

North Saanich Council COVID-19 Message #4

April 21, 2020

Welcome to the fourth edition of our North Saanich Council Communication. We encourage you to share this message with your neighbours and networks.

We would also like to invite you to sign up for the District's email notification system at <https://northsaanich.ca/register-for/notifications/#> The District uses this tool to inform residents of important updates, Council communications, newsletters and more. Our goal is to have 500 people sign up this month. We are more than half-way to our goal!



The banner features the North Saanich logo at the top left, followed by the text "COVID-19 Information" in large white letters on a teal background. Below this, it says "Get the latest news from the District!" and "Sign up for important public notices, messages from Council, news items and newsletters." To the right of this text is a QR code. At the bottom of the banner, it says "Register at: www.northsaanich.ca/register-for/notifications/"

You will start seeing the notice to the left appearing on Community Mailboxes this week as another way to reach residents; we are encouraging everyone to sign up. The District of North Saanich website is your best source for information.

Mayor Geoff Orr has been busy learning new technologies as he puts together video messages. You can view his latest message [here](#).

The District of North Saanich is on Facebook and Twitter! Please visit:

[District of North Saanich Facebook](#)

District of North Saanich Twitter @northsaanich

[District of North Saanich Fire Facebook](#)

District of North Saanich Fire @dns_fire

Council Meeting Update

A Special Council Meeting will be held on Monday, April 27th at 7 pm; the agenda will be available on the website by Friday morning. Two significant reports are anticipated: a Finance Report on tax rates and deadline options, as well as an analysis of the Sandown proposals, further to the recent request for proposal process. As the meeting will be closed to the public, your feedback should be addressed to Mayor and Council and sent to admin@northsaanich.ca by 12 noon on Monday the 27th. Video conferencing will be available for Council members who choose not to attend in person. The meeting will be livestreamed and can be accessed at northsaanich.ca/council-meetings. A webcast will be available the day after.

Health & Safety

Thank you for continuing to abide by the requests being made of all of us by the Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. We all have a stake in combating COVID-19; what we are doing is making a difference and matters to the collective well-being of our community. Decisions being made are in the interest of the greater good, and the results are beginning to show. We should all be very proud of our efforts and the impact they are having on flattening the curve in British Columbia.

The BC government has formally extended the provincial state of emergency until April 29th and the ban on outdoor burning is in effect until June 15th.

As a result backyard burning, including campfires, have been banned in North Saanich by Provincial Order until further notice. Information on the restrictions set by the Ministry of Environment can be found [here](#).

North Saanich is committed to reopening the Green Waste facility as soon as we feel that it is safe to do so in the context of our overall operational planning efforts. We understand that this service is very important to the community, especially at this time of year, and particularly as the wildfire season quickly approaches. Staff are working to develop a staged plan for reopening, and we anticipate a report to Council in early May with options for Council to consider.

The Provincial Health Officer has begun considering relaxations of some restrictions and when this will be advisable. North Saanich's Emergency Operations Centre has also turned its attention to staged recovery plans for the services that have been curtailed or limited, including green waste, parks facilities, the Freeride Park, Committee and Commission meetings, and other volunteer activities. We will share more information on these plans as they are available.

Economy & Local Business

The Province has further reduced the school property tax rate for commercial properties, which is intended to result in a 25% average reduction in the total property tax bills for most businesses. Late payment penalties have been postponed to October 1st. For more information visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020FIN0020-000703>

Local businesses are continually finding unique (and safe) ways to operate. The [Peninsula Chamber of Commerce](#) maintains an up-to-date listing of local businesses that are open. Please check them out and support them if you are able.

Community

We like to think about this as the good news section!

April 22, 2020 marks 50 years of Earth Day! The [Creatively United](#) community has a free speakers series this week. Check it out.

We would also like to congratulate the Deep Cove Planet Protectors for winning a \$1000 grant through the BC Green Games. Mme. Beaudry and Mme Lee's classes have been working hard to clean up plastic and petition local businesses and various Councils to ban single-use plastic bags. There is a fantastic video highlighting their work in this article by the [Peninsula News Review](#).

The incredible organizing team for the North Saanich Farm Market has been working hard to modify this year's Market to keep everyone safe, meet the new guidelines set out by the BC Centre for Disease Control, and continue supporting local farmers. The Market, held at St. John's United Church, will open in June with the exact date to be confirmed soon. Sadly, for this year, live music and craft vendors are not permitted; we encourage you to continue to support these local businesses directly.

Saanich School District #63 has delivered 750 meals to local families in need. The meals are prepared by Truffles Catering, and CUPE staff are supporting the weekly distribution through the three Middle Schools: Royal Oak, Bayside, and North Saanich. Indigenous education staff are connecting with families in the four local communities who need support. The School District continues to work with Beacon Community Services and the Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils to further extend and provide food support to our school communities.

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity? Beacon Community Services is looking for volunteers to fill a couple of needs through their 'Better at Home' program. If you would like to volunteer to make phone calls to seniors or do grocery shopping, please call 250-656-5537 or apply at <https://beaconcs.ca/join-our-team/online-application-form/>. Beacon Community Services is following the BC Seniors Advocate recommendations that people over 65 years of age stay at home as much as possible and for that reason, are looking for shoppers under the age of 65.

[Speak Aid 2020](#) is an initiative that has emerged as a result of conferences and workshops being cancelled around the globe; free keynote speakers are being offered to the public.

BC's Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has become a beloved household name these last couple of months. Dr. Henry's choice of footwear has become something of note, resulting in John Fluevog Shoes releasing a limited edition 'Dr. Henry' shoe, with 100% of pre-sale profits going to support Food Banks BC.

Our flags at the Municipal Hall are lowered to half-mast as we recognize the tragedy and the lives lost in Nova Scotia last weekend. We remember the victims and their families, including RCMP Constable Heidi Stevenson. There are many North Saanich residents who have deep roots in Nova Scotia. We join our fellow Canadians in extending our deepest condolences to everyone who is impacted.

Thank you for taking the time to read and share this message; we appreciate your feedback. Please let us know if there is anything else that you would like to see included in future editions.

We will get through this and thank you for the part you are playing to make it so.

As always, you are welcome to contact any one of us.

Sincerely,

Mayor Geoff Orr and Councillors Heather Gartshore, Jack McClintock, Patricia Pearson, Brett Smyth, Celia Stock, Murray Weisenberger