



Office of the Mayor
City of Columbus
Ohio

EXECUTIVE ORDER

2020-02

By: ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

**State of Emergency: Supplemental Order Pertaining to the
Operations of Boards, Commissions, and Panels
City of Columbus, Ohio**

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person. The virus is spread between individuals who are in close contact with each other (within about six feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that individuals can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine, signed an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency for the entire State of Ohio in relation to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the Columbus Board of Health declared a Public Health Emergency due to this imminent threat of an acutely hazardous disease, posing a high probability of widespread exposure to an infectious agent that poses a significant risk of substantial harm to a large number of people, a large number of serious or long-term disabilities, or a large number of deaths; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump declared a National Emergency, invoking the Stafford Act and allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster response and aid state and local governments in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health issued a Director's Stay at Home Order, containing prohibitions against mass gatherings of over 10 people, requirements for social distancing, and allowances for only essential businesses to be open to the public until April 6, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2020, Governor DeWine signed into law Am.Sub. HB 197 containing emergency legislative measures addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, including provisions allowing public bodies to use teleconferencing, videoconferencing, or other similar electronic technology in conducting open meetings; and

WHEREAS, on April 2, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health issued a Director's Order extending the Stay at Home Order until May 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in the City of Columbus there is a current threat of an acutely hazardous disease, illness, or health condition; specifically, COVID-19, that is believed to be caused by the appearance of a novel infectious agent; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has impacted the daily lives of the citizens of the City of Columbus and, the need for citizens and City of Columbus employees to stay home from work and other public places should they be exposed to the virus substantially impairs the functioning of city government and its ability to protect the lives and property of the citizens of the City of Columbus, and

WHEREAS, there is a need in the City to assure the efficient processing of zoning applications, right-of-way and building permits, certificates of appropriateness, and licenses in order to support continuing economic development during the financial crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Columbus relies on the work of commissions, boards, and panels to provide input, serve as public forums, and make decisions regarding city business; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID 19 pandemic and consequent restrictions, these commissions, boards, and panels are currently unable to meet in-person, resulting in delays in the processing of applications and other business across the City; and

WHEREAS, the commissions, boards and panels that are public bodies are required by the Columbus City Charter Sec. 240 to conduct meetings in accordance with state open meetings law requirements and required by the Columbus City Code to conduct Commission, board, and panel business in accordance with their individual regulations and bylaws; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to allow these public bodies to be able to conduct their meetings pursuant to the state emergency open meetings laws, including notice provisions and the allowance for meetings via teleconferencing, videoconferencing or other similar electronic meetings so that the normal operations of these boards, commissions, and panels may continue during the COVID-19 state of emergency while maintaining social distancing best practices;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Andrew Ginther, Mayor of the City of Columbus, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Ohio Constitution, the Charter of the City of Columbus, and Sections 123.01 and 123.02 of the Columbus City Code, do hereby order and direct, pursuant to the Mayoral Declaration of a Public Emergency issued on March 18, 2020, that:

1. I hereby suspend all the bylaws and regulations of the City boards, commissions, and panels that are public bodies as necessary to allow for their continued ability to convene public meetings in accordance with the open meetings provisions of Am.Sub. H.B 197 during the time of the emergency.
2. I hereby suspend those provisions of the Columbus City Code requiring that notice for meetings and special meetings of boards, commissions, and panels be effectuated by prior publication in the City Bulletin so as to allow said boards, commissions, and panels to provide notice in accordance with the open meetings provisions of Am. Sub. HB 197 during the time of the emergency.

This order shall be in full force and effect after my signature is affixed to this document.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the Mayor of the City of Columbus, Ohio, to be hereto affixed this 18 day of March, 2020.




Andrew J. Ginther, Mayor