

King prefers to warn first then fine

By Mark Pavilons

King Township staff are practising common sense and restraint when it comes to issuing fines for public gatherings during the pandemic. Some York municipalities are gung-ho when it comes to issuing tickets for infractions. King staff have received a few complaints from the public about people being in local parks. According to Jason Ballantyne, King's communications officer, he's happy to report that in every instance, the public has complied with bylaw officers' requests to leave the park or face a fine. "This is in keeping with our 'educate first, fine second' philosophy. We'd like to thank the public for working with us to keep all citizens of King Township safe," he said. Should enforcement be required in any situation officers may issue charges through a ticket (Part I) or summons/information (Part III), and available fines. It is an offence to fail to comply with an emergency order, or to obstruct any person acting pursuant to such an order. The maximum punishment is one-year imprisonment or a fine of up to \$100,000 for an individual, \$500,000 for a director of a corporation, or \$10,000,000 for a corporation itself (EMCPA, s. 7.0.11(1)). If the defendant gained a financial benefit from their violation of an emergency order, the court may increase the maximum fine to match the benefit the defendant received (EMCPA, s. 7.0.11(3)). Officers have discretion to charge people for failing to comply with an order made during an emergency and/or obstructing bylaw officers. Proceedings may be initiated once the declaration of provincial emergency is lifted by the provincial government. Once the declaration of provincial emergency is over, and normal court operations resume, these matters will be scheduled and heard in the POA courts in the ordinary course.