

May 31, 2020

Dear Members of the Alta Community,

We are clearly living in difficult times. We are enduring pandemic, earthquake, economic carnage, and civil unrest. And we are doing so with chaotic national leadership.

While my [first emergency proclamation](#) remains in place, my [fifth emergency proclamation](#) outlining some more-than-[yellow guidelines](#) for the Town of Alta expired on Thursday night. I had asked for approval of a sixth proclamation which continued some of the provisions of the fifth, but was denied by the Utah Department of Health. You can see a draft of that proclamation [here](#).

I believe that stricter protocols than the State currently requires are warranted. Why do I think so? First, because Utah has not met the [CDC's](#) nor the [John Hopkins](#) gating criteria to move from red to orange or from orange to yellow. Second, because of the degree of uncertainty surrounding the SARS-CoV-2 virus and COVID-19. Much is not known about the virus including, for example, the viral loads needed to experience disease; that means that guidelines are really rules of thumb rather than scientifically validated best practices and so being conservative is a good idea. And third, Alta is a small resort and second-home community with limited resources that attracts people from around the world, including from hot spots for COVID-19.

In sum, after many hours of research, conversation with experts, participation in public policy meetings, and careful reflection, in my judgment Utah's yellow guidelines are insufficient to protect public health in the Town of Alta. I do not have the authority, however, to require other protocols since the enactment of SB 3004 in mid-April. In the absence of that authority, for now I can only recommend that residents, visitors, and businesses follow the protocols in the expired [Proclamation 5](#) or the draft [Proclamation 6](#); I humbly beg that you do your part to protect yourselves and our community.

Thank you for your patience and understanding that while my decisions and recommendations may not always be the ones that you personally would prefer, nor the ones you would make if you were in my position, I am diligent and unremitting in doing my job as Mayor as well as possible. I have been very well supported by all the staff members of the Town who have worked tirelessly and bravely on your behalf. Please thank them when you see them.

Sincerely,

Mayor Harris Sondak