



## INFORMATION ON GYM CLOSURE DURING COVID "SAFER AT HOME" RESTRICTIONS

It is very frustrating to have restrictions and limitations on our lives due to this unprecedented and disruptive pandemic. We would like to offer the least restrictive access possible to the amenities and the Board continues to evaluate the situation. As you can see, it is a complex decision that has a ripple effect and will impact more than the individual who chooses to use a gym at this time.

When making decisions on the phased re-opening of the community, the Board considered several factors and carefully weighed the risk versus reward. Some of the factors that entered into the decision to close the gym included:

the health and safety of employees

health and safety of the community, including the average age of residents being in the most vulnerable category

legal exposure

number of people entering the community from areas of high transmission

stated unwillingness of vendors to work in our building if the gym/clubhouse is open to unrestricted access

local community transmission rates

the status of the Clubhouse as a major transmission point for the community

availability of recommended equipment and supplies

the condition and standards of our HVAC system

our experiences this summer with compliance for pool use from both owners and renters

the health, financial implications, and disruption to daily HOA business matters should even one case of Covid-19 be traced back to gym use, an owner who entered the Clubhouse, or an employee who tested positive

the recommendations from the CDC, the OSHA recommendations contained in the publication "Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for Covid-19", and the most recent information available in the rapidly changing scientific knowledge regarding the novel corona virus

Communities on the Outer Banks have shared their experiences with each other-some have opened their gyms, some have not. Currituck Club has chosen to remain closed. **Gyms are included in the top three highest risk environments for the spread of the disease.** Our employees and most of our residents are in the most vulnerable grouping. We are continuing to monitor the situation and modify the Covid response plan. Governor Cooper's order said gyms *may* open, and most for-profit gyms probably have. Currently, the Board is not able to open the community gym.

We know from data collected over the past several years that only a few people use the gym on a regular basis, particularly off-season. Several weeks could go by with not one single person using the gym, either during Clubhouse hours or with an after-hours access code. There were about a dozen people with codes who actually used them; about eight who used them a few times a month. Of that dozen, five no longer live in Monterey Shores or have stated that they would not enter the gym during Covid restrictions. That leaves a very small number, less than 1% of the owners, who would use the gym, and by doing so expose the employees and vendors who have to work in the Clubhouse, as well as their families, to a needless risk.

When Governor Cooper announced Phase 2.5, the Board revisited the possibility of gym access. At the time, the Covid metrics for the country, state, and Corolla were dramatically lower than they are currently. They carefully reviewed the requirements set forth in the Executive order. While it allows for users to self-clean after use, it still requires regular and routine cleaning of the facility by employees. The Board is not willing to risk the health and safety of any employee for the purpose of a few people exercising indoors.

The Board also considered the possibility of offering access to owners only but must consider tenant rights laws. Again, we know from our experience this summer, that when asked to comply with Covid restrictions or any rule, both owners and renters became belligerent, aggressive, and abusive towards staff. While we have some measure of control over owners' behavior through our governing documents, we do not have control over renters' behavior and cannot ensure compliance with any cleaning or safety protocols.

Our HVAC system is not entirely zoned and mixes air across all four air handlers. The current systems cannot adequately protect the rest of the Clubhouse from aerosolization of particles in the gym. As you may be aware, the original developer did not always build to code, and certainly not to current building standards. Once the gym is open, the entire Clubhouse mirrors whatever happens in the gym. Even if modifications were possible, the expense of retrofitting the HVAC units would be prohibitive based on the current income of the HOA.

Hopefully, this information will provide some insight into factors that informed the decision to keep the building closed to traffic during the current Phase 2.5, and to remain closed until the "Safer at Home" phases in response to the pandemic are lifted.

In the meantime, we will continue to work on ways to safely move through the phased re-opening as quickly as possible and keep looking for the light at the end of the tunnel. The Board has twice considered the possibility of remodeling the Clubhouse to allow for an outdoor entrance that by-passes the main Clubhouse. At a base projected cost of \$20,000.00 and in consideration of the community response to the dues increase, the Board decided both times that while a nice addition, it was not a necessary addition. Retrofitting the HVAC units would be an expensive requirement as well under this option. The Board has also considered a proposal regarding replacing the pirate ship in the playground at the end of its expected life span, which is 2 to 3 years, with a relatively new concept of outdoor adult exercise equipment. They will continue to gather information and evaluate this option.

In the meantime, we share your concerns about the need to exercise during this time. There are some resources available online with suggestions on how to fulfill this need without the use of a gym. Here is one example: <https://www.nuvancehealth.org/coronavirus/exercise-is-essential-for-well-being-during-covid-19-pandemic/>. We agree that this is not an ideal solution. We are all weary and overwhelmed by

the challenges this unusual situation has created. Hopefully, it will be behind us soon and we can resume normal, or at least near-normal activities. In the meantime, thank you for your understanding of the need to keep our employees and the community as safe as possible and to stay the course until this is over.

Monterey Shores PUD Homeowners' Association, Inc.

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