

## North Saanich Council COVID-19 Message #5

**April 30th, 2020**

Welcome to the fifth edition of our North Saanich Council Message; we've been in this business for one month! We're happy to hear that our message to the community is of use, and is being well received.

We are encouraged that so many of you have chosen to sign up for notifications from the District, which is your best source of information for our community. In the last month, we have increased our subscribers from less than 100 to 370. Given that there are approximately 4800 properties in North Saanich, we still have a ways to go. We have placed notices on Community Mailboxes throughout the District as a way to reach residents; if you see a group of boxes without one, please let us know. Please consider signing up for [Notifications](#) if you've not already done so.

Our Council Messages may become less frequent in the coming weeks, however our commitment to keep you informed remains the same.

### **Council Meetings**

While we do have the ability to meet remotely, Council is choosing to continue to meet in person at the Municipal Hall. Our Council Chambers is very generous in size, and thus we are able to meet the required social distancing measures by spreading out around the room. As the public is not permitted to be in attendance, communication to Council needs to be received by 12 noon on the day of a meeting and sent to [admin@northsaanich.ca](mailto:admin@northsaanich.ca). We are giving consideration to how we might be able to allow for increased public participation and improve this very important aspect of connecting with our residents. We miss having you among us on Monday evenings!

At the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting Council made a couple of decisions in an effort to ease the financial burden on our community; this is an update to information provided in Message #2.

- The overall 2020 municipal tax increase has been reduced from 2.88% to 1.44% (1.65% for residential and 0.95% for business). For residential properties, this will reduce the increase to an average of \$21, and for business properties, to an average of \$175.
- While the due date for property taxes remains July 2nd, residential and farm properties will not be assessed a penalty until August 1st (3%); an additional 7% penalty will be applied to unpaid balances on October 1st.
- The penalty date for commercial properties in classes 4 thru 8 has been extended to October 1st at which time a 10% penalty will be applied.

Council will be meeting on Monday May 4th; the agenda will be available at [Council Meetings](#) on Friday May 1st. We are anticipating a Staff Report on plans for re-opening the Green Waste Facility; we know that this is a very important issue for our residents and look forward to finding a solution that works for both staff and residents. We will also be continuing our assessment of the two proposals for the Long Term Operator of the Sandown property.

Our Deputy Fire Chief and Training Officer Steve Knapp retired on Wednesday and was treated to a drive-by salute from his colleagues and friends, acknowledging his 29 years of service with North Saanich Fire. Congratulations Steve!! You can see the video on the [Fire Department's Facebook](#) page.

### **Health and Safety**

The message from our BC Public Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Health Adrian Dix continues to be the same: stay the course and carry on as we've done for the past seven weeks. We extend our thanks to our residents and businesses, for your continued efforts in adhering to Provincial health guidelines.

The CRD has a page dedicated to [Community Health & Wellbeing](#) which includes links to many resources in the region, including the Community Health Network.

The UVic Centre for Youth and Society has created a resource hub that you may also find useful. <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/youthsociety/resources/community/>

### **Economy and Local Business**

The South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) of which North Saanich is a member has established a 'Rising Economy Task Force' which is intended to guide the recovery process in the CRD; Mayor Geoff Orr is participating on the Agriculture and Food & Retail sub-committee.

As a District, we are also turning our attention to recovery and what that could look like for our community. The plan will involve a risk assessment and a measured return, following directives from our Public Health officials.

The [North Saanich Farm Market](#) is gearing up to open on Saturday June 6th while adhering to the new health and safety protocols required. This is a great opportunity to purchase fresh local food, and support local farmers.

### **Community**

The Saanich Board of Education is seeking your input through the completion of a survey to inform their Budget process. The survey will be the primary tool for gathering feedback and closes at the end of day Friday May 1st. The background document

[2020/21 Budget Consultation Background Document – April 24, 2020 About the Saanich School District](#) provides information on the Saanich School District and the 2020/21 Budget context. The survey is available at the following link: [2020/21 Budget Consultation Survey](#).

Here is a great new resource dedicated to growing food! A group of organizations from across the CRD has come together to share resources to encourage those who would like to get into growing their own fruits and veggies. [Home | Growing Together | Collaborative Initiative | Capital Region](#).

The Canadian Forces Snowbirds are launching a cross Canada flyover this weekend, dubbed *Operation Inspiration*, to boost the spirits of all Canadians, beginning in Nova Scotia. Please watch the local news for details about their arrival in our area. [Snowbirds-to-fly-across-country-to-salute-canadians](#).

We sadly acknowledge the loss of a Canadian Military Cyclone helicopter between Greece and Italy yesterday, and the associated loss of six lives. The Military community is small, and at this time, we are especially thinking of our friends and neighbours at the 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron located in North Saanich, at the Victoria International Airport. Our condolences to all who are impacted.

Thank you for taking the time to read and share this message.

In the words that Councillor Murray Weisenberger spoke on Monday: “hang in there, keep up the social distancing, and let’s win this together!”

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 and Murray Weisenberger