

Message from Mayor Rob Keffer:
COVID-19 update - March 19

I'm going to jump right into the topic that I've gotten the most questions about, and reassure everyone that Council plans to offer some relief regarding property taxes.

This situation is moving at a very fast pace, and we are committed to responding in a manner that is both timely and responsible. We are working with staff to obtain accurate information on the best options, and now that the Province has passed a bill allowing us to meet by teleconference, we will be holding a special meeting of Council next week to approve relief measures. We will make an announcement immediately afterwards so that you know your options in advance of your next property tax instalment date (regardless of which payment plan you use).

There is no question that the growing number of cases in Ontario is alarming. I know that you've been hearing this from everyone but I don't think it can be said enough – take care of yourselves and of the vulnerable people in our communities. We have all had to redefine the meaning or “urgent” as we seriously consider what activities we need to do and what can be put off for the protection of ourselves and everyone around us.

With March break, school closures and many of you being off work, lots of people are looking to go outside and get some exercise and fresh air. I encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to unplug and get away from the stress of the current situation. At the same time, I want to remind everyone of the importance of maintaining the recommended social distancing and keeping up with your handwashing/sanitizing after using outdoor equipment, whether that be playgrounds, benches, crosswalk signals or anything else that is used by multiple people.

We will soon be putting signs at playgrounds to remind people about the measures you should take to protect yourself during the COVID-19 pandemic. These are not in any way meant to discourage people from using parks or enjoying the outdoors, but just to remind you that these are extraordinary times requiring extraordinary precautions.

We are hearing more from upper levels of government about measures to support and protect people. Recent announcements from the province include no new eviction orders for tenants, extending validation periods for driver's licences, licence plate stickers and health cards (you can use your expired documents for now) and another 1,300 phone lines for Telehealth.

We will continue to update our website at www.townofbwg.com/covid with links to information on the COVID-19 pandemic and on financial and health support services. If there is additional information you would like us to share, please let me know at rkeffer@townofbwg.com.

Best,
Rob Keffer