

March 23, 2020

For Immediate Release

COVID-19 Media Update

COVID-19 Update: Corporation of the County of Elgin

Warden Declares State of Emergency for Elgin County – March 21, 2020

On Saturday, March 21, 2020, Warden Dave Mennill declared a state of emergency for the County of Elgin. “I felt that it was prudent to declare a state of emergency now, while we are still in the early stages of COVID-19. Declaring a state of emergency is not done to incite panic, but to demonstrate how necessary meaningful action by everyone is,” said Warden Mennill.

The City of St. Thomas, County of Elgin and all local municipalities within Elgin have all declared a state of emergency, an action Warden Mennill calls “a coordinated regional response” to COVID-19. “Now, more than ever, all residents must follow public health direction – we need to continue to work together to reduce the spread of this virus” said Warden Dave Mennill.

“As the situation develops, residents can expect that our services and operations will continue to adjust according to the latest recommendations of health authorities. This is an unprecedented time and I’m pleased we are all working together -with each other [municipalities], with our staff and with the community.”

Warden calls Special Meeting of County Council – March 24, 2020

A Special Meeting of Elgin County Council has been called for 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. At this meeting, Council will consider making temporary changes to their Procedural By-law, or rules for their Council meetings, including consideration for electronic or virtual meetings.

Council will also review a draft COVID-19 Delegation By-law that would allow Council to temporarily delegate its authority if it is unable to hold a meeting. It is anticipated that Council will also receive an COVID-19 update from the Chief Administrative Officer.

While it is anticipated that the majority of Council members will conduct the Special Meeting by teleconference, the Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk will be in the Council Chambers and the Chambers will be open to members of the public. Attendees will be required to adhere to social distancing guidelines and will be pre-screened upon entry to protect staff and other members of the public.

County Facilities and Services update – As of March 23, 2020

The County website now has a dedicated COVID-19 landing page with up-to-date messages pertaining to closures, contact information for public health agencies, and contact information for other essential government services.

Residents are encouraged to keep in touch!

County residents and visitors can find information regarding service availability in the following ways:

- Visit our website: www.elgincounty.ca
- Call us: 519-631-1460
- Email us: info@elgin.ca

Key Messages from Warden Dave Mennill

Long Term Care – Visitor Restrictions

Restrictions are currently in place at our Long-Term Care Homes which only permits essential visitors to have access. “We have taken extra measures to try to keep our residents as connected as possible with their families, such as purchasing additional phones and other technologies. Our Homes staff, who often treat residents like members of their own family, are doing a remarkable job elevating the spirits of those who are missing their loved ones,” said Warden Mennill.

Next Steps & Thanks to Public Health

Residents are reminded that this is an evolving situation and information is changing rapidly.

Southwestern Public Health is leading the way in the protection and promotion of our community’s health and the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 is available on their website www.swpublichealth.ca. Elgin County continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely, taking direction from the Provincial and Federal public health officials and our Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Joyce Lock. We want to do everything we possibly can to minimize the impact of COVID-19 in Elgin County.

The County of Elgin is doing its part to support Southwestern Public Health’s response in a coordinated manner. The County thanks residents for their patience and cooperation during these uncertain times and continues to ask residents to follow the guidelines set out by the Ontario Ministry of Health.

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