
From: Michael Jones
Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 4:59 PM
To: Michael Jones
Cc: Alex Wenger; Stacie Pratschner; Bob Hammond
Subject: Emergency Order Related to Downtown Plaza Use
Attachments: Emergency Order EO20-08 Plaza Use Waiver.pdf

Council,

We have been working with downtown businesses, primarily restaurants, about the idea of using street space to create more outdoor dining space. The parking strips could be converted to temporary dining to expand capacity under the COVID physical distance rules. So far, the restaurant owners and managers have not expressed much interest in that. There has, however, been interest in opening more of the plaza space for dining. This seems to be a natural use of the plazas during these unique times.

I issued the attached emergency order today. It temporarily revokes the limits in the Blaine Municipal Code that regulate the exclusive use of plaza space. The limits are that exclusive use requires a conditional use permit and it can only be an area 12 feet deep extending out from the building. Under the order a business can occupy more space to create more dining and it can be done with a park special use permit rather than a conditional use permit. A park special use permit is an administrative permit. It is fast and still allows some review and oversight. The order expires December 31, 2020 and the normal rules get reinstated.

Because the existing rules are in the BMC Title 17 changing them would require an application, SEPA review, and a Planning Commission hearing before Council could take this action. Under the emergency order it can be done much more expeditiously. This allows the businesses to start taking advantage of the opportunity in time for summer instead of in about 2-3 months when the typical process would allow it.

Thank you,

Michael Jones, MPA
City Manager

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