

Don't use community pools, urge officials

Council members say some residents are violating county order

By Adriana Delgado

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Palm Beach County issued an order Monday to close all community pools to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, but many condo residents in town insist on taking a dip.

Town officials are urging

them to stop because it's a health hazard, they say.

"All community pools are closed. Period, end of story," said Town Council member Maggie Zeidman, who is spearheading an effort to raise awareness among condominium residents to not use community property pools.

"Clarification was provided. 'Community pools' means any pool that is not a pool of a private home,' therefore condo pools are considered community pools and are ordered closed," she said.

County ordinance 2020-003A says that "all community pools in Palm Beach County are closed, including community pools in both incorporated and unincorporated Palm Beach County."

The county had already issued an ordinance on March 25 saying all Palm Beach County-operated pools, water parks and aquatic splash pads were closing down.

Council member Julie Araskog said she was concerned about the influx of emails she had received from residents saying many people in condominiums were not abiding by county imposed rules of staying away from community pools.

"I have an onslaught of people that are upset and confused as to what their condos should do. This is a county order, not a town policy but the town is superseded by county and state laws and we must follow that," Araskog said.

She also said she understands people are frustrated, but the measures are there to ensure people don't get sick from COVID-19.

"I've had people ask me: what if we send one person at a time to the pool? That's not enough because this virus can live for hours or days on certain surfaces. This is for the protection of all condo residents."

A multifamily, highdensity building or development, where neighbors frequently encounter each other in hallways and common areas, is a perfect environment for contagion, Zeidman, a former nurse who was once director of nursing at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, told the Daily News on March 21.

Many residents of these buildings are seniors, the population most likely to suffer serious complications from COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. Two town residents have died from complications of the virus, and the number of those infected has risen to 13 as of Wednesday,

according to Town Manager Kirk Blouin.

“All pools and pool decks should be closed,” he said at Wednesday’s Town Manager’s update.

Two weeks ago, before the county order, the Citizens’ Association of Palm Beach spearheaded a series of recommendations for condo residents backed by Town Hall to keep the virus from spreading, which included keeping the swimming pool open but regularly disinfecting pool railings and ladders, removing half of the chaise lounges by the pool and spreading the remaining ones at least 6 feet apart to help prevent transmission.

But with the virus spreading rapidly and the county doubling down on closing amenities such as community pools, this may no longer be an option.

“We’re thankful to the condos that are following the order. I’ve been told there has been a lot of hostility towards condo property managers, and I just want to tell people to be kind. They’re just trying to protect your life,” Araskog said.”

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The exterior of Harbour House, which has been very proactive in protecting its residents against coronavirus. Residents are working with the town to get the word out about safety in multi-family buildings. [DAMON [HIGGINS/PALMBEACHDAILYNEWS.COM](https://www.palmbeachdailynews.com)]