



June 9, 2020

Statement from Mayor Ken Hewitt & Council

For the numbers today go to:

<https://hnhu.org/health-topic/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Throughout this pandemic there have been winners and losers. In everyday life when all things are equal, it is expected that some will win and some will lose. Some businesses will become very successful and some will fail. People will qualify for government programs and some will not. But for the most part everyone is playing on equal and fair ground with all the same opportunities for success.

One thing for certain is that the pride and dignity of many has been taken away as a result of COVID 19. While many decisions made in the past few months from our Prime Minister and our Premier needed to be made, the cost is significant on so many levels.

Despite two separate outbreaks, Anson Place and Scotlynn Farms, our overall numbers here in H-N have been as good as anywhere in the Province. Many decisions have been made to protect our communities and to ultimately achieve a successful re-opening. I would like to say that you all should be congratulated for your efforts and that equally, everyone shares in our combined success.

Yesterday's announcement from the Ford government, however, comes as a surprise for several reasons. In particular, we were not involved in discussions as Mayors of the public health unit region; our local Medical Officer of Health was not involved in any discussions surrounding the merits of opening or not. The rationale of a controlled outbreak on a farm makes no sense to me whatsoever, especially since we have many more farms operating today under very similar circumstances.

In fact, it was the Ford government that lobbied for the success of the migrant workers program but then left our local public health department with the task to manage the large influx of workers. At that time there were not enough testing kits, so not all the workers were tested. Where was our local MPP then? Where was Ford then?

Recently in the Reformer, our MPP is quoted as saying that, "our region has constantly been in the national media as having heavy problems," Barrett said Monday. "Sometimes, you get what you ask for." This has to be the most ridiculous statement made thus far. Anson Place spread broke out prior to the lockdown, and action was taken immediately. Scotlynn Farms has managed the situation with the most integrity possible. I would like to ask where and what has his office done to help in either of these situations? How does such an incredible statement as that fly in the face of the businesses in H-N that



cannot open today? This statement would suggest that you and I and everyone in H-N failed, and that because of these two incidents everyone should have to suffer the consequences. I just do not agree with this us at all.

It truly is sad that in a pandemic your elected officials cannot seem to work together and that the buses driving over each other continue to get in the way of doing the very best to represent the great people of Haldimand-Norfolk. Yes I am driving the bus right now, because the truth needs to be told that I am tired of the buck being passed down from this government and his office blatantly misleading people.

And let me be frank, it's not whether I believe we should be open or not. My issue is that this regional approach is picking winners and losers and ultimately that is not fair. It is not fair that restaurants or hairstylists should not be able to open at the same time as others. As mentioned, the Province has taken enough dignity and pride away from these small business owners. Yesterday was an outright slap in the face.

It bothers me that neither myself or Mayor Chopp were engaged in any meaningful dialogue about this announcement. It bothers me that we have a sitting member of this government and that his office has not had any dialogue about this or any other announcements. It bothers me that when asked, it always comes back to the local government decisions, which is completely false and misleading. This decision is squarely on the Province and our local MP. You should be challenging why and expect more than more misleading answers such as 'we consulted with local Medical Officer of Health and Mayors on this decision'.

I do not blame people for being frustrated when they ask me "how does it make sense that our PM can be protesting in public, despite the reasons, but we cannot have our local beaches open or have a small wedding?" "How do you respond to the idea that parks can be open but public washrooms cannot?"

When it does not make sense, trying to defend it and make it so only diminishes your credibility and I cannot and will not support the decision made by the Province that you can drive down the road for a beer on the patio and get your hair cut but you cannot here in H-N because the migrant worker program Ford approved is causing "heavy problems" as Barrett states.

If you are a business that CANNOT now begin to open under the new rules, the provincial website link is:

<https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/04/health-and-safety-association-guidance-documents-for-workplaces-during-the-covid-19-outbreak.html>

Stay Safe,

Mayor Ken Hewitt

