



March 25, 2020

Statement from the Mayor and Council RE: Local response to COVID-19

As an update, I met with our senior management team along with having discussions with Mayor Chopp of Norfolk on Monday and it was decided by us all that we would declare both counties under a state of emergency. Both Councils were notified and the press release went out yesterday.

Please understand that this does not change anything for you daily and/or does it mean that things here in Haldimand are worse. This simply gives us both as heads of council the ability to make necessary directions with staff more efficiently and gives us the flexibility to mobilize resources quickly. It also helps in the event certain by-laws need be adjusted temporarily to meet the needs of the county such as the closure of our parks etc, without formalizing a council meeting. Lastly, it puts the Provincial and Federal government on notice that when the dust settles and there is a funding envelope set aside for this pandemic, we will be applying for such to help relieve the financial stress that this has had on your municipality.

In a conference call yesterday, we had an update from our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Shanker Nesathurai. I asked what our numbers were and he wanted to be very clear that testing is not the most important thing we should be focused on but the things we can control, such as isolating ourselves from others, practicing social distancing, and going out in public areas only for the basics. If you are out for a walk, enjoy it, but maintain reasonable distance from others.

To date we have no reported COVID-19 cases back testing positive but we are waiting for many to come back this week. The health unit has received calls in the thousands, and currently there is approx. 300 (non travel related) on isolation with over 100 tested, some with negative results back and some still waiting. Again, please take these numbers with a grain a salt, the time to get results back is up to a week. The push for quicker results is nation wide and we hope that with the increase in both kits and people it will result in that.

As for those of you who are back from travelling, PLEASE, isolate yourself for 14 days, do not go in public, do not go shopping, ask for help, friends or family. The majority of positive tests have been travel related. While that is changing, that still remains the source.

We have shut down all playground equipment, tennis courts, skate parks, including the Port Maitland Pier for public use. While I know that you will all respect that, I have asked the OPP to be more diligent



in policing the parks along with our by law and they have been directed to advise any of the restrictions and if required they will fine those that do not care for the rest of us in the community.

Our local stores are doing their best to keep the supplies of food and other basic needs available for your consumption. One, I would ask that you continue to shop for your needs and not hoard for tomorrow because your tomorrow is someone else's need today. Two, if at all possible stay away from shopping in the surrounding cities, stay local for two reasons, help our local businesses, but also stay away from cross contaminating with those in the city.

As Mayor, I continue to see acts of generosity across the county, and regardless of the many differences people have, whether it be a leaf or Bruins fan, a liberal, or Conservative, and so on, the people of this County, when facing adversity, are truly the best examples of what it is to be Canadian. I am so proud to be here in Haldimand, call it my home and know that as we pull together to get through this difficult time, we will even be stronger as a collaboration of communities that make this County such a wonderful place. Stay safe.

Mayor Ken Hewitt

Haldimand County Council

Stewart Patterson

John Metcalfe

Dan Lawrence

Tony Dalimonte

Rob Shirton

Bernie Corbett