

Debra Thompson

From: Tim <gov-t@ridgefolkmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 5, 2021 2:25 PM
To: Assembly
Subject: Regarding the proposed mask ordinance

Members of the Borough Assembly,

I am writing to you in regard to the proposed face mask ordinance. I am opposed to this ordinance. I believe it to be unnecessary and that little to nothing will be achieved by its passage. I understand that some on the assembly feel the need to “do something” in light of the current Covid outbreak. However, one must come to grips with the reality that there are certain situations which are beyond your ability to control. I believe that this move by the assembly, if passed, will prove largely unhelpful. It is beyond your control. In short, you believe that by instituting (another) mask ordinance that it will somehow slow the spread of Covid within our community. Will it?

It seems to me that we tried this once before, a year ago. Yet, it was when that ordinance was in place that we had the largest Covid outbreak to date, nearly 80, I believe. Prior to that mask ordinance, we had been in the pandemic for eight months without any mask requirements covering the borough. And through those eight months we managed to have very low Covid numbers. To be sure, some were wearing masks through that time. But many were not. If masks are the solution, why were our numbers so low? And why did we have such a large outbreak in November and then February? While I don't expect the assembly to have answers to these questions, the question remains as at least a curious oddity that seems to run contrary to the solution now being proposed.

Our schools have had mask requirements for much of the last year and a half. If there was one good case study in a relatively controlled environment within our community on masking, this would be it. As of yesterday, at least one-third of the current case count were teachers and students. Does masking work? Perhaps it helps. From the numbers, you'd think the schools were unmasked. Why then are there so many from our schools with Covid? There are plenty of other people within our community who have not been wearing masks. Why isn't it hitting only them?

If we cannot achieve the goal of eliminating the spread of Covid within our schools where there is universal compliance, why do we expect that ordering everyone who goes into a public space to mask will achieve anything of significance? Especially when we know many or most will not mask? And the reality is that as more and more individuals contract Covid, there is less and less reason to see masking as the answer or to fear this virus. As more contract it, the likelihood of outbreaks shrinks as the pool of the untouched decreases.

People grow weary of the borough's intrusion in this way. Especially when we know that the overwhelming majority of those who get Covid recover. People will get sick. And most will recover. Mask mandates haven't had great success before. They will have even less now, as the pool of Covid-recovereds increases by the day. I urge the assembly to vote “NO” to this unnecessary ordinance.

Respectfully,

Tim Ritter