



## **City Council News** March 25, 2020

### **For now: let's focus on stopping the spread**

I'm sure you have lots of questions, just like everyone else. Unfortunately, this situation is evolving so quickly it's often hard to get clear, definitive answers to many of the questions people have about this pandemic and its long and short term social and economic implications.

As a local government, we have questions too. But, for now we're focused on making every effort to adhere to public health orders and applying lessons learned from other jurisdictions. In short, we're focused on taking every measure necessary to stop the spread of this virus – and that should be your primary focus too.

Even if you believe that the government is over-reacting, or that you are immune, or that this is only a slightly stronger flu bug, you owe it to your family, your neighbours, and your community to take the recommended steps to minimize the spread of this particular virus (over 6000 people have died of it in Italy alone).

The steps needed to stop the spread are quite straightforward: wash your hands, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue, maintain your distance from others, sanitize your home and workplace, stay in your home as much as possible, self-isolate if you've travelled or potentially been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID 19, and, if you experience flu-like symptoms, isolate yourself immediately and contact Northern Health's COVID helpline at 1-844-645-7811.

For now, everyone – everyone – needs to focus on stopping the spread and “flattening the curve.”

As a City we have closed all our public amenities, including, most recently, our playgrounds, outdoor courts, the dog park, and the skateboard park. All our public events have been cancelled and we have cancelled all but essential meetings, during which we will follow strict social distancing guidelines. We have deployed our bylaw resources to ensure compliance with the province’s public health orders and recommendations, and to help educate the public about “social distancing” in public spaces, particularly on the Riverfront Trail.

Businesses in Quesnel are in compliance with the current public health orders, with few, if any, exceptions. It’s vitally important to note that as of this writing, BC has not implemented a full closure of non-essential businesses as other jurisdictions have and the City does not have the right to impose that level of restriction. Having said that, the majority of retailers that remain open have instituted their own incremental sanitation measures and have social distancing protocols in place.

One of the questions we are getting at the City is whether we have any confirmed cases in Quesnel and, if so, how many. This information will not be made publicly available by Northern Health. More importantly, this information is not needed.

Confirmed cases of COVID 19 are not the issue, those individuals will be isolated, receive treatment appropriate to their symptoms, and steps will be taken to determine who may have been exposed to them. The real potential threat are individuals who have the virus and are not symptomatic – which could be anyone. These are the individuals most likely to spread the disease and this is why everyone must adhere to the steps we all need to take to stop the spread of this virus.

Yes, we all have questions and answers will be forthcoming as this situation evolves. For now, let’s stay focused on the primary task at hand and do everything we can to stop the spread of this virus.

For more information, visit [www.quesnel.ca/covid-19](http://www.quesnel.ca/covid-19).

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