

Town Crier, April 18, 2020

Stratford Town Crier

Public Information, Notices and Meeting Schedules

FLUSHING OF FIRE HYDRANTS

Beginning April 20, 2020, and continuing for approximately five weeks, flushing of fire hydrants will take place within the City of Stratford. Customers could experience some discoloured water. Water quality is not affected by this colouration. Discoloured water will clear, but before doing laundry, please check to see that water has cleared. If you have any questions, please call the City Water Division at 519-271-0250, ext. 281 during business hours.

HELP DO LOCAL GOOD SITE LAUNCHED

The City of Stratford has partnered with the United Way Perth-Huron on a “caremongering” initiative to bring those who have been most affected by COVID-19 together with those who are willing to lend a hand.

A new website has been launched at <http://helpdolocalgood.ca/> to provide information on how to help, and how to receive help.

There is a link on the site to donate to an Urgent Needs Fund that has been established to support to individuals and organizations who need assistance coping with the fallout from the COVID-19 outbreak.

The site also has a link to volunteer information for those who are able to contribute their time and energy to helping others in the community. For those who need help, the site provides links to community resources, including the 211 community information line.

And an associated Facebook group called Huron-Perth Covid 19 Resource Group - Help is Close to Home has been set up to provide information and support for people helping people during these challenging times. Those who do not use Facebook but want to help can contact reception@perthhuron.unitedway.ca or call 519-271-7730 to leave a phone number and briefly describe how and where you can help.

COVID-19 UPDATE – INITIATIVES TO ASSIST RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

At the April 1, 2020, Special Council meeting, Council approved the following initiatives to provide for the immediate relief and flexibility of residents and businesses in the City of Stratford:

- Waive penalty and interest related to the April 9th property tax installment due-date and stop all progressive collection activities until August 30, 2020,
- Waive penalties, interest, late payment charges and other fees related to water and sewer billing and suspend all progressive collection activities until August 30, 2020,
- Suspend any water meter disconnections until August 30, 2020,
- Suspend the transfer of overdue water accounts to the property tax account to assist landlords,
- Provide free parking until May 31, 2020 or the commencement of the Festival Theatre season,
- Waive interest on any general invoices from the City until May 31, 2020,
- Suspend the non-sufficient fund administration fee for returned payments until May 31, 2020,
- Provide credits or refunds for cancelled city-run community programs and services,
- Provide free transit until August 30, 2020.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR CITIZENS, BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY COVID-19

For many people, the COVID-19 pandemic has created feelings of stress, anxiety, uncertainty and fear, and the City of Stratford would like to highlight some of the mental health supports available to our community.

The City of Stratford Social Services Department works in partnership with Family Services Perth-Huron to make a variety of counselling services available to its clients, including support for mental health and wellness. Information about those services is available at <http://familyservicesperth-huron.ca/>

For local business owners and entrepreneurs hit hard by COVID-19, help is available through investStratford, the Perth Community Futures Development Corporation and the Stratford Perth Community Foundation, and also made possible through financial donations from Orr Insurance and Hyde Construction. Those partners have funded a project with the United Way Perth Huron to connect local entrepreneurs to the team at Family Services Perth-Huron, who will provide mental health and wellness support and counselling to businesses in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County.

Referrals to the program are made through the mentorship teams at both the Stratford-Perth Centre for Business (<https://www.stratfordperthbusiness.ca>), and Perth Community Futures (<https://www.perthcfdc.ca>).

The United Way Perth-Huron and the Stratford & Perth County Community Foundation are also providing support and services to individuals, organizations and families affected by COVID-19. Information is available at <http://perthhuron.unitedway.ca> and <https://spccf.ca/>

Choices for Change remains open but has moved to providing services via phone or video conference. New referrals are being taken and those interested can call 1-877-218-0077 to speak to someone and make an appointment. The Addiction Medicine Clinics with Dr. Datema are open but the Huron clinic has been temporarily moved to Monday and Thursday in Stratford.

The CMHA–Huron-Perth after-hours response line continues to be available at 519-274-2848 or Toll-Free: 1-888-875-2944, 0 for reception.

The mental health services contact number for Huron Perth Health Care Alliance is 519-272-8210 Ext. 2205. Their office hours are Monday-Friday 8:30-3:30 hours.

Huron-Perth Centre for Children and Youth - remains open for business via phone during regular business hours, Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm. For Services contact any one of the offices:

CLINTON OFFICE
Phone 519-482-3931
Text 719-3134

STRATFORD OFFICE
Phone 519-273-3373
Text 719-2350

LISTOWEL OFFICE
Phone 519-291-1088
Text 719-3766

Huron Perth Helpline & Crisis Response Team – for 24/7 Service - Call the helpline 1-888-829-7484 for immediate mental health and/or addiction support.

Other Service Providers that offer Mental Health & Addiction Services:

Family Health Teams & Community Health Centres – Providing mental health services by phone. This includes mental health counselors, physicians, and nurses. Please contact your local primary care clinic for information between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

School-based Services – these services are provided by a number of community partners remain available to meet the needs of students and their families by phone as per usual. Each School maintains a listing of the services available to their students.

Family Services Perth-Huron – open for counselling and supports by phone. Call 519-273-1020 or 1-800-268-0903. Please visit their website www.familyservicesperth-huron.ca for available resources.

Optimism Place (Perth) – “Open & Operational” – for all services, please contact 519-271-5550.

And all residents can access support through the Province of Ontario's mental health supports including:

- **ConnexOntario:** Adults and frontline workers who are dealing with the realities of COVID-19 can call ConnexOntario at 1-866-531-2600 for mental health, addictions and problem gambling support.
- **BounceBack:** A free, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) program that provides guided mental health self-help supports for adults and youth 15+. Call 1-866-345-0224.
- **Kids Help Phone:** Children and youth 18 and under who need to talk to someone about their mental health can call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868, for 24/7 virtual, phone and text support.
- **Good2Talk:** A phone and texting service that provides confidential support to post-secondary students. Call 1-866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868.

BAG TAG DELIVERY DETAILS

Stratford residents who would like to have garbage bag tags delivered to their home can do so by calling City Hall at 519-271-0250 Ext 237 to place an order.

Please note:

- Minimum order is 3 tags (at regular rate of \$3.50/tag)
- Payment is by credit card only
- Tags will be delivered to your home by the next business day

Bag tags are still available to purchase at some local grocery stores and other retail outlets in Stratford. For a complete list visit the City's website.

ALL OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AMENITIES CLOSED

Last week, the Province of Ontario extended its Emergency Declaration to close all outdoor recreational amenities as a means of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

That means all playgrounds, sports fields, basketball and tennis courts, off-leash dog parks, benches, skate parks, picnic areas, outdoor community gardens, park shelters, outdoor exercise equipment, condo parks and gardens, and other outdoor recreational amenities are closed.

Green spaces in parks, trails and river areas remain open for walkthrough access, but individuals must maintain a safe distance of at least two metres apart from others while in these areas.

For everyone's safety, we encourage all residents to follow the directions of the Emergency Order.

Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, punishments for individuals who do not comply with the Emergency Order include a maximum fine of \$100,000 and a jail term of up to one year.

The Stratford Police Service is responsible for enforcing the Emergency Order, and has increased the number of officers on patrol in the community.

If you have any concerns, please contact the Stratford Police Service at 519-271-4141.

CITY FACILITIES – HOW THEY'RE IMPACTED BY COVID-19

As part of our ongoing efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, and in keeping with the Province of Ontario's declaration of a State of Emergency, the City of Stratford has closed its administrative buildings to the public, until further notice. **The City will continue to provide services to the community, including Social Services to our clients in Stratford, Perth County and St. Marys.**

Facilities that are **closed** to the Public:

- City Hall
- City Hall Annex
- Cemetery Office
- Stratford Municipal Airport Office
- Stratford Fire Hall Offices
- Festival Hydro
- Stratford Tourism Alliance (Visit Stratford)
- Invest Stratford
- Stratford Perth Centre for Business
- Stratford Public Library
- All daycares and camps, including:
 - Anne Hathaway Daycare
 - March Break Daycamps
- All recreation facilities, including:
 - Stratford Rotary Complex (including arenas, walking track, community halls and meeting rooms);
 - Burnside Agriplex;
 - Dufferin Arena;
 - Allman Arena
 - Playgrounds, all-wheels skatepark
- Transit Shelters

Facilities that are **open** to the Public

- Exterior washrooms at City Hall
- Stratford Landfill (Open weekdays for garbage drop-off during regular hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will remain closed on weekends. Payment for garbage dropoff will be contactless, by credit or debit only. Cash will not be accepted)

MEETINGS, PROGRAMS, EVENTS – HOW THEY'RE IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Meetings, programs and events that have been CANCELLED until further notice

- Committee Meetings;
- Sub-committee meetings;
- Advisory Committee meetings;
- Public meetings, open houses, and public consultations (including Municipal Accommodation Tax);
- Stratford Lakeside Active Adults Association (SLAAA) programming;
- Swan Parade (April 5);
- Dairy XPO;
- Invest Stratford International Women's Day event;
- Farmers Market;
- Stratfords of the World Reunion, Ontario (postponed to 2021).

For updates, please visit our website at www.stratford.ca, email clerks@stratford.ca, or call 519-271-0250 during business hours.

GREEN BINS

The City of Stratford's green bin collection began the **week of April 6th, on your regular garbage day**. This is a weekly collection. Clearly marked compostable plastic bags, paper bags or newspaper can be used as liners.



Telephone: 519-271-0250 www.stratford.ca TTY: 519-271-5241