



# Press Release

## March 26, 2020

To the Community of Southgate:

I want to personally reach out to each of you on behalf of the Council and staff for the Township of Southgate to inform of the impact of COVID-19 on our Community.

This is a very challenging time for all of us. In the last 14 days we have seen increased Federal and Provincial restrictions and rules imposed on each of us, that will speed up the process to flatten the curve of the virus spread in time. Our lives have been changed, but we all must be patient and do our part. We will get through this, but please do everything we are told to stop the spread of COVID-19. We have information on our website under COVID-19 or you can contact the Health Unit for support. The health of our citizens and our community is of the utmost importance.

Further to the press release from the Township of Southgate on March 16, 2020, we want to provide another update on what the Township is doing and how the municipal services are operating during the COVID-19 Pandemic. As part of this messaging release we have provided an update on the status of future Southgate Council meetings, present municipal operations and rescheduling information for tenders and the tax sale process.

We are at the ready today, to support you and deliver the essential services we all require as a community. We also need to be prepared and ready when the Provincial Government lifts their Emergency Declaration to get back to work and our regular way of life. It may take a while, but patience and working together with social distancing and precautions will get us there in time.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely  
Mayor John Woodbury  
Township of Southgate

## **Administration Business Continuity**

To maintain social distancing and minimize the spread of the virus, the Southgate Administration Office has been closed to the public until Provincial COVID-19 Emergency Declaration has been lifted. Staff continue to work through today's challenges, provide customer service, maintain essential services, support a healthy community and ensure public safety. The best way to reach staff if your call is not answered is to leave a voicemail or email. Please be patient when calling in as phone lines are experiencing high traffic volumes. We will respond back to you as soon as we can. Measures have been put in place to ensure social distancing of our staff and include providing the ability for staff to work from home and remotely, both from virtual settings and in office shift rotations to maintain business continuity. Incoming mail, payments and tenders can still be dropped off at the Municipal Office at Hopeville, between the front doors during our regular office hours (Monday to Friday 8:30am-4:00pm) and will be collected by staff and processed following 72 hours of isolation to protect our employees. Please continue to monitor our website COVID-19 information page for updates and communication from staff.

## **Future Council Meetings**

A Special Council meeting has been called and will be held on April 1, 2020 at 9:00 AM for the purposes of amending the Procedural By-law to allow for electronic participation of Council members during a declared emergency as a result of Bill 187 - the Municipal Emergency Act, 2020 which was passed by the Provincial Government on March 19, 2020. This Special Council meeting is only being held for the purposes of amending the Procedural By-law, and no other information will be discussed, or decisions made during this meeting.

A second Special Council meeting has been called and scheduled for April 8, 2020 at 9:00 AM to address the agenda items that were included on the March 18, 2020 regular meeting of Council that was cancelled at that time. Following both Special Meetings of Council, the regular Council meeting schedule will resume with the next regular meeting being held on April 15, 2020 with a new start time of 9:00 AM.

Council members and staff will be participating in the Council meetings via Conference Call and invite members of the public to listen in on those discussions by calling **1 (647) 497-9373** and entering access code **# 990-730-221**. For public access it is best to wait until the start time of the scheduled meeting to dial in. The Agenda and Minutes for all Council meetings will be published on our website and available for the public to access as per our regular procedures.

With the extra high phone communications both on land lines and cell service through the day, we have been seeing access problems to complete telephone call connections. In anticipation of these challenges and our Council meetings relying on the public telephone systems access, we will have a secondary meeting time published in the agenda for each meeting. If the phone line does not allow us to connect, or a quorum of Council cannot be obtained during the first 15 minutes of the meeting, it will automatically be postponed and will begin at 7:00 PM on the same day. If you have any questions regarding Council meetings please direct them to Lindsey Green, Acting Clerk at [lgreen@southgate.ca](mailto:lgreen@southgate.ca) or by calling 519-923-2110 and leaving a detailed message at extension 230.

## **Property Taxes & other Municipal Invoice Payments**

At this time, the 2020 tax instalment due dates remain unchanged. Staff will be reviewing options with Council to provide relief. At this point in time we will not be adding penalties or interest charges to property taxes or water billings. Once we have the opportunity and the powers to meet with Council to discuss as well as address ratepayer billings issues, a decision will be made that is consistent with other Grey County municipalities.

## **Tax Sales**

The Property Tax Sales scheduled for April 2, 2020 have been cancelled. The Township will restart the process and re-advertise after the Provincial Emergency Declaration has been lifted.

## **Tenders**

Due to the concerns surrounding COVID-19, to ensure the safety of the public as well as Township Staff, we will be delaying the opening of the Lawn Maintenance, Water & Wastewater Rates Study and Hot Mix Paving Tenders until April 9th, 2020 at 1:00PM. This however **DOES NOT CHANGE THE CLOSING DATES** and Tenders must be submitted by the advertised date and time. The Township will accept tender submissions in the drop box at the Municipal Administration Office at 185667 Grey County Road 9, Dundalk, Ontario. If your tender is being delivered by Courier, please instruct them to leave the envelope or parcel in the drop box provided in the front entrance area of the Municipal Office between the business hours of 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

The opening of the Lawn Maintenance, Water & Wastewater Rates Study and Hot Mix Paving Tenders will occur on April 9th, 2020 at 1:00PM. As the Township Administration office remains closed to the public, bidders and members of the public can listen in via a conference call line or watch live video streaming through our "Go To Meeting" link.

If you wish to attend via telephone, please call 1-647-497-9373 and enter access code 866-804-557 or through this "Go To Meeting" link to live access the tender opening process <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/866804557>

## **Fire Department**

The Fire Department is still fully operational and will continue to respond to emergency calls. Anyone who calls 9-1-1 be advised you will be asked a couple of standard screening questions from the operator. Residents are asked to answer these questions truthfully so all responders can take precaution if needed to provide the best service possible.

## **Building Department**

The Building department is continuing to perform all mandatory inspections, using current COVID -19 safety precautions for staff and clients. Please be patient when requesting inspections/permit applications as staff are working separately from remote locations and the process may take a little longer; advanced notification is advised. For building concerns continue to call 519-923-2110 extension 242, or email [cmaltais@southgate.ca](mailto:cmaltais@southgate.ca).

## **Municipal Planning**

The Township's Planning Department is still available for public inquiries during regular office hours of Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm. To contact the planner please use the following number 519-923-2110 ext. 235. With so many individuals working from home the line may be busy. Please be patient. The best way to receive a quick response from the planner is via email at [cstredwick@southgate.ca](mailto:cstredwick@southgate.ca) . The Province of Ontario with its emergency legislation has still not enabled local municipalities to hold public meetings under the Planning Act. Until this is rectified, we are unable to hold any Public Planning Meetings. Until the COVID-19 situation is addressed, the Planner will not be available for any in person meetings.

## **Recreation**

All recreational facilities have been closed and programs cancelled until the Provincial COVID-19 Emergency Declaration has been cancelled. The health and safety of our patrons – especially children – is a top priority for Southgate Parks. We are still seeing social distancing not being adhered to in our playground areas and sports courts in Dundalk. **Effective today we will be closing all Southgate playground areas and sports courts to the public access** and signs will be posted as soon as possible. Parklands and trails are still open for walking and exercise, but we urge you to practice social distancing to protect your family.

## **Library Services & Programs**

Until further notice the library will be closed to the public and all programs are cancelled. Patrons can access e-books and e-audiobooks through Overdrive and the Libby App. Tumblebooks has offered free access to e-books and e-audiobooks until August. All information and links can be found in the e-library section of southgate-library.com. For any questions regarding these resources leave a message at 519-923-3248 or email [lrussell@southgate.ca](mailto:lrussell@southgate.ca). Staff will respond as quickly as possible.

Library books can be returned to the outside book drop. Fines will be waived for items due during this closure.

## **Roads Department**

Roads staff have been cutting trees with social distance practices in place. This work in preparation for the reconstruction of roads in 2020 and 2021. We also have staff patrolling our roads, pavement patching and grading gravel roads as weather conditions permit.

## **Waste Collection**

Waste curbside collection continues to proceed as scheduled. The Dundalk and Egremont Transfer Stations remain open, with the only changes being that payment is not being collected and residents will be invoiced at a later date. For the protection of our staff and social distancing the Reuse Centres at both sites are closed.

## **Water Operations**

Water Operators continue with our daily inspection routines, as well as our daily and weekly drinking water sampling and testing protocols continue to meet the Ministry of Environment Conservation & Parks regulations. The Wastewater collection systems is functioning normally, and treatment plant is in it's annual seasonal turnover condition with influent waters being held in the lagoons. Like our Roads staff, the

Water Operators are each working independently and distancing when it comes to travel, equipment operations and performing their site duties. An important note for the public is we please ask you to only flush toilet paper down the toilet at any time to avoid pipeline blockages on your property and pumps clogging at the treatment plant. Both can be very expensive to you as a property owner and to municipal wastewater operations, which you also pay for as well in your water bill.