



City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Friday, June 19, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria City Council continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and explore ways to support the community. Mayor Helps also took the opportunity during her weekly Facebook Live address to acknowledge World Refugee Day on Saturday, June 20 and National Indigenous People's Day on Sunday, June 21.

This week, the Province announced they will start engagement on B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan using virtual town halls and residents are encouraged to submit their ideas. The Province also announced that the Temporary Rental Supplement has been extended to the end of August and offers up to \$500 per month to help renters and landlords. The extension maintains the rent freeze and ban on evictions for non-payment of rent.

"I encourage residents to submit their ideas to the Province about how we can build a strong and resilient economy now and for the future as we recover from this unprecedented event," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "Living in a place like Victoria where we know rent costs are high, it's also great to see the Provincial Government extend their rental support and eviction freeze program that is helping the three out of five residents in Victoria that are currently renters."

Two weeks ago, the City launched Build Back Victoria, its re-opening and recovery initiatives. So far, we've received more than 40 applications from restaurateurs and retailers for extended patio areas and flex spaces. Last week, the City also announced that summer day camps are now available for registration, as well as outdoor fitness programs, such as yoga, bootcamps and even personal training. All activities are happening outdoors, mostly at the Royal Athletic Park, with proper COVID-19 protocols in place. Residents are encouraged to sign up and also to fill out an online survey to let our staff know what types of programs they're most interested in.

"I'm excited to see the new patios and flex spaces that City staff are working with businesses to implement along our city sidewalks and in parking stalls. Council saw the need, staff developed the tools, and businesses are now using them and it's exactly what we envisioned to help local businesses flourish again," said Mayor Helps. "This summer will be all about having fun and keeping safe, whether it's at Royal Athletic Park or along our streets with new physically distanced patios and outdoor shopping opportunities."

In addition to working with businesses and recreation activities, the City's Arts, Culture and Events team are in their third week of the Creative Spotlight campaign, teaming up with local artists to put a spotlight on creativity in our community. This week's feature is performer, song writer and educator Eden Oliver, who will be live streaming a performance from their porch Saturday afternoon.

Finally, tonight Victoria's Youth Poet Laureate is inviting the community to check out Youth Verses, a virtual showcase of visual and performing art created by local youth artists from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. via livestream on Facebook. Over the past three weeks, 12 youth aged 14-19 have connected online to participate in workshops facilitated by Neko Smart and guest facilitators, with the overarching intent to facilitate conversations on ways to harness creativity while navigating mental health.

To find out more and to register for City recreation programs visit victoria.ca/recreation.

Tonight's virtual showcase "Youth Verses" will start at 7 p.m. at victoria.ca/youthpoetlaureate.

Find out more about the showcasing of local artists at victoria.ca/creativespotlight.

To submit your feedback to the Province's Economic Recovery Plan visit gov.bc.ca/recoveryideas.

For information about the Temporary Rental Supplement visit bchousing.org.

—30—

For More Information:

Bill Eisenhauer

Head of Engagement

Cellular: 250.858.1061

beisenhauer@victoria.ca