



MAYOR'S REPORT
MAY 25, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING

COVID-19 UPDATE

Good evening and welcome to our second virtual council meeting.

I am here in the council chambers with our CAO Scott Luey, Clerk Amber LaPointe, Deputy Clerk Charlotte Madden and a member of Wee Stream who are live streaming this meeting for us. I would like to welcome our eight city councillors and various city directors who are each attending from home.

City Hall and almost all of our facilities remain closed to the public.

Staff have been working with members of our Emergency Operations Centre on recovery plans for a safe and gradual reopening once we get the go ahead from the Province of Ontario and our Emergency Operations Centre determines that it is safe to open our facilities to staff and members of the public.

In the meantime, we will continue to find new ways to deliver services to you.

We ask for your patience while we all work together for a safe and gradual return of services.

I know these times are trying on everyone, and recently there were some attacks on social media against our by-law enforcement officers who were out in the community trying to enforce the provincial orders.

Our staff deserve respect and I ask that you allow them to do their jobs in a respectful manner.

Activities that have reopened in Phase One

As the provincial government entered Phase One of its recovery plan, some restrictions were lifted allowing our municipality to reopen some amenities.

- Our boat launch reopened but not our marina or docks.
- Our tennis/pickle ball courts reopened – however, washrooms have not.
- The Elm Street leash free dog park is open.
- Our beaches continue to be open for passive use only – meaning you can walk the beach, not sit on the beach.

Parks remain open for passive use only. Last Friday we expanded some of the amenities included in passive use in our parks to include:

- Shoreline fishing, including H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park
- Bringing a chair or blanket to relax in parks
- Kicking a ball, playing catch, flying a kite and other such activities with members of your own household
- Use of basketball and soccer nets with members of your own household at community parks (excluding the Vale Health & Wellness Centre/T.A. Lannan Sports Complex)
- Individual activities such as yoga or exercising provided not in a group or class

All this, while still abiding by restrictions limiting groups to no more than five people.

Anyone taking advantage of these spaces are to follow the best practices as outlined by Niagara Region Public Health to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

These include frequent washing/sanitizing of hands, physical separation, avoid touching of shared surfaces and staying home if displaying symptoms or having been in contact with cases of the virus.

Organized sports are still restricted on municipal fields, given their necessity for gathering in groups.

At this time, park and outdoor amenities such as playground equipment, benches, outdoor fitness equipment, municipal beaches, washroom facilities, and the Algoport Skateboard and BMX Park will remain closed.

By-law enforcement will continue to enforce gatherings larger than five people, dogs off-leash, and anyone using closed park amenities.

Letter to Provincial and Federal Government

This week Niagara Region and the mayors of the 12 municipalities sent a letter to Ministers of Finance for the Province of Ontario and Government of Canada outlining the financial impact of COVID-19 on Niagara area municipalities.

We have offered 6 recommendations for financial relief and look forward to their response. The sustainability of our municipal operations is of the utmost importance as we continue to bring essential services to our residents and businesses.

The Mayors and CAOs in the region continue to hold weekly teleconferences to discuss issues related to COVID-19 in our communities and how we are dealing with them.

The Mayors of Welland, Thorold and myself continue to speak with MP Badawey on a weekly basis as he keeps us apprised of developments and assistance offered by the federal government.

Business Recovery

Our economic development officer, Julian Douglas-Kameka has been meeting with her colleagues in the region as well as businesses in Port Colborne and are developing a Regional Economic Recovery Plan.

Julian also continues to meet with local businesses via virtual meetings to assist with individual recovery business plans.

Curbside Pick-up

In order to assist with curbside deliveries, beginning last week City staff started installing 15-minute curbside pick-up zone temporary signage in the downtown core for residents and visitors supporting local businesses to use.

Since Main Street has no on-street parking, curbside pick up locations have been created in parking lots along Main Street.

Please watch for these signs when parking and be mindful they are there to help your local businesses.

Residents and visitors interested in supporting local businesses are also encouraged to visit <https://resilient.portcolborne.ca/> to learn which Port Colborne businesses are open and how they are adapting services.

Port Colborne businesses are also encouraged to visit this website to add their business and service offerings.

Outdoor Patios

We have heard from several restaurant owners requesting the creation or expansion of outdoor patios once restaurants and bars are allowed to open. We have also heard that many are facing significant red tape from the AGCO with respect to these temporary license expansion requests.

We urge the provincial government to ease some of these restrictions but also let the municipalities administer their by-laws and work with the businesses to find appropriate places for these expanded patios.

Public Health Statistics

Last week Niagara Region Public Health released COVID-19 statistics as they relate to each municipality. They can be viewed on the Niagara Region website at their COVID-19 link.

Statistics for Port Colborne remain very low with only 1 active case as of last Friday, but we need to remain focused on proper precautions.

ATVs and off-road motorcycles around the City

Earlier this month city officials met with staff from Gio Railways, The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation and Niagara Regional Police to further discuss the issue of ATVs and off-road motorcycles on private and city property.

We are developing a plan of improved signage, restricted access and increased enforcement to deal with these individuals as they continue to access private property.

We ask that you continue to report violators to our by-law enforcement office via email at bylawenforcement@portcolborne.ca or by calling 905-835-2900 Ext 207.

Closing

In closing, we must remain vigilant in fighting this virus.

Our number one priority is the health and safety of our citizens as we begin a safe and gradual reopening of services and business activities.

Please stay safe.