



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Meeting: Special Meeting of Council - 29 Jul 2020
To: Members of Council
From: David Stewart, CAO/Treasurer
Department: Administration
Subject: Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan – Phase 3 (Effective August 6, 2020)

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council accepts this report "Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan - Phase 3 (Effective August 6, 2020)" as submitted by the CAO/Treasurer; and

THAT Council approves the Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan - Phase 3 (Effective August 6, 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 pandemic. 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 and Phase 2. This plan will guide operations should the community be faced with additional waves of the virus.

Note: The Municipality of Hastings Highlands reserves the right to implement any of the Municipality's previously approved COVID-19 Recovery Plan Phases or any additional measures deemed necessary at any time to protect the public and staff should there be changes in the status of the pandemic.

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 on an as needed basis at least until the provincial government has lifted the emergency declarations.

Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Staff and Public Protocols and Procedures Guidebook

The Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Staff and Public Protocols and Procedures Guidebook will be an education tool for municipal staff as well as members of the public. It will be available in hard copy to all staff and public (upon request) and will also be available on the municipality's website.

This guidebook will be presented to Council for approval at the August 5, 2020 meeting of Council. It has been created in consultation with municipal staff.

COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN – PHASE 3

We are pleased to announce Hastings Highlands COVID-19 Recovery Plan - Phase 3.

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.

Phase 3 of the municipality's COVID-19 recovery plan will be in effect until one (1) of the following three (3) conditions below are met, in which case the municipality will transition to Phase 4:

1. Wide vaccination
2. Community immunity
3. Broad successful treatments

The municipality's COVID-19 Recovery Plan – Phase 2 will be extended to end of business day August 5, 2020. The reason for this extension is to allow the HH COVID-19 Staff and Public Protocols and Procedures Guidebook to be approved by Council at the August 5, 2020 meeting of Council before phase 3 implementation begins.

WHAT'S OPENING

Municipal Office

Effective **August 6, 2020** the Municipal Office will be open to the public by appointment only and only on select weekdays to start until we are confident in the new COVID-19 protocols and procedures.

Once we are confident and have allowed time to transition, the municipality will look at opening at a reduced and limited capacity following public health guidelines.

Municipal Council and Committee Meetings

Hastings Highlands Council meetings will continue to be held by teleconference and may include in-person meetings for members if it is safe to do so. Council Committee meetings will start up as we begin to implement phase 3.

During times where space does not allow the public to attend due to COVID-19 safe space and distancing protocols, meetings will be livestreamed and recorded. When permitted and safe to do so, the public will be welcomed to attend the Hastings Highlands Centre to participate in meetings again.

Playground Structures and Picnic Shelters

Playground structures will be open following the lead of the provincial government and provincial health guidelines.

Picnic shelters will open only when it is safe to do so following the lead of the provincial government.

Hand sanitizer and other disinfecting products **will not** be provided at these locations. Members of the public will be responsible for their own safety.

Beaches and Boat Launches

Access to Provincial beaches is permitted.

The Municipal owned boat launch site that is in Baptiste Village is open, operational and the dock onsite has been installed.

Outdoor Recreation Spaces

Outdoor recreational spaces including baseball diamonds, soccer fields and outdoor rinks will be open for public use but not available for rentals. These spaces will not permit the use of any organized recreational leagues until provincial orders begin to ease.

Additional Notes

Public washrooms at outdoor recreation spaces in the municipality will begin to reopen when it is safe to do so and sanitary measures will comply with public health guidelines.

Minimal outdoor furniture i.e. picnic tables or waste containers will be available for use at this time and may begin to be added when it is safe to do so.

The Municipality encourages all social and physical distancing guidelines as outlined by the Province of Ontario. Members of the public will be responsible for their own safety.

WHAT'S REMAINING CLOSED

Programs and Events

Following the guidance of Provincial Health information and orders, the Municipality of Hastings Highlands will extend the cancellation of programs and events until further notice and will continue to monitor public health and provincial guidelines.

Once the province begins to ease restrictions on groups and meeting crowds the municipality will begin to schedule programs and events. Only when it is safe to do so.

Community Centres

All municipal community centres will remain closed until the municipality transitions to Phase 4.

The reason we are proposing not to reopen these facilities in phase 3 is due to the increased risk management practices that would be required. The municipality is a corporate entity and it is our responsibility to ensure these spaces are properly managed adhering to public health guidelines.

Presently, the municipality does not have the resources or capacity to properly manage this.

CONCLUSION

Outstanding Concern Staff Office Spaces

As we begin the transition to phase 3 and what appears to be the new normal, we cannot lose sight of the fact there is still an outstanding concern around staff office space availability due to the provincial guidelines on physical distancing. As a result, staff is in the process of developing options for Council to consider addressing this issue.

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 . 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.

Municipal staff are available to help by calling (613) 338-2811 or emailing info@hastingshighlands.ca

Hastings Highlands Public Library

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

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Municipality is tracking costs associated with COVID-19 response and recovery. These costs are being provided to Council as part of the regular quarterly finance reports.

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 July 20, 2020

Reviewed By: CAO/Treasurer July 23, 2020