

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Aug. 24, 2020**



## **Support for business community during challenging times**

**Wasaga Beach** – The Town of Wasaga Beach has taken several steps this year to support its beachfront business tenants and the broader business community during these challenging times. As the province opened up the economy, the town was there to support local business

“We know our businesses create employment opportunities and provide valued services for our community and so we are happy to invest in them through a number of appropriate measures,” Mayor Nina Bifulchi said.

Specifically for beachfront business tenants the town has taken the following steps:

- In May, we implemented a deferred rental payment program for our tenants to support them through the summer months.
- In July, the town rebated the “Special Events promotion fee” that beachfront business tenants pay annually.
- In July, council [advocated](#) for changes to the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program so that beachfront commercial tenants impacted by the pandemic can apply to the program for rent relief. The regulations do not permit the town to apply on behalf of its tenants.
- In July, we created four sets of pods along the sand-covered portion of Beach Drive to ensure safe physical distancing at the beachfront during the pandemic and in turn provide a solid customer base for beachfront businesses. The alternative would have been to close off the space, a move that would have hurt the business community by severely limiting visits to the area.
- Earlier in the summer, the town approached beachfront tenants and made them aware of the opportunity to advertise on the fencing that makes up the pods along the sand-covered portion of Beach Drive. None of our tenants wished to make use of this marketing tool.

In addition, the town has implemented a number of programs to support the entire local business community during the pandemic. This includes the following:

- Our 'Support Local' campaign, which has included messaging through newsprint, display signs, billboards, social media, and radio.
- The creation of our [Wasaga Open for Business](#) recovery portal on the town website. The portal contains a variety of resources for the business community to assist with reopening and ongoing operations during the pandemic.
- The implementation of our [Open Patios](#) program to facilitate the quick opening of patios at local eateries.
- Established the [Open Parks](#) program, allowing recreational-style businesses that typically provide in-door programs to operate in local parks to allow for physical distancing.
- Launched the [Open Builds](#) Development Charge Deferral Program, allowing developers to defer paying development charges for their new builds.
- Reopened the [Visitor Information Centre at Nancy Island Historic Site](#).
- Authorized the reopening of the Wasaga Beach Farmers' Market in August.
- Provided financial assistance to the South Georgian Bay Regional Resiliency Plan, which provides marketing supports for the tourism economy.
- Established the [Flavours of the Beach](#) contest, encouraging people to support local restaurants and in turn be eligible for gift card prizes.
- Supported the Wasaga Beach Chamber of Commerce's pop-up PPE booth. The town provided a tent for the booth and PPE kit resources, including Support Local messaging, as well as social distancing floor decals.

"We continue to look for ways to support our business community as we know they play a vital role. Our economic development staff are happy to discuss additional ways the town can assist," Mayor Bifulchi said. "We continue to champion with the federal and provincial governments the position that tenants of municipally-owned buildings should be able to apply directly to these upper-tier levels of government for rent relief. Council is not in a position to provide financial assistance to support rent relief for commercial tenants in town-owned buildings. Doing so would require us to use residential and commercial tax dollars to meet the town's mortgage obligations on the buildings. This is simply not fair. We continue to work with our MP and MPP to obtain provincial and federal supports for the tenants in our commercial buildings."

With two more weeks of summer remaining, we encourage all residents and visitors to support our local businesses.

-30-

**For media requiring additional information, please contact:**

Michael Gennings  
Communications Officer  
Town of Wasaga Beach  
(705) 429-3844 ext. 2237  
[communications@wasagabeach.com](mailto:communications@wasagabeach.com)  
[www.wasagabeach.com](http://www.wasagabeach.com)