



YARMOUTH CLAM FESTIVAL

yarmouth, maine

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YARMOUTH, ME -- As organizers of the Yarmouth Clam Festival, we have been closely monitoring the ever-evolving COVID-19 crisis. Based on the high degree of uncertainty about what the coming months will hold; and after consulting Town officials and local community groups; and in the best interest of the general public, our volunteers, vendors, and the non-profit groups that are involved, we have made the difficult decision to cancel this summer's 55th Annual Clam Festival (scheduled for July 17 -19, 2020).

This is the time of year when Clam Festival organizers would typically be making critical decisions about programming and purchasing, and be pursuing financial, in-kind, and volunteer support from local individuals, businesses and nonprofit groups. During this public health crisis, when our entire community is under such an intense strain, it does not feel feasible, or even conscionable, to request such commitments.

“This was one of the hardest decisions the Chamber and the Board has had to make in a very long time,” says Erik Tiner, president of the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce Board, and General Manager at Lindquist Funeral Home. “Knowing the rich history and tradition behind the Clam Festival I can assure you this decision was not made lightly or without extensive conversation amongst the Board. However, the health and safety of the community is much more important to us. We will be back in 2021 and it will be bigger, it will be better, and it will be filled with hugs and crowds.”

Randall J. Bates, Chair of the Yarmouth Town Council said “We share the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce’s sadness in making the difficult decision to cancel the 53rd Annual Yarmouth Clam Festival. We commend the Chamber for having the foresight to reach this tough decision promptly. The Yarmouth Clam Festival is the one time of year when we proudly place our entire community on display (albeit with ferris wheels and cotton candy mixed in) for all to see. Yarmouth comes together during this time and our community spirit shows. The coming together will be sorely missed, but our community spirit lives on and will buy us through this extraordinary time. We will miss the Festival this year but look forward to what it has to offer in 2021! Stay healthy and safe. From six feet away, I am.”

Many local nonprofits rely on the Clam Festival for funds to support their activities all year long. Taking into account the costs of food, equipment, and the impossibility of knowing how the COVID-19 crisis might impact attendance, we didn't feel that we could plan a successful event that would support these groups. We considered postponing the Clam Festival for a later date this year. But with so many questions about the timeline for the COVID-19 crisis, that is not feasible at the moment.

“While we are disheartened at the thought of a summer without this traditional event, we feel that moving forward with the given uncertainty would be a risk to our community, volunteers, vendors and guests,” says Adrienne Nardi, executive director of the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce. “We also want to make sure we are able to provide the support our local business community needs at this time. Clam Festival will be back, and we will endeavor to make it better than ever, but for now we will focus on our business members to make sure they too return stronger than before.”

While the Clam Fest may not take place, we are looking into hosting a community wide event when conditions allow, to help reboot our local business economy. We'll provide more details as a program takes shape. Please reach out to the Chamber at anardi@yarmouthmaine.com if you're interested in getting involved.

The Yarmouth Chamber supports over 180 businesses members and is the host of the Yarmouth Clam Festival, which champions over 30 local nonprofit groups. We strongly encourage our many fans, supporters and community to find ways to continue to support these wonderful organizations and businesses in the months ahead.

We will be back for Clam Festival 2021, July 16-18!!

For more information, please visit the Yarmouth Clam Festival website at clamfestival.com

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