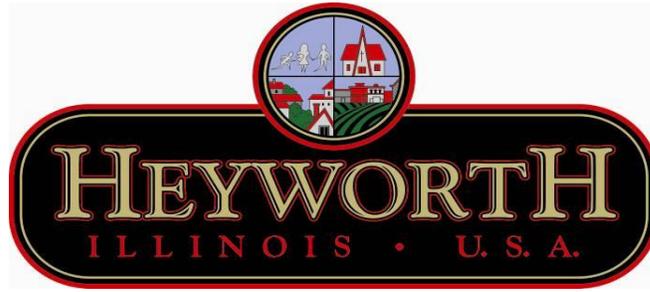


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The Village of Heyworth is an equal opportunity provider and employer

Hey Heyworth!

Freedom!

According to Merriam-Webster the definition of freedom is: 1 : the **quality or state of being free**: such as. a : the **absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action**. b : liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another : independence. Simply put as a noun it is “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint”.

I have been thinking a great deal more about “freedom” during these challenging times. I have been asked often, and in many ways, how I consider freedom in my approach and decision making. To start with, I would like to share a few of my related beliefs. 1) I believe that freedom is a God given right and I feel blessed to live in a country that has a constitution that reflects these rights. 2) Freedom comes with responsibility and when we exercise our freedom, I believe we must also hold ourselves responsible for our actions. 3) I believe that the right to privacy and private property is an essential component to freedom.

Before I move on to my approach related to COVID, I want to go back to my May 7<sup>th</sup> press release and my comment “What makes Heyworth great is our strong sense of community”. I know this to be true today. I also shared that our community “like any group of people, individually there are differences of opinions about the disease itself let alone how we should deal with it. If we focus, or pick at, these differences, they will start to divide us in ways that will undermine our community. There is a whole spectrum of opinions in our community on how Heyworth should best approach this crisis ranging from proactively enforcing every Heyworth citizen to follow every Federal, State, and County order to completely opening up Heyworth in violation of every Federal, State, and County order.”

My approach related to COVID has been to focus on preserving the freedoms of all private residents and private businesses while prioritizing the delivery of essential public services the citizens are paying for. I have encouraged the “private” sector to follow the CDC and IDPH guidelines as well as to follow the Governor’s executive orders while allowing residents and businesses the freedom to make their own private decisions. However, considering my #2 belief above, my approach also respects that residents and businesses will hold themselves responsible for their “private” decisions.

To assure the continuation of our essential services of providing police protection and maintaining the availability of clean drinking water and removal of sewage, my approach is similar but there are some fundamental differences. The major difference is “private” vs. “public”. There are many risks to the continuation of our services due to COVID including; the health of our public employees (what if our workers are unable to work), lawsuits as a result of the Village not following the guidelines/orders (we all know what a litigious society we’ve become), and the loss of potential revenues to the Village violating guideline/orders (yes, there are conditions that come with those grants and low interest loans). This results in a much more conservative approach to following the CDC and IDPH guidelines and following the Governor’s executive orders. Please know, I am NOT projecting the approach I’m taking toward running the Village’s “public” operations to you as “private” residents and businesses.

Having that said, I encourage everyone to stay diligent and disciplined in taking measures to slow the spread of COVID especially moving forward as the data indicates the numbers in Central Illinois are going in the wrong direction. We all want to stay in Phase 4 of the Reopen Illinois plan.

I also encourage everyone to keep focused on community. Be respectful of each other. Show Grace! And, keep using “common sense”.

Take care, be safe, and God bless!

Todd Zalucha, Mayor