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May 27, 2020

City of Athens partially opens recreation, extends grace period on disconnects

The following are a list of COVID-19 protocols related to the City of Athens that Mayor Ronnie Marks updated on May 27.

“We continue to monitor the number of local and statewide cases and implement ways to provide services in the safest manner possible,” Marks said.

City of Athens facilities

The City of Athens continues to make improvements to its facilities to limit exposure risks for staff and citizens, such as installing glass barriers at counters. In order to complete these improvements, City of Athens facilities, unless otherwise specified, will remain closed to the public until June 8. Each facility has contact information listed on the door, and contact information for each department is available online at www.athensal.us.

Athens Parks and Recreation

Director Bert Bradford said the department is partially opening and will continue to evaluate programs. The department is tasked with getting staff certified in certain areas, such as lifeguards, after certification classes were postponed during state health order restrictions. In addition, the department is working to fill 40 temporary positions after those employees were laid off during the state health order restrictions prohibiting recreational activities.

As the city opens some of its recreational programs, Bradford asks users to please adhere to social distancing and sanitation guidelines.

Trails and tennis courts have been open. Here is an update on the other programs.

The following will open to the public on Monday, June 1:

- Current Recreation Center for public usage (restrooms & fitness classes)
- Pavilion Rentals
- Playground equipment
- Fitness Classes
- Practice Field Reservations – Wavaho Field only

The following are delayed:

- Travel Baseball/Softball Tournaments (will resume in late August)
- Youth Sports Camps (we will re-evaluate July 1)
- Swimming Pool Open Swim (we will re-evaluate July 1)
- Karate (will resume at the new Rec. Center)
- Pool Parties (when lifeguards are hired)
- Swim Team Practice (when lifeguards are hired)

The following are cancelled for this summer:

- Youth Volleyball Season (impossible to social distance in volleyball)
- Free Play Basketball (will resume after social distancing is over)
- Home Swim Meets
- Adult Softball

Fall Registration Information:

- *Baseball & Softball (extended season – 12 games, tournament, keep score)*
 - *Registration: June 15 – July 8, \$70*
 - *Evaluations for baseball are July 16 & 17*
 - *Evaluations for softball are July 18*
 - *Practices on July 27*
 - *Opening Ceremonies on August 24*
 - *Games begin August 25*

- *Soccer & Flag Football*
 - *Registration: June 20-July 13, \$50*
 - *Evaluations for soccer are July 21 & 23*
 - *Evaluations for flag football are July 25*
 - *Practices begin August 3*
 - *Opening Ceremonies on August 31*
 - *Games begin Sept. 1*

- *Adult Softball*
 - *Registration: Aug. 1 – 31, \$350*
 - *Coaches Meeting: Sept. 9*
 - *Games begin Sept. 14*

- *Archery*
 - *Registration: Sept. 1 – 30, \$30*
 - *Wednesday Class Dates: Oct. 7,14,21,28, Nov. 4*
 - *Friday Class Dates: Oct. 2,9,16,23,30*

Athens Utilities

Athens Utilities is again extending its suspension of the practice of disconnecting utility services for nonpayment.

Customer Accounts Manager Bill Vaughn said the new extension date is June 22. Customers will be responsible for the full bill amount accrued until payment is made. Vaughn urges customers to pay what they can on their bills to help keep their balances low.

Payments:

- Drive-thru at 508 S. Jefferson Street. Lane is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Pay online at www.athens-utilities.com. The online company that provides this service does charge a fee.
- Mail bill stub with payment to City of Athens Utilities, P.O. Box 830200, Birmingham, AL, 35283-0200.
- Place bill stub with payment in the night box at the facility at 508 S. Jefferson Street.
- Pay by phone by calling toll free 1-855-760-0921. The company that provides this service does charge a fee.
- Pay by bank draft (no fee). Forms are available:
 - Online at www.athens-utilities.com
 - By calling 256-233-8750
 - By emailing customeraccounts@athens-utilities.com

Athens City Council meetings

The city will continue to live stream these meetings on the city's YouTube channel at [CityofAthensAla](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0W0W0W0W0W0W0W0W0W0W0W). A phone number for citizen input will be provided during these meetings. Citizens who attend must sit in designated seats that are six feet apart.

In addition, due to COVID-19 protocols, those who meet the following criteria are prohibited from attending in person:

- Persons who have been, within the last 14 days, in any area identified by the CDC as subject to a Level 3 Travel Health Notice or as a place of "Widespread sustained spread and restrictions on travel to the United States," see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> This list may update.

- Persons who reside or have had close contact with someone who has been in one of the areas listed above within the last 14 days.
- Persons who have been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital or health agency.
- Persons who have been diagnosed with or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or the flu.
- Persons who have a fever 100.4 degrees or higher, cough, have trouble breathing, or are obviously unwell, and have not been free of those conditions for 48 hours.

Athens Municipal Court

Municipal Court Judge Don Mansell said the suspension of all in-person court proceedings, as ordered by the Alabama Supreme Court, are extended through June 30. This suspension also applies to the city's defensive driving course. The Court set a tentative date to resume proceedings on July 7.

In addition, any person who has been sentenced and ordered to make monthly payments toward their fine, costs or other court-related fees, will be given a 60-day grace period to make the payments. This will encompass payments for March and April. No one should be penalized if they are unable to make payments for these months. The clerks will accept payments of any amount for those able to make a payment. This applies to previously sentenced defendants. Please contact Municipal Court if you cannot pay a citation by sending an email to court@athensal.us or faxing a request to 256-233-6889.

Those who need to contact Municipal Court staff or make a payment can send an email to court@athensal.us or call 256-233-8733.