

CHCH Transcript - Mayor Burton on Morning Live – June 11, 2020

Host: Stage 2 of the reopening of Ontario starts tomorrow, but the town of Oakville is one of the areas excluded, Oakville Mayor Rob Burton joins us today. What's your reaction to that?

Mayor Burton: I should ask you, because you were excluded too.

Host: Yes, Hamilton is excluded as well, not very happy.

Mayor Burton: Do you feel like the teacher has just told you that you're going to be held back a grade while the other kids go ahead? Because that was the sensation that I had

And it was worse because I felt that we were an "A" student. We met, long ago, all the criteria that the province had established for being able to re-open. So, you know, lots of hospital capacity, outstanding tracing that's really fast and very low incidence of cases. In Oakville I think we had three deaths the entire 12 weeks.

Host: So do you think it's because of the areas around you or is it you're being lumped in with all of Halton?

Mayor Burton: Well, actually all of Halton is pretty good and I would never point at my neighbours like Hamilton or Peel. However, I will tell you that the Mayors in Peel have been very loudly saying that they're not ready and so I do have residents who are nursing the impression that the kids next door are dragging us down.

Host: Now I understand the Halton Region have sent a letter, now have you heard back anything?

Mayor Burton: No we have not heard back, you know on Monday he held out this little ray of hope where he said, "Every Monday we'll check and if you beat the criteria, we'll let you go." So I suppose if you're an optimist you could say, "Well we already beat the criteria. He said next Monday he'd check the ones he's holding back and let us go if we meet the criteria. So I guess we should take the view that as long as we keep beating the criteria on Monday he's surely going to let us go through. And I should mention that one of the ways that we can keep meeting the criteria is to avoid the "Three Cs" of Covid danger. That would be: crowds, confinement and circulating too much. And wherever you can't keep your distance, wear a mask.

This is one that a friend of mine made for me and a lovely, fashionable fabric. So your mask doesn't have to be ugly and it doesn't have to be expensive.

Host: Right. It just has to work? What else could Oakville do? Or have you done everything that you can do?

Mayor Burton: We've done everything. Right from the start, we took it seriously. We clamped right down. We have incredible low incidence of the disease. I attribute that to

how seriously everybody in Oakville took it. Now, there's a few exceptions everywhere but I've never seen a community like Oakville for snitching I guess, call it the calling out the bad players and sic-ing the police and the by-law enforcement people after the ones that aren't behaving. We had visitors from other places come in and misbehave and fail to follow the rules. I remember one gentleman from Mississauga got one of our most expensive tickets when he argued with a police officer and said that he was a taxpayer and the park could not be closed because he paid for it. And we're kind of like, "Jack you're from Mississauga, it's an Oakville park." But anyway? One little thing like that doesn't prove any big pattern but it makes for a funny story.

Host: Well, hopefully on Monday you get the good news along with the rest of Halton and I wish you luck with that because I can imagine you're probably under a lot of pressure from the businesses in Oakville?

Mayor Burton: Oh my God, you know what? I feel the pressure myself even without them telling me how hard hit they are. It's just astonishing to me the strength and resilience that we expect our small business enterprises to have to withstand these kinds of shocks to the system and it's taken us months to get the Federal government and the Province to come to the table and help small businesses. This can't end soon enough.

Host: Okay, hopefully we have better news when we talk to you next time. Mayor Rob Burton from the Town of Oakville, thank you for joining us.