Welcome
Welcome everyone to this week’s community update, our first of 2021.
In addition to medical officer of health Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang and Vaccine Task Force Chair, Deputy Chief Shirley Hilton, we welcome Jim Moss, Vice President of Workwell at the YMCA of the Three Rivers (Waterloo Region, Guelph and Stratford-Perth). Workwell is a unique new initiative to foster workplace well-being.
Thank you all for being here.

Sick leave benefits
On Wednesday our Region’s Board of Health unanimously passed a motion from Councillor Vrbanovic and Councillor Lorentz to advocate to the Province and the Government of Canada for the need for paid sick time. Further supports are needed to help address the ongoing spread of COVID-19, and other illnesses in the future.
Dr. Wang presented evidence that workplace outbreaks are a major obstacle in slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our community and yet the current provincial and federal sick leave benefits are either unpaid or time restricted, and we feel that’s unacceptable in a pandemic.
Without paid sick benefits people are more likely to go to work when they have symptoms of COVID-19 or should be self-isolating.
Unpaid or limited sick day benefits might not cover recommended self-isolation days, and puts some workers in a difficult financial situation.

This motion adds our voice to numerous other municipalities pressing for better benefits.

Another motion was also tabled by Councillor Strickland for next week’s Special Council meeting calling on the province to take further measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces by:

- Providing access to rapid testing in all workplaces
- Increasing provincial enforcement and spot checks on COVID-19 compliance in workplaces, and
- Provide more resources to the Region of Waterloo to ensure compliance of COVID-19 prevention protocols in workplaces

**Enforcement update**

Today’s enforcement update is from December 28, 2020 to January 6, 2021 and includes actions from our local enforcement partners.

**22 tickets and 6 court summons were issued this past reporting period:**

- City of Cambridge By-Law issued 4 tickets
  - 3 at private residences for gatherings – Total payable $880.00 for each ticket.
  - 1 to the Stag Shop on 561 Hespeler Road for being open as a non essential business during lockdown. $880.00 total payable
SPEAKING NOTES

- City of Kitchener By-Law issued 13 tickets
  - 9 were issued at private residences for gatherings. 5 of these were issued at one residence. This residence has been visited and charged previously. Total payable is $880.00 each ticket.
  - 4 were issued to businesses. Total payable is $880.00 each ticket
    - East African Café – 2 tickets issued - 1 ticket for failing to comply with a continued order (Customers inside with alcohol service during lockdown, as well as continue to have no customer logs) and 1 ticket for failure to wear face coverings. Total payable $880.00 each ticket. They were previously charged by City of Kitchener in December 2020.
    - Red Rose Spa – 1 ticket for being open as a non essential business during lockdown. Total $880.00
    - Beauty Health Design – 1 ticket for being open as a non essential business during lockdown. Total payable $880.00
- City of Waterloo By-Law issued 2 tickets
  - 2 at private residences for gatherings – Total payable is $880.00 each

- GRT issued 1 ticket for failure to wear a mask Total payable $240.00
- Region of Waterloo By-Law issued 2 tickets at 150 Main Street for failure to wear a mask. Total payable $240.00 each
- Waterloo Region Police Services charged Trinity Bible Chapel for exceeding the capacity limit at a place of worship. Each of the 6 church elders was issued a summons to court and the fine is to be determined by the court.

In addition, yesterday Region of Waterloo By-law Enforcement officers laid charges under the Reopening Ontario Act in connection with an in person gathering at a Church on Lobsinger Line in Woolwich Township.
Nine charges were laid in total. Six individuals and the church corporation itself were charged for hosting a gathering exceeding the indoor limit and two individuals charged with attending.

Region By-law officers, in partnership with Waterloo Regional Police Service, responded to complaints by visiting the place of worship on Sunday, January 3. Officers laid the charges based on their observed breaches of the province-wide shutdown restrictions including exceeding indoor gathering limits.

Although we cannot comment specifically about these charges, as they are before the courts, I will say how deeply disappointed I am, in addition to the Mayor of Woolwich and many Regional Councillors and residents who voiced their frustration with this display of civil disobedience.

Regional staff are working within the provincial legislation and are considering all options for next steps.

The rising number of COVID-19 cases, outbreak settings, and hospitalizations in Waterloo Region are very concerning as we will hear from Dr. Wang in a moment.

Most places of worship in our community, across the Province, have shifted to offer online services and spiritual support, and I want to thank the majority of our residents for your cooperation during these unprecedented times.
SPEAKING NOTES

Dr. Wang’s COVID-19 public health update

Deputy Hilton’s Vaccine Task Force update

Special Guest Jim Moss, VP YMCA Three Rivers

I’d like to introduce Jim Moss a friendly community face to give us some more information on how we can all contribute to workplace wellbeing and home life balance during these unprecedented times. Thanks Jim for joining us.