

Transcript of the Update from Mayor Shantz about COVID-19

March 24, 2020

Hello

We are living in unprecedented times and our information and understandings about COVID-19 change hourly. I know you have heard much through traditional media and social media, but I wanted to talk to you directly as your Mayor.

First, I want you to know that local community and political leaders are meeting regularly to make sure our efforts are coordinated and effective.

The Regional Pandemic Control Group has been meeting regularly to share information from leaders in a number of sectors including health, community support, critical infrastructure, communications, and the municipalities.

Everyone is working diligently and collaboratively to keep us safe and to help us with our decision making. We need to move quickly in a coordinated fashion, but we need to move with wisdom and intention, not rashly.

Our goal is to keep you, our community, our employees and especially our health care and emergency workers safe and healthy.

This is a serious virus. Let's not panic, but do take to heart and obey the directives from Public Health. Canada has been blessed with time to learn from others.

You've all heard the guidelines, please respect them.

- Stay home
- Practice Physical Distancing
- If you are returning from out of country, you need to self isolate in your home and follow the rules set out on the Public Health website – go to regionofwaterloo.ca and click on the site for details.

If you haven't been travelling, protect yourself and others:

- Wash your hands often with warm water and soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Maintain physical distance of 6', 2m, or I like the visual of 2 arms lengths

The Township and all Region of Waterloo municipalities have taken a number of steps to protect the public and staff:

- All municipal facilities are closed – including arenas, pools, community centres, libraries, and the municipal offices. Critical and core services that can be done on-line or over the phone will continue for the benefit of residents and businesses
- We are putting in place the technology to allow us to have remote Council and Committee meetings
- We hope to have measures in place later this week to assist residents and businesses who need help paying their tax and water bills
- We will provide resources for businesses regarding help available.

The Township website Woolwich.ca and the Regional website regionofwaterloo.ca contain good information and links where you can find recent news, information and links to other sites. But you can also follow us on Social Media via Twitter and Facebook.

Some of you may think this is like a flu, and for many people it will feel that way. The difference is that no one is immune and if we have half our health care workers off sick, or the hospital beds overwhelmed with serious COVID cases, our system will fail us.

Our Federal Minister of Health has said: “Physical distancing will last months. When people play loose and hard with the rules, it puts our civil liberties in jeopardy. It makes governments look at more and more stringent measures to contain people in their homes. Our freedoms around measures we are taking now depend on people taking them seriously.” End quote.

That means: Listen up! The longer we resist the rules, the more stringent they will get and the longer they will be in place.

Rest assured that we continue to monitor the situation.

- I want to thank our health care workers, and emergency workers who serve the community so selflessly.
 - Thank you to the businesses who are allowing employees to work from home, and those who are finding new ways to serve us. Remember to support local businesses as they struggle through this time.
 - And most of all, I want to thank all of you – our friends and neighbours who are self isolating after trips abroad, those who are self monitoring your symptoms and you who are practicing physical distancing... All of you... We need to remain vigilant
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- ✓ Just a reminder that a smile travels more than 2 metres.
 - ✓ Social media and telephones travel much further.
 - ✓ Conversations and connections can happen in many ways.
 - ✓ Let’s take care of each other, let’s support each other, and we will get through this together.
 - ✓ Oh, yes, and.... Wash your hands!