

The Bandera PROPHEET

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City Council extends emergency order limiting City Park occupancy

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The Bandera Prophet

Effective today, the Bandera City Park will have a limited capacity of 750 people. Council members this morning voted 3-2 to extend the mayor's emergency order restricting the number of people allowed in the park for the next 30 days.

Voting against increasing the total occupancy from the original order instated last week, which capped entry at 500, Council Member Don Clark said he would be supportive of keeping it the same on a trial basis, or none at all.

"My thoughts are we close the park completely," Clark said, adding San Antonio's positive CoViD-19 tests are on the rise, and people from Bexar County expose Bandera residents to greater risk. "People are going to come to Bandera. There's a big chance that we'll get more infections when they come."

Marshal Will Dietrich said he understood the logic of closing the park down, however he said it would be problematic to carry out. He said keeping the park closed and empty would require more manpower and be difficult to control. As it is, Dietrich said he was working on assigning an extra officer to the park full-time.

Council Member Jerry Russe said at a limited capacity of 500 people, the park "looked almost empty."

Council Member Rebeca Gibson asked about limiting entry to city and county residents only, with Russe and Council Member Lynn Palmer expressing consensus.

“I think that’s too complicated,” Dietrich said, adding charging more for out-of-county residents is the best option. “To just outright ban out-of-county residents is opening Pandora’s Box for problems.”

Mayor Suzanne Schauman said the Department of State Health Services reported Bexar County has 7,474 active cases, compared to three in Bandera County.

“If it’s limited capacity, I think we could be okay,” City Administrator J. Horry said. “I don’t see a lot of people from the city intermingling with people from San Antonio.”

Schauman said last weekend, the park reached 500 people late Saturday afternoon. On Sunday, 100 people bought tickets.

On June 29, Pct 2 Commissioner Bobby Harris announced the Medina County Park in Lakehills would be closed through July 8.

“The Medina Lake boat ramps are closed. All the rivers are closed in New Braunfels and San Marcos. Canyon Lake is closed. People are going to be looking for someplace to go,” Council Member Rosie Smith said, who was the second nay vote to Gibson’s motion to increase the number of people allowed in the park.

“The community needs to know this has nothing to do with the revenue the city might bring in,” Palmer said, who polled residents and concluded people seem divided equally on the matter. “What is the best way for us to control out of city residents who come in? It’s not about the revenue.”