



# CITY OF BEDFORD

2000 Forest Ridge Drive - Bedford, TX 76021  
(817)952-2100 [www.bedfordtx.gov](http://www.bedfordtx.gov)

## MESSAGE FROM MAYOR MICHAEL BOYTER

Last night the Bedford City Council met in a Virtual Special Work Session. The purpose of the Work Session was to discuss “re-opening” City facilities, the status of upcoming City events and festivals, and to brainstorm ideas to support Bedford businesses as they begin to reopen.

### City Facilities

Bedford, like our neighboring cities, is faced with the challenge of finding ways to safely provide access to City facilities while addressing health and safety concerns for our residents and staff. First and foremost, before any facility can be “re-opened” to the public, protocols must be established to limit possible viral exposures by and between individuals and steps taken to ensure that shared surfaces are properly cleaned and disinfected.

Today, the Bedford Public Library opened its drive-up window to the public, with staff available to help patrons check out books. A schedule of open hours can be found on their website at [www.bedfordlibrary.org](http://www.bedfordlibrary.org). In addition, they have begun to take steps toward opening the interior to the public at a yet-to-be determined future date. This will entail reconfiguring library seating, computer access, and constructing plexiglass dividers to safeguard staff.

City Council agreed that City facilities such as City Hall Buildings A, B, & C will remain closed to the public for the time being. Residents are still encouraged to pay bills and contact customer service either online or by phone. The Bedford Courts Department has successfully “re-opened” through virtual means. Customer Service will begin taking steps to allow public access, at a future date, with the installation of plexiglass dividers as well. The Law Enforcement Center and the Fire Stations remain closed to the public until further notice.

All Bedford parks, including the Boys Ranch, the walking trails, and the Bark Park are open to the public. Social distancing rules apply. For everyone’s safety, playground equipment and exercise equipment along the trails will remain inaccessible. Benches at the Bark Park will be removed. The Boys Ranch Activity Center, Senior Center, Bedford Splash Aquatics Center, Roy Savage pool, and other buildings remain closed for the time being. Tennis courts will be allowed to open with social distancing, however all ballfields will remain closed, this includes the ballfields at Meadowpark.

The Old Bedford School will remain closed until further notice.

### City Events/Summer Programming

As you know, Bedford usually conducts a number of activities at the Boys Ranch (newly named Generations Park) throughout the summer. These includes exercise classes, recreational leagues, and summer day camps for children. This programming generates revenue while requiring the need for facility/park access, as well as the hiring of seasonal employees. In evaluating these summer programs, Council weighed health and safety concerns, economic factors, ability to conduct programs while honoring social distancing rules, while accounting for the unknowns in its determination.

All summer programming at the Boys Ranch (Generations Park) and other parks, including summer day camp, will be cancelled.

Splash will remain closed and will not open for the summer.

Roy Savage pool will remain closed until further notice.



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The Bedford Library's Summer Reading Club, in conjunction with HEB Reads, will be conducted virtually and with the use of the Library drive-up window, for the time being.

In response to the determination to cancel summer programming at the Boys Ranch (Generations Park), Council has asked staff to determine the impact of this decision on beginning construction and redesign of the park and of the CNTR (Multi Generation Recreation Center). Staff will be reporting back to Council about the possibility to accelerate ground-breaking on our new park.

## **City Festivals**

As we look ahead on the calendar, there are two events that have become a fixture to everyone in Bedford. These are Fourth Fest and the Labor Day Blues and BBQ Festival.

Council has decided to cancel Fourth Fest for this year. Strict guidance from the Governor and Tarrant County remain in effect, discouraging large scale public gatherings. There was discussion to conduct a virtual Fourth Fest with music and fireworks with everyone watching from home. However, Council did not feel comfortable with earmarking funds for this event, while facing tough budget decisions from the impact of the "stay-at-home" orders. This was a difficult decision.

Equally difficult, was the decision to cancel this year's Bedford Blues and BBQ Festival. We have begun seeing the proliferation of events being cancelled throughout the area and even though we are several months away, plans for the festival started last year. Over the next few months, it would have been necessary to commit to agreements and spend money in anticipation of the event. With uncertainties surrounding our ability to produce the quality event that we have become accustomed to, uncertainties about conducting large public gatherings, and uncertainties about the expectations and the economics of the event, Council elected to cancel this year's event. Councilmembers encouraged staff to take this opportunity to come back next year with a plan to revise and reinvigorate the event. BluesFest has become the face of our town, but again, weighing the perception of conducting the event against the specter of budget and potential personnel cuts, influenced the decision. I cannot tell you how agonizing this decision was.

## **Helping Bedford Businesses**

Council and staff conducted a conversation to discuss what is currently being done to aid our business, and to seek additional ways that the City can support and help our local businesses recover from the negative impact of the "stay at home" orders. All agreed that the City should remember to "stay out of their way" as many businesses begin to reopen, however from this discussion, a number of ideas were generated. This includes, but is not limited to, creating a frequent visitor incentive program, changing Certificate of Occupancy requirements to allow new patio seating definitions for restaurants, a bingo card program, helping with marketing signage, social media marketing help, training services to help businesses with social media advertising, a resources page and other links on the Bedford website, and so on. A list of these ideas was compiled, with the intention for staff to bring a more formulated plan to Council in the near future, on how to best implement some of these ideas.

Noted in the meeting was the success of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services in their reaching out to our businesses and providing them with free facial masks for their personnel.

## **Thank You**

Thank you for tuning in last night. Thank you for all the thoughts, prayers, and suggestions that you have provided over the past few weeks. Thank you to Council and Staff for all the hard work, your willingness to address serious issues, your



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judgment in keeping City services moving forward, and in helping to “re-open” Bedford. I continue to remain cautiously optimistic that we will continue to move forward smartly as the City stirs back to life. Please stay tuned as Council returns to an active agenda with the focus of moving projects forward.

Thank you everyone for all the troubles and sacrifices that you have made. I recognize that many are beginning to experience cabin fever, however, let me reiterate, our health care professionals continue to highlight how much everyone’s efforts have made a difference to slow down and to flatten the curve. Our early efforts to get ahead of the problem were only successful because of the smart decisions that you have been making and your use of common sense. As Bedford comes back to life with businesses reopening and public access to City facilities beginning to accelerate, it remains important for everyone to keep using common sense in your routines. Please continue to wash your hands frequently, use social distancing, only leave your house when necessary, and wear a facial covering.

Thank you, Bedford.

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Mayor Michael Boyter