

Wednesday March 18, 2020  
Protection Island COVID-19  
Update

Hello,  
Everyone

A brief meeting was held this afternoon with representatives from several Island organizations to discuss the unique issues that face our neighbourhood as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. In attendance were Peter Frewin representing Block Watch and the Emergency Preparedness Committee, and Kevin Pistor, David Carter, and Gary Weikum representing PINA. Jim Menzies was out of town and therefore unable to attend on behalf of the Lions Club. As a small group, we will continue to meet regularly to address Island issues and keep you informed of planned initiatives to help each other.

Our Island is somewhat at a disadvantage during this crisis because of our relatively isolated location, but this is more than compensated for by the social networks, volunteers and caring residents who are always willing to assist their neighbours. The first thing you can do to help your neighbour is to encourage them to subscribe to Prolsle. We will be using Prolsle to disseminate information; therefore, it is important that as many residents as possible subscribe to this service. If you know your neighbour's email address, and with their permission, you could forward a copy of select emails you think they should read. If your neighbours are unable to connect to the internet, then please print them a copy of this information notice, and subsequent notices, so they can stay informed of Island activities.

We identified several issues that should be addressed in the short-term and would like to share our discussion points with the neighbourhood.

1) We appreciate that the cancellation of weekend ferry service is a major disruption to some Islanders. After reaching out to the Ferry Service, I am convinced that, under the current conditions, they have given due consideration to all the related concerns and have reached a sound decision supported by the community health guidelines. Marty has already posted an email with an explanation and I think it is important for islanders to recognize it was not an easy decision, but a necessary one. It is my personal belief that, if conditions worsen, we may expect more changes. If this happens, we must accept these with grace and understanding. At least, the cancellation of weekend sailings will keep "tourists" away and reduce the chance of viral spread to our island.

2) The Ferry Service Management has communicated the schedule changes with Canada Post, to support timely mail delivery. Other service providers, such as the City of Nanaimo, BC Hydro, Telus, and Shaw, should be advised by the customer requesting the service to check the Dinghy Dock Pub website for posted ferry times before heading over.

3) We understand the justification for the reduction in weekday service. Ferry ridership will be significantly reduced as residents adhere to the instructions being provided by the provincial and federal governments: Stay at home from work, school, and recreation activities; cancel non-essential appointments and travel; as well, reduce shopping trips. These measures, along with social distancing of two metres, will help to keep the entire community safe.

4) We appreciate that some private boat owners have offered to shuttle people and cargo across the harbour. Please be considerate of the boat operators. *If you have any inkling that you may be unwell or may have been in contact with a virus carrier, please do not accept a ride in a private boat unless the appropriate precautions are taken by you and the boat operator.* If at all possible, make arrangements for only the cargo to cross the harbour. Also, we recommend that you find out from your pharmacist how third parties can pick-up medications on your behalf in order to limit the number of human trips to the other side.

5) We will be contacting the Fire Department, asking for information on how COVID-19 patients (hopefully none) will be evacuated from the Island. We are assuming that Station 7 is not equipped to do this, and that BC Ambulance personnel may need to come to the Island.

6) We will be contacting the Nanaimo Port Authority to determine what support they may be able to offer if access becomes too onerous for service providers.

7) Initial discussions have begun on the possibility of organizing a food bank in the near future. A number of residents are independently employed and are not eligible for Employment Insurance should their employment/contracts evaporate. We would attempt to determine need before proceeding.

8) Gary and I ran into Jase on our way home from the meeting this afternoon.

We had a brief discussion about keeping the lines of communication open. Jase is open to making adjustments to accommodate residents. We appreciate their readiness to help.

**9) If you have any ideas on communication techniques, Island initiatives, or how to access resources, please let us know by responding to this email.**

10) Finally, none of us have ever been through this situation before. None of us are experts. Please listen to the health experts and take their advice seriously. You are not making these sacrifices for just your own health; you are doing this for the health of your community.

Stay tuned, more to follow.

Sincerely, on behalf of the team,

Kevin  
Pistor