

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Meeting Date: July 19, 2021
Report Code: CM-21-016
Subject: City Actions and Decisions Implemented Re: COVID-19
from May 15, 2021 – July 16, 2021

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-21-016 respecting City Actions and Decisions Implemented Re: COVID-19 from May 15, 2021 – July 16, 2021, City Council directs staff to bring forward a by-law to amend the City's Sign By-law to allow for signage in response to an emergency as described in the report.

Highlights:

- Staff have remained committed to providing the highest level of service for the residents and businesses of Owen Sound
- Senior Leadership continues to monitor and meet daily to manage COVID related decisions and announcements from the Province
- The Province has moved from Step 2 to Step 3 in the Provincial reopening framework

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Background:

All decisions and actions made by Council and staff are fundamentally anchored to the principle of – Safety First.

This report focuses on the actions and information from May 15, 2021, to July 16, 2021

Analysis:

The Province announced that on July 16 all areas of the province would be entering Step 3 of the Roadmap to Reopening. The link to the Provincial website can be found [here](#) and has an "At-A-Glance" Section that highlights Step 3. Step 3 required that Vaccination rate plus key public health and health care indicators required 70-80 per cent of adults with one dose and 25 per cent fully vaccinated.

Staff continue to monitor and meet bi-weekly and assess the situation closely, and work diligently with the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit throughout the Provincial Roadmap to Reopening.

Clerk's Services

Since City Hall has re-opened, the Clerk's Division has issued 60 marriage licences and performed 22 civil ceremonies. The RFP for the election service provider has been issued and the fees and charges review is complete with new fees in effect July 1, 2021. All City staff have been onboarded onto the new electronic records management system called "SHARE" with work continuing "behind the scenes" to complete the project.

By-law Enforcement

For By-law Enforcement, during Q2 there were 366 investigations initiated and 346 of them have been resolved with an average compliance rate of 5 days. The regulatory by-law that saw the most complaints in Q2 was the Yard Maintenance By-law which has had 83 investigations.

Planning & Heritage

Under the provincial restrictions in 2021, planning timelines have remained in effect and the Planning & Heritage Division has worked to continue to process applications.

Interest in the City's CIP Programs has been strong with staff delegated approval of 10 grants including two (2) accessibility improvement grant applications, five (5) façade and structural improvement grant applications, and three (3) start-up space leasehold improvement grant applications.

The accessibility improvement grants approved are assisting property owners within the City's River District with the installation of two (2) universally accessible washrooms that will better serve the needs of all users. Similarly, the approved start-up space leasehold improvement grants have assisted three (3) new start-up companies to locate within previously vacant storefronts within the Downtown.

These 10 projects have a total combined value of \$154,123. The grant portion provided by the City is estimated to be \$47,723.65.

The Planning & Heritage Division has also approved four (4) sidewalk patios within the Downtown under the authority of staff-delegated approval as well as 12 temporary patios located on private property throughout the City.

Parks & Cemetery

The Harrison Park Family Campground resumed operations July 11 at 70 per cent COVID capacity. Demand for camping remains strong, with booking revenues for the season totaling \$198,000 to July 6, surpassing the revenue generated by the entire 2020 camping season by \$18,000 to date.

The Mile Drive asphalt resurfacing project was completed on June 22. The approved capital project aligns with the recommendations of the City's Recreation Trails Master Plan and the MYAP.

After being shut down for the full 2020 outdoor swimming season due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Harrison Park Pool opened to the public on June 23. Step 3 changes have increased the permitted capacity of the pool to 49 swimmers.

The new \$1 corn machines have been installed at the Bird area in Harrison Park.

Parks facilities have been made available to the community again, including the Community Hall at Harrison Park and the Kelso Beach amphitheater that are both being rented to day camp operators.

The playground replacement at Duncan McLellan Park was completed on June 29 and opened to the public. The play equipment was designed to meet the accessible standard detailed in Annex H of the CSA Standard for Play equipment, satisfying the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP).

Parks staff completed the beautification program in the River District, installing flowers and banners. New this year is the implementation of a new

electric watering system on the City's flower watering truck. This unit reduces noise and carbon emissions significantly.

Sportsfields and ball diamonds are open to the public as a part of Stage 2 re-opening.

City Parks have remained open with normal late spring and early summer maintenance activities are ongoing. All seasonal washrooms are now open in parks.

Cemetery staff excavated and poured 18 concrete monument foundations in advance of new monuments being delivered by suppliers. Facilities staff support the foundation program by coordinating with Cemetery staff to construct each of the custom dimension forms ahead of the installation date.

Building

On June 11 restrictions impacting certain construction types were lifted.

The building division continues to work safely undertaking inspections with precautions.

The Building Division continues to support the City's Development Team in the pre-consultation and site plan stages of applications.

The construction industry in Owen Sound continues to be strong.

Construction has started on the new restaurant buildings in the Heritage Grove development, Staff has also received tenant fit-up permit applications for Burger King and Fire House Subs. Construction at Southbridge and Owen Sound Gardens continues. Construction of a new veterinary clinic is underway on 16th Avenue East (Behind Canadian Tire). OSMNPHC's ODAWA building has completed the roof construction and is now weathered-in to allow for interior work to continue. New permits for renovations and decks continue to be received.

The Building Division has now successfully recruited a temporary contract inspector. This was delayed until pandemic restrictions had lifted and this individual will start work in July.

Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre and Bayshore Community Centre

Facility staff undertook a move of the Vaccination Hub from the Bayshore to Rec Centre at the end of April/Beginning of May. Staff also moved the facility

from the JMRRC to Owen Sound District Secondary School in early July. The City is tracking staff time to support the vaccination hub and the County of Grey is committed to offsetting these costs.

Bayshore and Rec Centre staff have been redeployed to Parks and Facility Maintenance and have been supporting extra projects and work in these areas. The staff has been appreciated by these other divisions and the ability for cross divisions to work together has been a positive experience taken away from the pandemic.

The Bayshore Roof Restoration capital project was completed as well as the accessible handrail project. Replaced damaged and aged ceiling tiles in dressing room hallway areas have been replaced as well as a large section of the lobby floor tile was removed and the area reinforced and repaired.

The Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre opened for a hockey camp the week of July 12 and will reopen in Step 3 July 19. Staff are working with the user groups and look forward to both facilities being busy with users in the Provincial Stage 3 reopening.

Working with Grey Bruce Health and Vaccination Hubs

The Grey Bruce Health Unit has relocated its Vaccination Hub from the JMRRC to operate at Owen Sound District Secondary School (OSDSS). The portable signs that were used at the JMRRC and the Bayshore to direct vaccine recipients at the site entrances are proposed to be relocated and used at OSDSS. The JMRRC and the Bayshore are both City-owned facilities and are zoned 'Open Space' (OS) in the City's Zoning By-law (2010-078, as amended). The City's Sign By-law (2014-001) permits accessory portable signs for Community Events, being events in a City facility, in the OS zone. OSDSS is not a City-facility and is zoned 'Institutional' (I). A portable sign is not permitted as accessory to the vaccination hub when located in the school, as-of-right. This prohibition has created a need for exemption from the provisions of the Sign By-law. On this basis, Staff are proposing that City Council amend the City's Sign By-law to include language around provisions for exemptions for sign placement during an emergency. It is recommended that the Sign By-law be amended to include the following under Part V of the By-law:

33. The requirements of this by-law shall not apply to prevent the placement of any type of sign that directly or indirectly supports public health and safety where:

- a. the City Manager in consultation with the Mayor believes a matter:
 - i. is of an urgent or time-sensitive nature; or
 - ii. could affect the health or well-being of the residents of the City; or
- b. a state of emergency is declared.

In accordance with the City's Notice By-law, a notice was posted on the City's website on Thursday, July 8, being at least 10 days in advance of this meeting of Council.

Council is requested to approve a By-law to amend the Sign By-law to allow the temporary signage for the vaccination hub.

Community Development & Marketing

The Community Development & Marketing Division has continued to pivot and adapt to the various scenarios that COVID has presented. In mid-July, the River District Board of Management launched the #RiverDistrictSightsofSummer, a physically distanced social media engagement initiative that encourages residents and visitors to highlight their favourite locations and activities in the River District.

To complement the River District branding, new banners, consistent with the guidelines have been installed throughout the River District. Along with participating in regular calls with the Grey County Economic Development working group, staff continue to be involved and participate in the Local Immigration Partnership initiative, a joint venture between municipalities in Grey and Bruce to address newcomer integration and employment needs in the region.

Tourism

The Visitor Centre at 1155 1st Avenue West was permitted to open to the public as part of Step One in the Province's Roadmap to Reopen. The Visitor Centre is stocked with new Owen Sound merchandise that is available in-store or online. The Visitor Centre also carries information about City programs, local businesses, art galleries, and museums.

The Summer Sound Outlook magazine was launched, featuring articles on the River District, Patio's, The Salmon Tour, and some of Owen Sound's unsung green spaces that residents and tourists can visit.

Events & Activation

The City held successful virtual Canada Day Celebrations and a live fireworks show. TD Harbour Nights began on Sunday, July 11 while Music at the Market kicked off on Thursday, July 15. Rogers TV Grey County will be airing all TD Harbour Nights concerts on local channel 53. This will assist in providing greater access to members of the public who may not be able to attend the live concerts or may not feel comfortable in doing so. All activities were carried out in consultation with the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit.

Facility Booking and Programs

Outdoor recreation for minor sports groups has resumed with restrictions in place. Parks staff worked diligently throughout the closure period to ensure that fields were ready for public use upon restrictions being lifted. Owen Sound Minor Soccer resumed on-field use July 5.

Ice rentals at the Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre have resumed for the provision of day camp/care services under Step two of the Provincial Restrictions. Staff has liaised with ice user groups to maximize facility usage while operating within Public Health guidelines. Additionally, staff continues to work closely with event organizers for the Salmon Spectacular, Summerfolk, and other key-city events to navigate the ongoing changes brought on by the Provincial restrictions.

Financial Implications:

There will be financial implications for the corporation from the COVID-19 pandemic. With no indication of the duration or the full extent of mitigation actions that may be required, the financial implications are continually being monitored. Staff report [CR-21-070](#) "Mid-Year Financial Update and COVID Forecast 2021" highlighted the financial aspects. The deficit is driven mostly by revenue shortfalls rather than increased costs.

Communication Strategy:

Update reports in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be submitted to Council bi-monthly. It is anticipated that these reports specific to the COVID-19 pandemic will end in November, 2021.

The City media release respecting Step 3 attached to this report highlighted for the public changes to city services relating to step 3.

Consultation:

Senior Leadership Team

CEMC

Health & Safety Coordinator

Attachments:

1. Media release regarding Step 3

Recommended by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Tim Simmonds, City Manager at tsimmonds@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1210.