

March 23, 2020

Mayors Address to the Community

Good Morning Everyone,

It has been one week since my last address to the community and in this time, we have seen many changes to the COVID-19 situation, today I would like to give our residents an update.

Please be assured that City staff and Council are working diligently with the Province and Interior Health to put in place measures that will protect and provide relief to the residents of Revelstoke. I am also in regular communication with the physicians of Revelstoke as we are working together to continue protecting our community.

I cannot stress strongly enough the severity of this situation for our community, the facts are:

- It is no longer a question of, if COVID-19 will come to Revelstoke it has been found in our community, while we have encouraged residents to act as if it were here all along, we now have to take stronger measures to protect the population as well as our health system.
- If we are to have a chance, we need to fight back and control this virus so we can be better prepared to help those that will be affected.
- We need to continue to follow government regulations, this is up to all of us:
 - practice social distancing always (which means physical distancing, 2 meters or 6 ft away from each other)
 - stay home as much as possible
 - wash our hands and keep our homes wiped clean
 - practice self-isolation if you are unwell or have traveled outside of the Country

I would like to recognize all the businesses that have shut down, I realize this was not an easy choice and in the long run will save lives and help slow the spread of the virus.

In addition to the closures of businesses I would like to recognize the youth of our community: while some youth are closely following the government regulations, some are not. I strongly suggest that you do not congregate in groups, respect the social distancing rules, and obey the playground and park closure notices. While the risk that you are unable to fight the virus should you be exposed, is low, gathering in groups increases the number of potential cases that are brought home to high-risk loved ones or passed along to others in grocery store line ups, etc. We urge you to act as though you have the virus and do your part in ensuring the rest of your community remains healthy.

Because our Province has declared a Provincial State of Emergency we have closed all public buildings and stopped all non-essential services in an effort to protect our staff and our residents.

- Where possible we have staff working from home and will monitor and adjust the situation as required
- We have closed all City parks and playgrounds in an effort to stop congregation and enforce social distancing, barricades and signs went up yesterday
- The City will continue to provide water and sewer services and garbage pick-up. For the safety of our workers, only bagged garbage will be picked up.
- We are working hard to protect our front-line essential service workers, following stringent precautions and protocols with respect to safety measures
- All senior staff are trained in Emergency operations and will support Interior Health if our system becomes overwhelmed

- As of March 22, yesterday, the CAO activated our Emergency Operations Centre to a Level two, this will allow for additional staffing preparations and a more formal process of collaboration between all the agencies involved. We have been and will continue to use the Incident Command System with this incident.

We continue to support our doctors with their messaging to the public. We are extremely lucky to have physicians in our community who are so loyal to our resident's health and wellbeing. In their words "Doctors and nurses cannot do this alone. What the public does now will impact the health of British Columbians for weeks and months to come. Lives depend on your actions now."

- On Saturday Queen Victoria Hospital opened a COVID-19 Assessment & Testing Center, now open 7 days a week, it is important that we follow all Provincial protocol and not overwhelm this system.
- Please note that this testing center is only for those individuals that have been pre-screened and provided an appointment time to ensure that social distancing is maintained, it is not intended as drop in centre.
- If you develop respiratory symptoms or discover you've had contact with someone positive for the virus, self-isolate immediately and contact 811 or the Revelstoke COVID Testing and Assessment Clinic at 250-814-2230 for advice.

I think it is also important for residents to understand that the City of Revelstoke is governed by the legislated requirements of the Province of BC. Know that we are working closely with them to change regulations with respect to payments for utilities and taxes.

- Council will be meeting this week to begin amending the Bylaws that will allow to us push back deadlines for payments of city utilities.
- Council continues to encourage the Province to:
 - adjust the 2020 tax deadline
 - as well as expand the eligibility for the property tax deferral program, similar to what they did, in 2008, in response to the recession. This would allow residential property owners to defer the property taxes, at a very low interest rate.

As soon as these amended regulations are in place and the City can move forward with making changes the residents will be informed.

Please stay safe, respect each other, be kind and follow the regulations and understand that, in the words of the Federal Government: if we do not adhere to the suggested regulations at this time, more restrictions will be put into place.