

## Regional Councillors Report: June 29/2020

Mayor, members of council, staff and members of the public.

I would like to start by saying that I'm proud of our community and the Region of Niagara residences in helping keep COVID in control so we could move to Stage 2 of getting back to some sense of normalcy. Our public health team is working diligently in getting quick turnaround on tests. Presently we are at a 2-3 turnaround. We had a presentation by 2 gentlemen looking for our support to the province to help create more capacity for COVID testing here in Niagara. This could produce even quicker turnaround for better monitoring of the virus. This was welcomed and supported to be addressed by the Provincial Health Ministry. From a financial side of things the ~~Region~~ Niagara Region has incurred costs through COVID. As council we are working with staff to find cost saving measures to help in easing the extra costs on to the taxpayer.

Last month staff came back with a list of projects that they felt were deemed non-urgent. Council and staff are in discussions to be able to trim up to 40 million on the 2020 budget or to defer these projects into the future. As you know this has its challenges because infrastructure can't be deferred indefinitely. And as we start the process of the 2021 budget we will have some very hard decisions to make with not knowing the full implications of COVID. We were given an update on the status of affordable housing units demand here in Niagara. Presently the Niagara Region owns 2,684 units, housing providers supply 3,659, those on rent supplement equal 1,433 and there is 734 units in new development. And there is a waiting list of 7,178 persons looking for affordable homes. I'm afraid as we start to feel the full effect of COVID in the economy these

numbers will only increase.

An update on our two longterm home rebuilds are for Linhaven, construction starts in March 2021 with a move in of August 2023 and Gilmore Lodge is slated for June 2021 start and completion in Oct of 2023. These projects will both be debentured an amortized over a half life of the facilities. These two new builds will accomodate approx 163 beds per facility.

And lastly the Mayor and myself have been working closely with Public Works staff and our staff, addressing the waste collection, or the lack of service by the contractor. I will let the Mayor give us an update on our strategies moving forward. This is my report and will take any questions from the councillors.

Councillor Wittever