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January 12, 2021



Our local small businesses are current facing many restrictions due to the Provincial Emergency declaration and stay-at-home order which is in effect until at least February 11, 2021 as a means to reduce the number of cases and lessen the demand on hospitals and healthcare workers. The provincial government currently has financial support for small businesses to help pay for utilities, property taxes, and other expenses. I encourage small businesses to apply for assistance at covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-help-businesses-ontario. The [Ontario Small Business Support Grant](#) (OSBSG) is open for applications. The OSBSG will provide eligible businesses with between \$10,000 and \$20,000 to help cover decreased revenues expected as a result of the province-wide shut down.

This is a stark reminder that although we have vaccines, the road ahead is still long until the distribution of those vaccines is widely implemented. A reopening plan for business will be required well in advance of the end of the lockdown period. That significant effort should be made to ensure that all businesses, big and small, have a fair chance to experience the benefits of a reopened and recovering economy. I will continue to advocate for more suitable options for small businesses.

In the meantime, we must all do our part and adhere to all provincial public health directives. I invite everyone in the community to get out and enjoy our parks and open spaces. Residents are encouraged to take a walk or a hike through our parkland that covers around 70 hectares of land.

Grab a ball and play catch with your immediate household on one of our open fields, make a scavenger hunt, build a snowman, take a walk along the paths by the Boyne River, walk through the Tottenham Conservation Area or, contingent upon the weather, use our part of the Trans Canada Trail for strolling, trekking, skiing, snowshoeing.

We need to get inventive with keeping fit, more so now with some of the limitations in place due to the pandemic. If you want to remain indoors, take a look at our [New Tec Connects](#) webpage for virtual fitness opportunities as well as virtual tours and craft and activity ideas.



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Town of New Tecumseth