



March 25, 2020

Good afternoon, I am Barb Shaw and I am the Reeve of Wollaston Township.

We are in the midst of a crisis that is frightening, overwhelming and will result in many changes to life as we know it.

On behalf of Council: Lynn, Darlene, Tim and Jay – I want to let you know that we are aware of the weight of the situation and we are taking our roles more seriously than ever before.

Since we knew there was a risk of COVID-19 in our Country, we started considering changes at the Municipality and by the time we knew there was a risk, here in our community – we were taking necessary steps to protect our staff, our frontline workers and all of our stakeholders.

Information changes on a daily basis, and we gather what we can from trusted sources, to share with you.

But then it is up to you – each of you, individually and collectively to follow the recommendations.

If you are using physical distancing as a strategy – use more.

If you have returned from travel – you must practice isolation.

That means staying home – in one home. Not going to the shops. Not going for a walk off your property and not going to the LCBO or the Post Office. This also means that you don't go for water at the Municipal tap.

For seasonal residents who are arriving in the community to weather the storm – we are asking that you practice social isolation for 14 days.

For all stakeholders – if you have new members joining your households – **the same 14-day isolation needs to apply.**

These are drastic measures, but we already live with extremely stressed, limited resources when it comes to our rural healthcare system.

Taking these steps will protect the frontline workers across the community who continue to be ready to serve.

Every time you make an exception and break these rules it is more likely that we will face exponential loss of life. It is that serious.

Our Township will continue to provide updates on Facebook and our Municipal Website – wollaston.ca. Now would be a good time to develop communication channels in the community whereby those with online access can call those without. This is a great way to help in this difficult time. This will become a survival strategy in the weeks ahead.

We do not have time to chase comments or answer questions on other social sites. Information is here and on our website. Come here to get it and then share it.

There is no guide for navigating this crisis and those in political positions – at all levels of government are facing an unbelievable amount of stress right now – to make the best decisions, to work within our legal and legislative frameworks and inevitably, to save lives. Because that, above all else, right now, is the focus.

I understand that you are scared. I am also scared and I try each day to find hope in the midst of the grief that we are collectively feeling.

I want to thank those who are walking into this storm with courage – the healthcare workers, the emergency personnel, retail workers, those who will keep giving us a chance.

I also want to thank our staff for being responsive. We are working to keep them safe by requiring a high level of distancing – which is why the office is closed – and we are starting to prepare for them to work from their homes.

Council will be meeting in the next couple of days – using newly approved technological provisions – and we will only be dealing with urgent matters that will keep our Township operational.

As our financial and staffing resources are stretched, we will update you on necessary service level changes.

I want to also thank Reeves and Mayors and Warden Rick Phillips for being so supportive, for answering my questions and for providing moral and professional support during this time. This is a time to govern with humility and to seek support and I will continue to do that.

And finally, to those in the community who have reached out – to offer support – to offer to be of service – I am grateful for your willingness to engage – to reach out and to be kind.

And that's what will get us through the tough days, weeks and months ahead – kindness.

I will try to answer some of your questions now – if I have missed your question, I will post a response after this broadcast.

I want you to know that your Municipal Staff, volunteers, our Community Emergency Management Coordinators and your Council are doing everything they can to ensure that our community makes it through this unimaginable crisis.

Thank you.