



#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Bristol to Partner with Local Restaurants on Outdoor Dining**

**(BRISTOL, CT – May 18, 2020)** Restaurants in Connecticut will be able to offer outdoor dining with significant capacity restrictions as well as stringent public health regulations for cleaning, sanitizing and food handling beginning May 20<sup>th</sup>, according to the Governor’s latest Executive Order. To prepare, the City of Bristol started Monday to partner with local restaurants by offering on-site consultations and a quick permitting process to assist owners interested in outdoor dining but unsure of how to get started. The City is authorized to begin this temporary, streamlined approach to outdoor dining following guidance issued by the Governor’s Office empowering local governments to expedite approvals for outdoor dining during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“City officials have created a simple application form that can be turned around quickly, but acknowledge that each restaurant and location is unique, requiring a customized approach,” stated Justin Malley, the City’s Economic & Community Development Director. “This will ensure safe and efficient outdoor dining environments that both restaurant owners and the public can enjoy.”

Restaurant representatives have the option of calling the Building Department at 860-584-6215 to set up an on-site visit to discuss their individual circumstances. All restaurants will be required to complete the free online Temporary Outdoor Permit form located at <https://bristolct.viewpointcloud.com/>, click the image of the Building Permit, then select the **Temporary Outdoor Dining Permit**, then click the Apply Online button. If you do not already have an account, you can register as a new user. Once the form is completed, a final inspection of the outdoor dining location will occur.

In addition, restaurants will work with the Bristol-Burlington Health District to adhere to State of Connecticut guidance concerning health and safety issues associated with the COVID pandemic.

“The Health District will support the City and assist the Food Establishment owners with the team approach of evaluating and assuring safe outdoor dining options,” stated Marco Palmeri, Director of Health, Bristol-Burlington Health District

“We have been speaking with restaurant owners daily during the pandemic and gathering feedback on the potential of outdoor dining,” noted Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu. “Some restaurants are currently set up for outdoor dining and will make a smooth transition. Other eateries have never done outdoor dining but are interested in utilizing part of their parking area or employing other methods of offering a safe dining experience to the community. These are the businesses that will benefit most from a personalized visit to offer guidance.”

While many recommendations to restaurants will be “common sense,” the issue of safety remains a primary concern, notes Councilman Peter Kelley, who was tasked by the Mayor to make calls to restaurants over the last 2 weeks. “Public safety always comes first, so that will be an issue that drives many of our conversations with restaurants.”

“Every environment is unique,” says Thomas Lozier, Chief Building Official. “The City is here as a partner and we are not looking to complicate this process or to create unreasonable expectations. It should also be said that some businesses may take longer to open, and may choose to do so after May 20<sup>th</sup>.”

“Again, it is important to note that restaurants will be required to adhere to State of Connecticut guidance for restaurants to follow concerning health and safety issues associated with the COVID pandemic,” stated Councilman David Preleski. “It is also important to note that those who are over 70 are still encouraged to stay home under the current guidelines. We are carefully balancing a phased in opening for some of these business sectors, with emphasis now on the restaurants due to some of the complex issues involved. We have also been reaching out to hair salons, and supplying information to retail businesses and offices as well.”



An on-site consultation takes place at Better Half Brewing with City of Bristol officials. From left to right in the foreground: Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu; Kristopher Lambert, Fire Marshal Elect; Justin Malley, Executive Director of Economic and Community Development; Erica Mikulak, BS, Sanitarian from the Bristol-Burlington Health District; Christopher Parrotta from the City of Bristol Department of Public Works. In background: Michael Haseltine, Owner of Better Half Brewing with Thomas Lozier, City of Bristol Chief Building Official.



City officials meet with the staff of Marilyn's Pub to discuss and review their outdoor dining plans and the permit process. From left to right Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu; Justin Malley, Executive Director of Economic and Community Development, Staff of Marilyn's Pub, and owner, Marilyn; Christopher Parrotta, City of Bristol Department of Public Works; and Thomas Lozier, City of Bristol Chief Building Official.

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