

City-owned properties are one step closer to being smoke free

By-law being presented to Council April 1; would come into effect May 15

For immediate release (March 7, 2019) – A by-law banning smoking/vaping tobacco and cannabis outdoors on property owned or leased by the City of Orillia is being presented to Council for final approval on April 1 after receiving Council support at its meeting this week. Once approved, the by-law would come into effect on May 15, 2019.

“Council thoroughly debated the idea of banning smoking and vaping on properties owned or leased by the City and ultimately determined that we want to create a greener, healthier community and this is one way in which we can support that initiative. I believe that by making our City parks, trails and properties smoke- and vape-free we are providing a welcoming environment that contributes to the overall wellbeing of our citizens and visitors. Based on discussion around the Council table, this by-law may evolve with time,” said Mayor Steve Clarke.

At its meeting on March 4, Council provided direction on specific exemptions it would like included in the by-law. The exemptions are: the current designated smoking area at the City-owned Nordia property (2 Hunter Valley Rd.), and the Stephen Leacock Museum (50 Museum Dr.) during special events, subject to a smoking permit being issued by the City’s Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

The ban on smoking/vaping outdoors includes tobacco, cannabis, e-liquid for vaping, and herbal material used in waterpipes, and applies to the following locations owned or leased by the City of Orillia:

- Any property upon which is located a municipal building, park, or beach;
- Any parking lot, trail, walkway, or lane;
- Any dock;
- On or within a vehicle located on City-owned or leased property; and,
- On or within a boat located or moored on City-owned or leased property.

In addition to the specific exemptions approved by Council, the following general exemptions apply to a person that is:

- Smoking/vaping on any portion of a highway (this includes sidewalks) as municipalities do not have any jurisdiction to regulate this area;
- Smoking/vaping while situated on a vessel containing sleeping, cooking, and toilet facilities that is moored within any City-owned or leased water lot;
- Smoking/vaping on a campsite within a park, provided the campsite has been approved by the City in conjunction with a special event;
- Entitled to possess cannabis for medical purposes and can provide the necessary documentation.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) states: “Adopting or expanding a smoke-free/vape-free by-law is an important consideration for a municipality to positively impact the

health of the communities it governs. Based on the evidence, SMDHU encourages municipalities within the health unit to enact smoke-free/vape-free legislation for the following reasons:

- Directly contributes to creating a smoke-free/vape-free culture
- Reduces the initiation of smoking and vaping among our youth
- Reduces the prevalence of tobacco use
- Protects the environment
- Protects against second-hand smoke and vape
- Increases the number of people who quit smoking
- Reduces tobacco-related morbidity and mortality, including acute cardiovascular events.”

Following approval of the by-law banning smoking/vaping on property owned or leased by the City, the City will hire a part-time Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer to assist in enforcing the by-law effective May 15. The City will also erect new signage, which will complement a robust public education campaign, to inform residents and visitors of the ban. These costs are being subsidized through provincial funding provided by the Ministry of Finance associated with the legalization of cannabis.

The City of Orillia is a city of 31,000 people in the heart of Ontario’s Lake Country on the shores of Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe. Visit our website at orillia.ca.

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