia County who have suffered at the hands of this virus. Many have suffered economically, all have suffered emotionally- as we are deprived of the company of our friends and those we love. But too many have also more deeply. As of last Friday, there were 10 positive cases in the Town of Copake. As of 3:00 p.m. today at there are 333 positive case of COVID-19 in Columbia County. Overnight the number of hospitalizations went from 6 to 10. And as of today, there have been 24 fatalities in the County.

As the numbers grow- I am sometimes afraid that we can become numb to this loss of life. But sooner or later for all of us, the loss and the pain becomes real and personal.

We will end this meeting with a moment of silence for those who have lost their lives to this horrible pandemic.