

North Saanich Council COVID-19 Message #7

May 13th, 2020

It has been another busy week and we have a number of important updates and information to share with you.

BC's Restart Plan was laid out for us last week, and the general direction can be found here: [BC Restart Plan](#). Details will be forthcoming as the various sectors solidify their guidelines and seek approval from the Province. We can expect to see a number of "openings" taking place in the coming weeks.

New [Buy BC e-commerce funding](#) is available to help farmers and food processors overcome lost sales by moving their product sales online.

Council Updates

Just a reminder to check the [District's COVID-19 page](#) regularly for updates; not all updates to the website are sent out as notifications, including our Council Messages.

Thanks to all of you for helping spread the word about our District notification system; we are now up to 405 subscribers! If you've not already done so, please register here [Register for Notifications](#)

The North Saanich Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) remains at Level 1 and now meets twice per week. Planning is ongoing, but some changes are already underway, such as the installation of plexiglass at the front counters and social distancing floor stickers.

Reopening of the Municipal Hall will be completed in stages; our inside staff who have been working from home will gradually return over the coming weeks, and this will be followed by opening the building to public access. There are a number of plans that will need to be put in place as our staff implement the new obligations for health and safety that have arisen due to COVID-19. We again thank you for your patience as we work through this process.

We are optimistic that our Commissions and the Board of Variance will soon be able to begin meeting again, either in person, virtually or a combination thereof. More details will be provided as we have them.

The North Saanich Green Waste Facility opened this week and is operating 8am to 3pm daily up to and including Saturday May 16th, after which the regular schedule and hours will apply. Thanks to the suggestion of one of our residents, in lieu of payment, we are accepting cash donations to the Saanich Peninsula Lions Food Bank. Thanks for supporting this important local service.

Sandown: You will be aware that for some time, Council has been engaged in a process to choose a Long Term Operator for the Sandown lands; Council has indicated

that the preferred proponent is the Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture (SCRA). Council will meet in June to further review the SCRA proposal and identify additional questions and concerns that they would like the proponent to address.

On May 4th, Council received a letter dated April 30th from Chief Tanya Jimmy of the Tseycum First Nation, indicating the Nation's interest in the Sandown lands. No further discussion between Council or Staff and the SCRA will take place until we have a better understanding of the Tseycum Nation's interest in the land.

Health and Safety

The Province has suggested *Eight Golden Rules* for everybody as we move forward:

1. Maintain physical distancing outside your household; keep your number of contacts low and keep a safe distance. Few faces and big spaces.
2. Practice good hygiene; wash your hands, avoid touching your face, cough/sneeze etiquette.
3. Stay at home and away from others if you're feeling unwell -- every time.
4. Make necessary contact safer with appropriate controls.
5. Increase cleaning at home, work and frequently touched surfaces.
6. Consider the use of non-medical masks where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as shopping and on transit.
7. Continue to minimize non-essential travel.
8. Stay informed, be prepared and follow public health advice.

The Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition website is a great resource if you are a cyclist. They have put together some Scavenger Hunts, Discovery Rides and Ride the Distance routes. Check them out [GVCC Theme Rides](#)

If you are looking to keep children occupied outside at this time, there are some fun ideas and useful resources on the CRD's [Active School Travel Planning](#) site.

Economy and Local Business

Numerous business partners and government ministries are engaging in economic recovery planning, including: Small Business BC, Tourism Vancouver Island and the Island Coast Economic Trust. Locally, here is a great initiative to support small businesses in getting their products and services online [Locals for Locals](#)

Mayor Geoff Orr continues to participate in weekly conference call meetings with Minister Selina Robinson, and one of the areas of focus is the transition to recovery. The local area Mayors also meet weekly via Zoom and are stressing the importance of a coordinated regional approach, for all sectors.

Check out this [Economic Recovery Wiki](#) created by the South Island Prosperity Partnership. Share your ideas for our economic recovery; this is a great collaborative effort.

The District continues to advance capital projects funded by capital reserves and gas tax revenue. These projects include Lands End / Chalet Road watermain replacement and Scoter Trail north. Even though the Municipal Hall is closed, building permits continue to be processed and March/April 2021 numbers are on par with 2020 figures.

Community

If you don't already have a Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) card, it's not too late! Visit [VIRL Get-a-Card](#) Online registration is available and within 24 hours, you will have access to a suite of digital resources that are sure to meet some of your educational and entertainment needs. You will find a listing of the many eResources offered [here](#)

BC Provincial Parks will be reopening for day use only on Thursday May 14th; this includes ~~LAU, WELNEW~~/John Dean Park. This will be welcome news for many of you. We are fortunate to have this great park right in our community.

The Panorama Recreation Centre remains closed; however, in response to the BC Restart Plan, groundwork is now underway to prepare for the reopening of some recreational services and programs, including the modification of summer camps. We expect to have more information to share with you in the next few weeks.

We recognize that there is a lot of interest in reopening the pickleball and tennis courts at Wain Park; staff in the Emergency Operations Centre have this on their radar and we plan to re-open the facilities with establishing safety protocols on Tuesday May 19th.

As we approach the May long weekend, we wish you well and acknowledge that we are fortunate to live where we do. In the words of Minister Adrian Dix, "the best place to be in BC is where you live."

Patience is the word Dr. Henry focussed on earlier this week. This continues to be a challenging time for everyone; an extra dose of patience is going to be required by all of us.

Be kind, Be calm, Be safe

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