

HERE'S WHAT A STATE OF EMERGENCY MEANS FOR HALTON HILLS

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The Town of Halton Hills declared a state of emergency on March 25.

What that means is that the town, particularly the mayor and chief administrative officer, has the ability to make decisions without the approval of committees or council.

"It allows the town to do its day-to-day business without council approval," Mayor Rick Bonnette said.

The declaration allows for the town to react quickly to new information being released from federal, provincial and regional governments.

"This is a tough decision to declare a state of emergency," Bonnette said. "I've never done it before, and it's the first time it's been done in Halton Hills."

However, the mayor and chief administrative officer are providing council with daily briefings during the pandemic.

At the last scheduled council meeting on March 9, the province reported six cases of coronavirus. By March 13, the town closed libraries and seniors centres to control the spread. By March 18, the town closed its town hall building to the public.

Bonnette said more announcements are expected in terms of property tax deferrals.

"If the region passes their motion [regarding property tax deferrals], this will give the Town the ability to offer tax relief," Bonnette said.

"We won't be holding any more council meetings until this declaration changes," chief adminis-



Graeme Frisque/Torstar

The Town of Halton Hills has declared a state of emergency as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

trative officer Brent Marshall said.

Marshall also outlined a number of relief efforts already in place for residents and businesses, including changes to peak hour pricing for energy costs from

the Ministry of Energy, as well as changes to water and wastewater pricing on the way from Halton Region.

"We're looking at all of our programs from an economic development stand-

point," Marshall said. "If we can modify those plans and turn them into local enhancements, we're going to do that."

With health and safety at the forefront, Marshall said the town was still

looking at ways to safely and effectively keep businesses thriving in Halton Hills.

"Building inspectors are still going out in the field, but in a safe way," he said. "We're making sure to approve as many permits as possible. Anything that will help keep the local economy going, we're doing that."

As information about the pandemic changes frequently, the Town of Halton Hills has established an information page that is updated regularly here: www.haltonhills.ca/covid19/.

Residents are also encouraged to connect with the town via the Let's Talk Halton Hills platform.

"We're trying to do our best from a small-town perspective," Marshall said.

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