



July 20, 2020

Statement from the Mayor and Council

For the numbers today go to:

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

Today the Premier has announced that Haldimand-Norfolk will advance to stage 3 of Ontario's re-opening plan. With that we will see the opportunity for larger groups to gather both inside and outside. Further to that, restaurants will now be able to open for indoor dining.

In the last 18 days we have had one single case reported and that is a reflection of the actions of many who have taken the time to be diligent/cautious for our families, friends and community. In the meantime, it's important you enjoy the summer, but maintain the same course of actions that you have been taking.

While we are preparing now for the fall – with schools reopening, and the weather forcing us more inside rather than outside – we continue to seek advice from our local Medical Officer and the Public Health unit on how we can be best prepared.

Again, the topic of masks keep coming up and while it should not be mandated, people should be taking all recommended precautions, such as: washing your hands, maintaining social distancing and wearing MASKS in public spaces.

I have been in conversation with Council, and through them the local businesses and Chambers of Commerce and the majority of our local businesses are asking that Haldimand pass a by-law to make the wearing of masks mandatory within their locations.

Norfolk Council will be meeting this week to discuss this item as well and since we share the same public health unit, we believe that it is imperative that the bylaw in Norfolk should resemble Haldimand. For that reason I have been in discussion with both counties' Chief Administrative Officers and Mayor Chopp to ensure that we are working together on this.

Last week, both myself and Mayor Chopp participated in the Health & Social Services Advisory Committee that is comprised of 3 members of Norfolk Council and 3 members of Haldimand Council. We all heard from our CMO Dr. Nesathurai with respect to masks. It is his belief that masks do help prevent the spread of the virus and he encourages an aggressive education plan to help businesses and



members of the public better understand the importance of wearing masks in public. As in the past, I respect the members of our health unit and their expertise. I don't always agree but at this time we are asking staff to review the current mask by-laws out there and to shape something that best meets the needs of Haldimand. I understand that Norfolk will be doing the same and that both CAOs will be bringing a draft by-law back to both Mayor Chopp and myself for executive authority.

As we are the voice of Council and are the duly elected of all of you within Haldimand and Norfolk, both business and private, it is our duty to represent the majority of those on Council along with the voices heard over the past several weeks. Despite what ours or my personal feelings may be.

If you are a business that can 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