



MAYOR'S REPORT

JANUARY 11, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING

COVID-19 UPDATE

Good evening and welcome to our virtual council meeting.

Joining me in the council chambers tonight are our CAO Scott Luey, Clerk Amber LaPointe, Deputy Clerk Charlotte Madden, and a member of Wee Stream who is live streaming this meeting for us.

Our city councillors and various city directors are each attending from home.

As you are aware, we are currently in the lockdown stage of the Province of Ontario's Response Framework in dealing with COVID-19. Unfortunately, number of cases of COVID-19 across the province continue to rise and we are expecting to hear from the Premier tomorrow about possible further restrictions.

In Port Colborne specifically, our numbers remain low and that is due to the hard work each and every one of you are putting forth.

We emphasize the need for social distancing, hand washing and face coverings where social distancing can't be maintained or where required by the Region's face covering by-law.

We ask that you continue to support our local businesses through these tough lockdown times.

Last Thursday I met virtually with the other Niagara Mayors and Regional Chair Bradley. We have sent a letter to Premier Ford which I would like to read to you this evening.

Dear Premier Ford,

At a recent virtual meeting, Niagara's 12 mayors and the Regional Chair met to discuss the pressing challenges facing the community due to the second wave of COVID-19.

With the significant increase of COVID-19 cases, an alarming rise in the number of pandemic-related deaths, and the continued impact of outbreaks in more than 50 per cent of Niagara's long-term care homes, the consensus of the heads of council was that Niagara is at a critical point.

Along with a number of initiatives being undertaken at the local level, Niagara's municipal leaders agreed to urge the Provincial Government to take action in the following areas:

1. Compared to many other areas of the Province, Niagara appears to be falling far behind in terms of vaccine distribution. To date, there has been no COVID-19 vaccines distributed in our community. Niagara's municipal leaders respectfully call on the province to ensure our front-line health care workers and residents have equal and timely access to vaccines as compared to other areas of Ontario.
2. As they have indispensable local knowledge of their communities, Niagara urges the province to consider increasing the role municipalities and local Public Health units play in the vaccine distribution strategy. Moreover, we ask the province to more openly share its plans regarding vaccine distribution to ensure local residents have the information they require.
3. As they play a critical role maintaining the health of our communities, we respectfully request that paramedics across the province be added to the list of priority healthcare staff to receive the vaccination.

As I am certain you are aware, Niagara's population is older than the provincial average, with more than 1 in 5 residents being over the age of 65. This means that per capita more of our residents are highly susceptible and vulnerable to this deadly virus than compared to the rest of Ontario.

Ensuring the expedited delivery and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine is absolutely critical to protect those individuals. On behalf of the residents and businesses of Niagara, we respectfully request prompt consideration of these crucial requests.

Respectfully submitted, 12 Niagara Mayors and Regional Chair Bradley

Closing

We will continue to work together and remain vigilant in fighting the COVID-19 virus.

Our number one priority is the health and safety of our staff and citizens.

Please stay safe and be kind.