



## Region of Queens Municipality PROGRAM AND SERVICE UPDATES - May 13, 2020



The past two months have been difficult for everyone as we try to support each other and stay safe in light of COVID-19. The Municipality has endeavored to continue to provide all of the programs, services and infrastructure that our residents have expected from us in line with provincial Orders and directives. Today, we wish to provide our community with further updates as they relate to some of our programs, services, and facilities for the next 3-4 months. SAFETY always has, and will continue to be, our NUMBER ONE PRIORITY for our staff and our residents. There is no clear understanding of what the next few months will hold or what restrictions will continue to be in place. In light of this, the Municipality has made the following decisions:

1. Due to the inability of water safety instructors and lifeguards to physically distance from swimmers, small change facilities that do not allow for physical distancing, and the inability of our instructors and lifeguards to complete the required water safety and lifeguard certifications because of these restrictions and cancelled training opportunities, both Milton Centennial Pool and North Queens Aquatic Centre will not open in 2020.
2. Due to the restriction on physical gatherings being limited to small groups and for the safety of our citizens, our full Canada Day celebration scheduled for July 1, 2020, in Privateer Park, Liverpool, is being postponed. We will still consider having a fireworks display on that day if possible and permissible considering all required safety measures in place leading up to July 1st.
3. Our 2020-2021 budget included a Summer Concert Series in various community parks throughout Queens County. Due to the restriction on community gathering sizes expected to be limited to small numbers for the foreseeable future and the safety of our residents, this concert series has been cancelled.
4. Normally, the municipality conducts 2-3 tax sales a year and sells properties that are more than three years in arrears. Based on the current pandemic situation and the inability for purchasers to physically distance during these in-person sales, no tax sales will take place in the fiscal year 2020-2021 for safety reasons.
5. Province of Nova Scotia has recently announced an operating loan program for municipalities across Nova Scotia totalling up to \$380 million to help pay their bills due to late payments from residents negatively impacted by COVID-19. The funding must be paid back with interest and the proposed program recommended by Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) notes that the program would not be available for those not affected by COVID-19, who are unable to pay their taxes for other reasons. Council believes that it must treat all of its residents the same and therefore has chosen to not participate in this provincial loan program. We do however; have and continue to offer payment programs for any resident or business having difficulty paying their taxes on time. Our finance department staff are available to discuss each person's unique needs every year, and not just during a pandemic. Because of past and current prudent financial planning, the Municipality has the expected cash flow in reserves to pay its bills until our residents that are having difficulty paying their taxes are able to do so. It is important that those who are able to pay their taxes on time do so.

6. Previously Council announced revised due dates for taxes, water and sewer bills, as well as several other programs and services. These delayed payments dates still stand. A full list is on our website at [www.regionofqueens.com](http://www.regionofqueens.com) and follows on the next page. This delayed payment schedule is available to ALL residents and businesses and not just those negatively affected by COVID-19. Electronic tax bills have now been issued for those registered for that service, and paper bills will be mailed around the first week of June.
7. The Municipality is also experiencing reduced revenues because of COVID-19 and restrictions placed on our facilities to ensure public safety. To mitigate some of these losses, several staff are on lay-off and this situation is being monitored weekly to determine if future lay-offs will be required. These decisions will be made to best protect programs, services, and infrastructure services to our residents and minimize inconveniences as much as possible, while ensuring public safety.
8. While many municipalities in Nova Scotia have closed or reduced services to the public, we have done our best to continue to offer all services and infrastructure, including regular waste, recycling, organic, spring cleanup and leaf and yard waste pickup, as well as normal operating hours at our Solid Waste Management Facility in Milton. Additionally, we continue to operate our water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities safely, while continuing with required infrastructure upgrades in Caledonia, Milton and Liverpool. This has required extra safety precautions for our employees and facility users however; we recognize the importance to residents and businesses of keeping these operations open.
9. Our municipality is one of only a few in the province that own and operate a residential care facility. Hillview Acres in Middlefield is home to 28 residents currently and they are being provided with exceptional care by our staff around the clock, keeping them occupied with activities and helping them connect with family virtually. We are following all required safety precautions for both our staff and residents and have our pandemic plans operational within the facility. Our community should be very proud of these dedicated staff that are going above and beyond during these difficult times.

Chris McNeill  
Chief Administrative Officer



**Region of Queens Municipality**  
**2020-2021 BILLING AND DUE DATE CHANGES**



Due to recent local impacts resulting from COVID-19, Council has authorized the following billing schedule for the next five months from April to August 2020.

Service	Current Billing	New Billing
Dog Tags	Invoices are sent on April 1st with payment due upon receipt.	Invoices will be sent on June 1st with a due date of June 30th. Current tags will be valid until June 30th.
Vending Permits	Issued throughout the year.	No new permits will be issued during State of Emergency. Current permits which expire on March 31, 2020, will not be renewed or extended.
Taxi's	Invoices are sent on April 1st with payment due upon receipt.	Invoices will be sent on May 1st with a due date of May 31st. Current licenses will be valid until May 31st.
Property Taxes	Bills are issued at the end of May and are due upon receipt, with no interest charged if paid by June 30th.	Bills will be mailed in early June with due date of July 31, 2020.
Parking Meters	Parking at meters is charged at 25 cents per 15 minutes and timed parking for cars over designated time is fined at \$10.	Parking at meters and timed parking lots will not be enforced during the month of April or May.
Water / Sewer	Next billing period for mid-November to mid-February is scheduled to be issued on March 30th with a due date of April 30th.	Billing of water and sewer for mid-November to mid-February will be issued on April 30th with a due date of May 31st. Next bill to be mailed on July 1st will be delayed until August 1st.
Queens Place Emera Centre Memberships	PAD payments are charged on each person's billing date each month. Some facility users have cards that have no expiry and can be used when facility opens.	All memberships will all be extended by two weeks resulting from mid-March closure. No PAD payments will be withdrawn from membership accounts during April or May. Those that have prepaid will have membership benefits extended by an equivalent time.
Solid Waste	Commercial users of Queens Solid Waste Management Facility are billed on or before the 10th of each month for use during the previous month.	Commercial users will continue to be billed as usual on or before the 10th of each month for the previous month.
Septage	Commercial users of Queens Septage Disposal Facility are billed at the beginning of each month for use during the previous month.	Commercial users will continue to be billed as usual on or before the 10th of each month for the previous month.
Queens Place Emera Centre Advertising	Businesses are billed on April 1st for signage advertising within the facility for 2020-2021 fiscal year.	Businesses will be billed on June 1st with a due date of June 30, 2020.