



**PORT COLBORNE**

## MAYOR'S REPORT

### FEBRUARY 8, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING

As you are aware, we are currently in the lockdown stage of the Province of Ontario's Response Framework in dealing with COVID-19. The message has been clear "Stay Home."

This week as case numbers have started dropping and children have returned to school, we anticipate changes to the current restrictions in Niagara as of February 16<sup>th</sup>. Exactly what level Niagara will be at will be determined by the province closer to this date.

We continue to emphasize the need for social distancing, hand washing and face coverings where social distancing can't be maintained or where required by the Region's face covering by-law.

We ask that you continue to support our local businesses through these tough lockdown times.

We are also in discussions with the Region and other municipalities on a coordinated show of respect for those who have lost their lives due to COVID-19. I hope plans will be finalized by our next meeting, and I will speak about them then.

#### [February is Black Heritage Month](#)

February marks Black History Month, a time when we celebrate Black culture and recognize the many accomplishments and contributions made in Niagara, in our province, and across our country by those in the Black community.

I would like to tell you a story about the role Port Colborne played for the freedom for many.

They were hidden in plain sight on the ships coming into the guard lock at Port Colborne. Escaping their enslaved conditions, helpers had guided them along the Underground Railroad, directing them to ports like Erie and Sandusky along the American shore of Lake Erie. Among the owners and captains of the vessels on the lakes were abolitionists.

Determined to help those Black freedom seekers escape slavery, sometimes they hid the fugitives onboard, but a less suspicious method was simply to add them to the ship's crew list, using fake names.

The fugitives could board the ship openly, and just had to act their part as crew members as the ships left American shores heading toward Canada.

Recent research has focused on the schooner, Home, and its abolitionist captain, James Nugent, who assisted many to freedom in Canada.

Nugent brought the Home into the Welland Canal on many trips and it was here in Port Colborne, at the guard lock of the Second Welland Canal, where some of the blacks escaping slavery got off the ships, and stepped into life as free people, while others stayed on board until the ship reached St. Catharines.

Although their lives here were not easy, with racism and prejudice still formidable barriers, they were free.

We each have a part to play in eradicating racism.

In September of last year, we signed onto the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, reflecting our commitment to work toward policies that eradicate racism and discrimination, and promote human rights and diversity.

While we have made progress as a community, much work remains to be done.

### [Heritage Week 2021](#)

Heritage Week 2021 also takes place February 15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> . This year's theme is Exploring our Past and Re-imagining our Future.

Heritage is all around us. It is in the stories you hear from your family and friends, the places you visit, the buildings you see in your community, the books you read, the films you watch, the cultural activities you experience, the landscapes you love to explore and so much more.

During Heritage Week the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum encourages everyone to visit the L.R. Wilson Heritage Research Archives Facebook page and discover our great buildings, extraordinary landscapes and vibrant industrial and rural communities or to watch the virtual tours of the Museum exhibit "A Village By the Canal" a series of videos on YouTube launching heritage week.

If you can't experience activities and places on-line, then consider exploring heritage village by strolling through the museum grounds and Welland Canal trail where exhibit panels are available to read.

## Build a Fire Truck

The Fire Department is challenging all kids in Port Colborne to build them a fire truck.

The goal is to build a fire truck with any items you have around the house. This could include the following: Egg Carton - Milk Carton - Tissue Box - Construction paper - Shoe Box.

Then, take a photo and sent to [fpo@portcolborne.ca](mailto:fpo@portcolborne.ca)

Be sure to include your contact information:

- Name
- Grade and age of student
- Contact information
- Name of School
- Parents e-mail contact

Photo to be submitted by Monday, February 22, 2021 5:00 p.m.

## Frozen Pipes

Our Customer Service Representatives have been receiving calls from homeowners experiencing frozen pipes during this current cold snap.

If the pipes in your home have frozen, you can attempt to thaw those pipes yourself following the steps below.

1. Turn on a tap in the basement. If you are successful in thawing your pipes, water will begin flowing from the tap.
2. Locate the water shut-off valve in your home. If the pipe you are attempting to thaw bursts or you are successful in thawing the pipe, it may leak and potentially cause a flood. In this case, you will need to shut off the water to your house using the water shut-off valve until the leaky pipe is fixed.
3. Use a blow dryer or space heater on the exposed pipe near the water meter for one or two hours, or you can try placing a warm towel or rag around the pipe. Do not use a torch with an open flame – you could set your house on fire.

If you have completed these steps and still don't have water, under the City's Frozen Water Service Pipe Policy, you will need to contact a plumber to come to your home. The plumber should confirm that your internal plumbing is not frozen, and attempt to thaw your service line from inside the building.

For more information, see our website. And remember, Warton Willie said spring is just around the corner.

## Polar Plunge

The City of Port Colborne is inviting residents to PORTicipate in this year's Virtual Polar Plunge in support of Special Olympics Ontario.

This will be the second time the City has participated in this signature fundraising event, with participants braving the cold and jumping in Lake Erie at Sugarloaf Marina last year. With current COVID-19 restrictions in place, this event will be completely virtual, asking participants to take the plunge safely in the comfort of their own home.

I know this is different from last years Polar Plunge, but I think people can be creative. You could fill a bathtub with ice cubes, or make a snow angel in your bathing suit, or run through a cold sprinkler. There are so many possibilities.”

Last year more than \$560,000 was raised in Ontario, with Port Colborne raising approximately \$12,000. This year we hope the community can hit the \$5,000 mark and look forward to seeing residents get involved virtually.

Individuals are asked to PORTicipate in the following ways:

- Register for the plunge by visiting [www.polarplunge.ca](http://www.polarplunge.ca)
  - Residents are encouraged to join the Port Colborne team
  - Plunge anytime between February 1 to February 28, 2021 from the comfort of your own home: <http://polarplunge.ca/ways-to-plunge>
  - Fundraise and receive amazing prizes and incentives while helping support over 26,000 Special Olympics athletes across the province
  - Post your Plunge video on social media using the hashtag #PlungeON and #PORTicipate
    - Be sure to tag the City of Port Colborne in your post for a chance to be featured on social media, or send your video to [eventservices@portcolborne.ca](mailto:eventservices@portcolborne.ca)

Participants are encouraged to be creative and have fun, however, safety is very important. Please follow these [safety tips](#) as you PORTicipate in the Virtual Polar Plunge.

## Closing

We will continue to work together and remain vigilant in fighting the COVID-19 virus.

Our number one priority is the health and safety of our staff and citizens.

Please stay safe and be kind.