

## Remarks from Mayor Mike Savage – Monday, March 30, 2020

Good afternoon, thank you for joining us.

I want to provide an update from our perspective and provide additional clarity on where we stand on social distancing requirements in outdoor spaces.

I will get to that, but I want to assure you first of all that the business of City Hall is continuing

- To continue to practice safe social distancing, there will be three virtual special meetings of Regional Council on April 2, April 14 and April 28, each starting at 1 p.m. (The regularly scheduled meetings on April 7 and April 21 are cancelled).
- Technology for virtual meetings is currently being tested which may allow residents and media to access live-streaming video of the meeting while it is underway. Updates on the status of this potential access will be provided Thursday's meeting.
- One of the agenda items, at an upcoming Council meeting, will be the status of property taxes. The municipality is evaluating options for taxpayers.
- A Notice of Motion will be presented on April 2 regarding the due date of taxes as an immediate measure. Decisions will be communicated to taxpayers after Regional Council deliberation and in advance of the deadline.
- Regional Council minutes will be available on halifax.ca within 24 hours of the meeting. An audio recording of the entire meeting proceedings will be available as soon as possible following the meeting.
- The agenda and reports for the April 2 meetings will be posted on Halifax.ca on Tuesday, March 31 at 1 p.m.

Halifax Transit has been designated by the Province of Nova Scotia an essential service under the current provincial state of emergency.

- In light of this directive by the province, the municipality will continue delivering the highest level of service that can be reasonably provided – while also continuing to take steps that help minimize the spread of COVID-19 and make buses as safe an environment as possible in the circumstances.
- The level of transit service provided will continue to be adjusted as necessary, based on available operational resources.

For riders who have purchased a March or April transit pass, please keep your passes until further notice. Halifax Transit will update the status of transit passes in the coming days.

We continue to work to ensure we are following all public health directives aimed at curbing the spread of Coronavirus.

We support the Province's decision to close parks and beaches, and we have followed suit with the closure of municipal parks, beaches, many trails, outdoor sports venues and playgrounds.

At the same time, we continue to support safe outdoor opportunities to get fresh air and exercise.

It seems not everyone has gotten the message. This past weekend, we had a small number of people disregarding these directives, sneaking into parks, even moving barricades aside.

Let me clear, it is not acceptable to put your personal interests above our collective social responsibility to try to flatten the curve of Covid-19 in our community.

Do not go to provincial or municipal parks. Do not take a stroll on the beach, or play a game of tennis, or swing from the monkey bars on the playground.

We have worked to keep neighbourhood trails, that are not inside municipal parks, open. But, we need better cooperation.

Do not drive to a trail outside of your neighbourhood to go for a stroll or ride your bike.

This will only serve to create crowding that flies in the face of the good social distancing measures are all counting on, now more than ever.

I know it's awful, I know it's hard. And, it's vital that we all recognize our shared responsibility.

Make no mistake, we are not asking you, we are telling you. Chief Kinsella is here to answer details around enforcement, but I think you know that there have already been hefty fines.

I want to tell you that I am also so inspired by the sense of community we are witnessing, apart and yet together.

Whether it's Charlie A'Court rocking out to Footloose on his Dartmouth step, a front yard dance party in Halifax's West End, or the chalked messages and homemade signs of support for Dr. Robert Strang in Fall River – we will have each other to thank for getting through this time.

Thank you.

## **OTHER KEY OPERATIONAL UPDATES:**

### **Halifax Transit**

- Halifax Transit has been designated by the Province of Nova Scotia an essential service under the current provincial state of emergency.
  - In light of this directive by the province, the municipality will continue delivering the highest level of service that can be reasonably provided – while also continuing to take steps that help minimize the spread of COVID-19 and make buses as safe an environment as possible in the circumstances.

- Residents are reminded that the level of transit service provided will continue to be adjusted as necessary, based on available operational resources.
- For riders who have purchased a March or April transit pass, please keep your passes until further notice. Halifax Transit will update the status of transit passes in the coming days.

### **Parks & Recreation**

- The 2020 Volunteer Awards are postponed until further notice.
- Recreation centres remain closed for the foreseeable future and all programming cancelled.
- Please note that all municipal spring recreation programming is cancelled and refunds will be processed in the coming days.
- Summer recreation program registration scheduled for April 1 is cancelled. The status of summer recreation programming will be determined at a later date.
- All programs have been removed from the online registration system, and credits for cancelled programs have been applied as a first step.
- All registrants will receive an email outlining this information, and additional questions can be submitted by email to [myrec@halifax.ca](mailto:myrec@halifax.ca). The registration phone line is not active for the time being as recreation staff continue to support ongoing service adjustments related to preventing the spread of COVID-19.

### **Remarks from Chief of Halifax Regional Police Dan Kinsella**

Thank you Mayor Savage.

I want to start by thanking the men and women of Halifax Regional Police - both sworn and civilian - who are continually showing their dedication to public safety. I also want to thank all health care workers, other first responders and partners.

We are in the midst of significant uncertainty and a constantly shifting situation...because of COVID-19.

The main message that I have for the public today is quite simply this.

We need you to help us help you.

Education remains our top preference during these tough times. But when all other steps have been exhausted ...enforcement will follow.

I do want to emphasize that the vast majority of people are doing all the right things.

- Physical distancing

- Avoiding social gatherings of more than 5 people
- Self-isolating at the appropriate times

But some people continue to take unnecessary risks.

We need everyone to educate themselves on what the responsibilities and expectations are.

Our officers will keep doing our very best to ensure public safety.

We want people to focus on fighting the spread of the virus...not the rules to contain it.

Thank you.