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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

April 9, 2020

**ROAD CLOSURE: OAK AVENUE AROUND THE LAKE (Marquette Park)**

**Gary, Indiana-** Greetings:

On Wednesday April 8, 2020, the Mayor and his Senior Advisers made the difficult decision to close the drive to vehicular traffic. This was not an easy decision. We did so for several reasons.

Tuesday night, three suspects allegedly pistol-whipped and attempted to rob two other individuals at the playground with children present. They were apprehended and arrested. Officer Lilly (Senior Beach Patrol Officer) and I made the decision to bring on the seasonal beach patrols due to the overwhelming assemblage of people over ten at all the parks, but especially in Marquette Park, last week. They generally do not start until the end of May; this helped control the situation, as Officer Lilly came upon the incident. The police did an outstanding job.

The number of people refusing to socially distance is untenable. The warm weather invites people to come out of dwellings that they have been relegated to because of COVID-19.

Oak Ave is closed at Newton, so you must turn left to Locust, then to Montgomery, and turn left to exit the lakefront area going west. You can still come around the park driving East but must proceed East on Oak. Police wrote two tickets while we were installing the barrels as they drove around them. People don't listen, so for everyone's safety we closed the drive.

**You Can:** Walk into the park and beaches with *groups under ten*. Children can play on the playground in *groups less than ten*. We will keep this in place until at least April 30.

Thanks.

In the same vein, I ask for prayers for the city's Executive Director of Health, Dr. Roland Walker, who has worked tirelessly with the State, CDC and Lake County to bring you data and has guided the fight against COVID-19 for us. He has tested positive for the virus.

- *Eric E. Reaves*

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