

## CHIEF AND COUNCIL UPDATE

Chief Philip Franks

The Covid-19 pandemic picture is not getting better. Each day in Ontario alone there are approximately 400 cases reported. Half of the 4,300 cases are from the Greater Toronto area, but each health unit in Ontario reports new cases each day. The province put more measures into place on the weekend expanding the list of businesses that are not essential. Construction sites not building essential projects are one example.

Wahta is taking many examples from the health officials in the province. To this end the playground equipment and tennis court are off limits and have been taped off. Access to the community garden will also be restricted for the time being. We are facing at least another two months of social distancing even with the precautions that are being taken.

Wahta Council is urging all non-essential businesses to close so that we can help stop the spread of the virus, not only in our community, but for the general public as well. The sooner the population stops spreading the virus, the sooner people will not have to be sheltered in their homes. Those who remain open will be doing so at their own risk. *Guidelines class essential businesses as those that primarily sell food, beverages and consumer products necessary to maintain households and businesses including supermarkets and grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants (take-out, drive-through and delivery service only).*

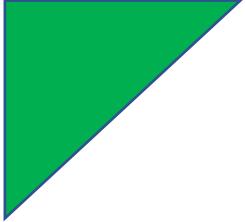
Businesses that do remain open must adhere to precautionary measures including installing plexiglass screens to protect their employees, limiting customers to no more than two at a time in the premises, ensuring waiting customers are spread out, and removing any seating or benches that may be outside the premises. They should also provide hand sanitization at the entry, clean any area a customer has touched after each purchase is done, including counter tops and debit machines. Employees should be washing their hands often after handling money. Latex gloves are not recommended, as they offer a false sense of security and continue to spread the virus from one place to another. If using these, understand the proper way of removing the gloves and disposing of them. Employees should be provided safety guidelines regarding hygiene, washing often, and not touching the face.

On the issue of cottage owners coming to the area we will further discuss this during the week. The province has told everyone to stay in place at their primary residences. We need to support that message for the time being. The emergency control group will be making recommendations for Council.

For the next while there will be more deaths and increased cases of the Covid-19 virus. There is no cure for it and no vaccine. The only way to deal with it is to keep practicing physical distancing, which is staying at least two meters (six feet) from each other.

In other community news, the projects we had planned for community structures will be delayed as of the latest release of essential businesses. The new duplexes that were planned are on hold as the supplier of the buildings has had to close for the time being and cannot construct the buildings. As well, the contractor hired to put a new roof on the administration building will not be able to proceed in April, as the job is not considered essential.

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COVID-19  
Wahta Mohawks  
**Update from the Chief**  
**April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Regarding the Additions to Reserves process to implement the land claim settlement, we will see some delays with regard to the environmental assessment work to be done on the lands where hunt camps were located. The team for the ATR process meets every other month by telephone as we work toward completing all the details involved in having the land put back to reserve status.

The staff doing daily check ins with people continue their work. I want to thank everyone for the suggestions and voicing of their concerns during these calls. This information is necessary to continue to serve members during this time of pandemic.

The Emergency Control Group meeting minutes will be going to Council for further discussions on the current issues and I will provide another update this week.

Niawen for your consideration.

**Chief Philip Franks**