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NEWS

TOWN COUNCIL ENDORSES VACCINE PASSPORTS

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Halton Hills council has thrown its support behind COVID-19 vaccination passports, which were formalized by Premier Doug Ford Sept. 1.

The local councillors unanimously passed a motion Aug. 30 that endorses the development of secure vaccine passports and medical exemption certificates, which business owners can require the public show before accessing services.

While the resolution added a "should they (businesses) wish to do so" clause, the plans laid out by Ford indicate that the passports/exemptions will be mandatory to gain entry to certain non-essential places

like restaurants, nightclubs, gyms, sporting events, concerts and more.

Mayor Rick Bonnette — who recently sent a letter to Ford and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urging them to institute a vaccination passport — said providing proof of vaccines is nothing new. Bonnette pointed to times when he previously had to show such documentation when travelling to certain countries.

"I think we all feel safer in close confinement — whether it's in an airplane, a ship, a movie theatre or a hockey game — (knowing) that everybody's been vaccinated," he said.

Coun. Jon Hurst, who seconded the motion moved by Coun. Moya Johnson, said there are several rea-

sons to introduce a vaccine passport.

"We're removing the burden from businesses having to determine admittance eligibility," Hurst said, adding the passports will also give assurance to all vaccinated patrons and employees that they're "in good company."

In addition, he said he thinks the program will send a message to unvaccinated people (excluding those with medical and other legitimate exemptions): "You don't have the right to put anyone else at risk."

Johnson and Bonnette noted that businesses and chambers of commerce have been asking for a vaccination passport program.

The new provincial policy is set to come into effect on Sept. 22.

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