



## TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH

Press Release

January 12, 2021

### **Re: Petition – Request to Re-evaluate and Initiate a Mask/Face Covering By-law**

Township of Norwich Council received a submission dated January 5, 2021 and an accompanying petition, requesting that Council re-evaluate and initiate a mask/face covering by-law for the Township of Norwich.

Council considered the request at its meeting January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and after such consideration adopted the following resolution:

“That the petition dated January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 requesting that Council re-evaluate and initiate a Mask/Face Covering By-law for the Township be received,

And that Council confirms that it remains in full support of provincial and SWPH requirements for mandatory face coverings, but that it will not adopt a local by-law requiring face coverings at this time, for the following reasons:

1. The Province of Ontario introduced requirements for mandatory face coverings in indoor public spaces across the province October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020;
2. It is the understanding of Council that one consideration in enacting a provincial requirement was to ensure clarity for residents across the province regarding face covering requirements;
3. Both police services and local by-law enforcement officers are authorized to enforce the current requirements put in place by the Province and SWPH;
4. Enforceability remains a concern respecting individuals, as any local by-law would be subject to the same exemptions for individuals from requirements for face coverings without requirement for proof of such exemption;
5. With such considerations, a local by-law would not provide any additional authority to require face coverings, nor additional authority for enforcement;
6. Council previously passed a resolution in support of health officials efforts to protect the health of residents, endorsed the SWPH letter of instruction regarding requirements for face coverings, and maintains its position encouraging residents to wear face coverings in public places.”

Council continues to strongly encourage all residents to abide by the advice and orders of the Province and SWPH, including wearing face coverings at all times where the physical health of the individual allows.