



## AGENDA ITEM REPORT

**Meeting:** Regular Meeting of Council, Operations - 17 Jun 2020  
**To:** Members of Council  
**From:** David Stewart, CAO/Treasurer  
**Department:** Administration  
**Subject:** Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan - Phase 2  
(June 23, 2020 to July 31, 2020)

### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council accepts this report "Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan - Phase 2 (June 23, 2020 to July 31, 2020)" as submitted by the CAO/Treasurer; and

THAT Council approves the Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan - Phase 2 (June 23, 2020 to July 31, 2020).

### ORIGIN:

The threat posed by COVID-19 to both the community and to the Corporation is ongoing. This report focuses upon the Corporation of the Municipality of Hastings Highlands' efforts towards recovery and transition to what will be the new normal operating environment for the delivery of municipal services post COVID-19. Protection of the health and safety for staff is paramount, and guides the decisions discussed in the body of this report.

It is understood that this document will guide municipal operations and will work in conjunction with the municipality's COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan and the municipality's COVID-19 Recovery Plan – Phase 1. This plan will guide operations should the community be faced with additional waves of the virus.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Province of Ontario has released a Framework for Recovery. The Recovery Planning for Hastings Highlands works in conjunction with the Provincial Plan and incorporates all relevant safety considerations.

Municipal Staff who work in each respective municipal service areas, have provided valuable input into this plan. The plan has been reviewed and approved by the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG), consisting of the Mayor, CAO and Department Heads.

The MECG group will continue to meet at least until the provincial government has lifted the emergency declarations.

## **COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN – PHASE 2**

We are pleased to announce Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan - Phase 2.

This plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and adaptations may be made in accordance with regulations and direction from the Province of Ontario and Public Health Officials. The plan itself is a fluid plan that responds to changing conditions as they relate to providing safe municipal services.

Following the guidance of Provincial Health information and orders, the Municipality of Hastings Highlands will extend the closure of all public facilities and the cancellation of programs and events until **July 31, 2020**.

More specifically, the municipality's swim program for summer 2020 as well as the municipality's household hazardous waste day scheduled for July 18, 2020 have both been cancelled. The October 17, 2020 household hazardous waste day may have extended hours to accommodate the July 18, 2020 event being cancelled.

All municipal buildings, facilities, playground structures, community centres and picnic shelters will be closed until **July 31, 2020**.

Access to Provincial beaches is permitted.

Additionally, outdoor recreational spaces including baseball diamonds and soccer fields will be open for public use but not available for rentals. These spaces will not permit the use of any organized recreational leagues.

NOTE - No outdoor furniture i.e. picnic tables or waste containers will be available for use. Public washrooms will not be open for use at this time. The Municipality encourages all social and physical distancing guidelines as outlined by the Province of Ontario.

### **Hastings Highlands Website and Social Media**

The Municipality of Hastings Highlands has created a separate COVID-19 information page on the homepage of the municipality's website [www.hastingshighlands.ca](http://www.hastingshighlands.ca). This page is the municipality's source of credible information that is available in one location to website guests.

Hastings Highlands continues to use corporate social media as a vehicle to disseminate the municipality's COVID-19 planning and communications information to followers.

The Municipality will continue to provide services to support the community via telephone and email, wherever possible. Municipal staff are available to help by calling (613) 338-2811 or emailing [info@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:info@hastingshighlands.ca).

### **Council Meetings**

Hastings Highlands Council meetings will continue to be held by teleconference at least until the provincial government has lifted the emergency declarations and/or gatherings of more than 30 people in a public space are permitted.

## Public Input for Council Meetings

The public is encouraged to provide their input regarding agenda items during the 'Public Input' section of the agenda.

This can be done by way of email to the Clerk at [shuschilt@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:shuschilt@hastingshighlands.ca) or to the Planning Clerk at [cbuijas@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:cbuijas@hastingshighlands.ca) if it is a planning matter. This input will be read during the meeting or inserted into the agenda and republished, dependent on when it is received.

Delegations and Presentations will continue to be provided electronically during the state of emergency. If a Council Member has a question in regards to a delegation or presentation in the agenda, they can email their question to the Clerk, who can contact the delegate for a response, which the Clerk can read out to Council during the meeting.

When it is safe to do so, an alternative meeting solution, such as holding meetings at a safe distance in Emond Hall, may be implemented through the Clerks department.

## Council Correspondence Pick Up

The municipality will be installing a pedestal mailbox unit at the front of the Hastings Highlands Centre for Members of Council and off-site staff to pick up their mail at their convenience. Mail keys will be distributed after the unit is delivered and installed.

## **Administration**

As an essential service in the Province of Ontario, Hastings Highlands staff continues to support the community while preparing for the future. As we begin to live with this new normal, it is important that we reflect on the trust we are placing in each other.

Here in Hastings Highlands, we are doing whatever we can to support our staff in the delivery of essential municipal services. We are working hard to comply with the provincial health and safety association guidance documents.

We have also been working hard to transition as many services as possible online to create a safer way to conduct business for our stakeholders. For example, the finance team has released new methods of electronic payment options for stakeholders through the municipality's website [www.hastingshighlands.ca](http://www.hastingshighlands.ca). In addition to being able to pay property taxes online, stakeholders can now pay for waste site fees, building permits, planning applications, administrative monetary penalty system (AMPS) fines and any other fees invoiced through the municipality online.

## **Building and Planning Services**

The Municipality of Hastings Highlands is taking precautions regarding the developing situation with COVID-19 in an effort to protect staff, residents and businesses as it relates to building and bylaw inspections and new building and planning applications.

As such, the Municipality's Building and Planning Departments will be operating as follows:

## Building Department

The Building Department remains operational. For information on building permits and inspections, please refer to the details below:

New permit applications:

The Municipality continues to review and issue building and septic permit applications.

Please email the applications to: [mcox@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:mcox@hastingshighlands.ca) or alternatively, while the Municipal Office is closed to the public, building permit applications may be mailed in or dropped off at the Municipal Office by prior arrangement. Arrangements are to be made by emailing Martin Cox at [mcox@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:mcox@hastingshighlands.ca). You will be provided with a time for drop off and a member of staff will meet you. Alternatively, use the mailbox located on the Hastings Highlands Library wall, adjacent to the main entrance of the Hastings Highlands Complex.

Site Inspections: New Construction

The Building Department will be inspecting in person unoccupied construction sites only.

The Building Department staff will not be entering occupied area of buildings under construction including personal dwellings or occupied areas of industrial, commercial, multi – residential and institutional buildings. Details on inspections for previously occupied areas are listed in “Site Inspections: Occupied Buildings” below.

Inspection staff may ask you to answer brief, non-intrusive screening questions related to the COVID-19 health risks, and practice social distancing. Please understand this is for the protection and peace of mind of our staff who will be serving you and other members of the public.

Building inspections are to be booked by emailing Martin Cox [mcox@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:mcox@hastingshighlands.ca) or by calling 613 33812811 extension 255.

Site Inspections: Occupied Buildings

The Building Department staff will not be entering occupied areas of buildings under construction including personal dwellings or occupied areas of industrial, commercial, multi – residential and institutional buildings.

The Building Department will review emailed quality photos and videos or inspect via video calls on programs such as Facetime, What’s App and Zoom. The Building Department will email the owner or builder an inspection report stating whether the inspection is satisfactory or list deficiencies. Any deficiencies can be reviewed at a later date by the same methods.

Building inspections are to be booked by emailing Martin Cox [mcox@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:mcox@hastingshighlands.ca) or by calling 613 338 2811 extension 255.

## Planning Department

The Planning Department remains operational.

As of April 17, 2020, the Municipality of Hastings Highlands is suspending any *Planning Act* proceedings pending additional direction from the province.

In the interim, the Municipality's Building and Planning Clerk, Cathy Bujas, will continue to process the applications and provide the County Planner and other associated agencies with copies of our *Planning Act* applications (i.e. rezoning applications, minor variances etc...). This will allow the relevant agencies to continue to review the applications and provide comments or address any issues ahead of time so that collectively we can minimize any delay once the typical planning process returns to normal.

The Road Allowance applications fall under the *Municipal Act* and not the *Planning Act* and should not be affected.

### New planning applications

The Municipality will review electronically submitted planning applications, including minor variances and 911 addresses.

Please email the applications to: [cbujas@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:cbujas@hastingshighlands.ca)

While the Municipal Office is closed to the public, planning applications may be mailed in or dropped off at the Municipal Office by prior arrangement. Arrangements are to be made by emailing Cathy Bujas at [cbujas@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:cbujas@hastingshighlands.ca). You will be provided with a time for drop off and a member of staff will meet you. Alternatively, use the mailbox located on the Hastings Highlands Library wall, adjacent to the main entrance of the Hastings Highlands Complex.

### **Bylaw Enforcement Services**

There will be limited site inspections for bylaw enforcement until further notice.

### **Fire and Emergency Response**

#### Training

The Training Division of the fire department is working on plans to continue and complete the Fire Fighter II program. We have started working on plans for in class training to allow for theoretical instruction to continue. We also have some live fire exercises left which is the practical portion of the training. We are implementing plans to complete this component as well. The practical portion will be completed by keeping a group size of ten (10) or smaller while maintaining social distancing of two (2) metres. The only time the social distancing requirements will be waived is if the fire fighters are wearing SCBA's which will protect the fire fighters from any aerosol exposure to COVID-19. We are also developing plans to start our Fire Fighter I program. We started the program and were only able to complete the first weekend which is the Legislation 101 portion of the program. We are planning on a September start date but a lot of that will hinge on the progression of the COVID 19 restrictions.

#### Station Drills

We have had a couple of Microsoft Teams meetings with our District Chiefs to develop plans to get back to weekly station drills to keep fire fighters skills up to date and ensure that they do not get rusty

from lack of practice. We will be following the advice we have received from the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs that we continue our drills with a 5:1 ratio of fire fighters to Officer. We have asked our District Chiefs to assign fire fighters to Officers keeping that ratio in mind and schedule drills in such a way that only one group is in for drills on a given day. Each station already had a drill schedule so they will be able to continue with the drills.

## Responses

We have created a few Operational Guidelines in response to COVID-19 and will continue with those guidelines until such time as the restrictions are lifted and COVID-19 is not as prevalent as it is today. It is important for us to continue to educate the public on the difficulty fire fighters have when responding to emergencies during COVID-19. It is very difficult for fire fighters to maintain social distancing and/or wear masks. A great example of this is when responding to forest fires in high heat conditions. The equipment is heavy and sometimes requires fire fighters to assist each other when moving equipment so social distancing does not work in these circumstances. Wearing PPE such as masks can cause respiratory distress on fire fighters working in conditions with extreme heat while moving the equipment and therefore cannot protect themselves and cannot distance themselves. We have created a self-screening guideline for fire fighters. Sometimes fire fighters are going to be exposed to each other in these types of circumstances and the only prevention we can do at this point is educate the public on the risks to our fire fighters when responding to incidents as well prevent those displaying symptoms from attending the fire station or fire scenes.

## **Municipal Roads and Operations**

The Municipal Roads and Operations has maintained full service operations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional measures have been implemented to protect staff while performing their operation duties.

## **Municipal Waste Sites**

All Waste Sites will remain open and will operate in accordance with their normal schedule. Additional measures have been implemented to protect staff and guests.

## **Hastings Highlands Public Library**

Please visit the Hastings Highlands Public Library website for information  
<https://www.hastingshighlandslibrary.ca/>

## **Risk Mitigation**

The following are several ways for Hastings Highlands staff to reduce the risk of contracting the virus or spreading the virus to others. Some or all these mitigations may be required, subject to government regulations and infection control best practices.

- Wearing masks to reduce the chance of the spread of the virus to others;
- Wear PPE when appropriate;
- Washing hands regularly;

- Sanitizing surfaces;
- Staff should not share phones, pens, staplers, computers etc.;
- Staff should work from their designated buildings and limit entrance to other buildings;
- Work remotely when possible;
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve;
- If you use a tissue, discard immediately and wash your hands afterward;
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth;
- Avoid contact with people who are sick;
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after;
- Where possible, wear gloves when interacting with high-touch areas;
- Do not touch your face with gloved hands. Put on and remove gloves in a manner that avoids contamination of the hands;
- Ensure you wash your hands after removing gloves;
- Wash your clothes as soon as you get home.

### **Hastings Highlands Employee Self-Isolation Protocol**

Staff members will self-isolate for 14 days in the following situations:

1. If they test positive for the COVID-19 virus. This will require 14 days being symptom free before a return to work;
2. If someone they cohabitate with tests positive for the COVID-19 virus;
3. If someone they work with (same Department or same Building) tests positive for the COVID-19 virus;
4. If they are exposed to someone confirmed to have the COVID-19 virus.

### **Hastings Highlands Employee Meetings**

Video Conferencing and voice calls will be the preferred method of communication between staff;

- Physical distancing best practices will be adhered to for all in-person meetings

- Offices will be considered personal space and entrance is restricted to the individual assigned to that space. Entry by all others is prohibited unless able to physical distance.

### **Hastings Highlands Employee Cleaning/Sanitizing**

Employees will be responsible for sanitizing their personal workspace upon arrival at work and when leaving;

- Employees will be responsible for sanitizing any municipal-owned vehicles when beginning use of the vehicle and when finishing;

- Employees will be designated to ensure that washrooms are sanitized daily.

### **Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Inspection Checklist of PPE**

Members of the Municipal Emergency Control Group are working with members of staff to develop a COVID-19 Checklist of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that shall be available at municipal buildings and facilities where staff may be in contact with members of the public.

The inspection checklist will be implemented through the municipality's joint health and safety committee.

### **CONCLUSION**

This report was prepared on June 11, 2020 and is based on the information available at the time. As new actions are taken by other levels of government and new information surfaces, this plan will be modified accordingly. The protection and the health and safety for staff and our community is paramount and has guided all the decisions we have made in this incremental phased approach to the municipality's COVID-19 recovery plan.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The Municipality is tracking costs associated with COVID-19 response and recovery. The second quarter treasury report will outline more of the specific financial impacts related to COVID-19.

### **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4 EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AND GOVERNANCE**

Goal: Plan and Implement Emergency Management

Action: Ensure compliance with applicable legislation in community emergency management planning.

Action: Strengthen our safety and security protocols at municipal buildings and facilities.

### **REFERENCES:**

N/A

### **Prepared By:**

David Stewart, CAO/Treasurer

**Reviewed By:** Municipal Clerk June 11, 2020

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