

# **New Bedford restaurant reopening advisory group established**

Mayor Jon Mitchell announced that the City of New Bedford will establish a restaurant reopening advisory group, co-chaired by City Planner Tabitha Harkin and local businessman and restaurateur Stephen Silverstein, owner of The Black Whale and founder of Not Your Average Joe's.

"When restaurants reopen in New Bedford, we want to ensure they can do so safely and profitably," said Mayor Jon Mitchell. "I'm grateful to Steve Silverstein, Tabitha Harkin, and the reopening group comprised of business leaders and industry professionals for their willingness to provide their expertise and recommendations to the City as we look toward our next steps in reopening our local economy."

On May 18, Governor Charlie Baker announced his plan to reopen the Commonwealth of Massachusetts "to methodically allow businesses, services, and activities to resume, while avoiding a resurgence of COVID-19." On May 21, Mayor Jon Mitchell announced that the City of New Bedford would follow and implement the first phase of Governor Charlie Baker's reopening plan, with adjustments warranted by the current risk level of disease transmission in the city and region, including for large workplaces and houses of worship.

Based on the Governor's announcements about forthcoming phases in the reopening process, guidelines around the reopening of businesses in the restaurant and hospitality industry are expected to be announced as part of the second phase of reopening. New Bedford's restaurant reopening group will make recommendations to the Mayor about how to implement the reopening of restaurants in the city so that guests and

workers can remain safe, and local business owners can operate profitably while ensuring safe and healthy conditions at their establishments.

Once the state's guidelines on reopening restaurants in Massachusetts are released, Mayor Mitchell will announce how New Bedford's restaurants will reopen, based on the state guidelines and the recommendations of the working group. This will include how New Bedford restaurants will be able to operate, including outdoor dining adjustments, social distancing measures and enhanced hygiene protocols for dining establishments.

The state's reopening plan can be found at [www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts). As the Governor made clear, his reopening decisions are based in part on the progress the state has made in lowering the number of new positive cases and the positive test rate.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of the virus in New Bedford has remained different from that of the state as a whole. Current information on trends in New Bedford may be found on the city's website: [www.newbedford-ma.gov/health-department/coronavirus/](http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/health-department/coronavirus/).