

Township staff continue to serve residents

By Mark Pavilons

While the municipal offices are closed to the public, King Township staff are busy serving residents. The Municipal Centre has always been available for staff to use during the pandemic. However, officials encouraged staff to work remotely as much as possible. "We've adapted to the new normal with our virtual conference calls - it's allowed us to be extremely efficient in getting work done," said Jason Ballantyne, King's communications officer. He estimates there's never more than a dozen people in the building at any one time, most days less. "We have extensive safety protocols in place, including continual deep cleaning, hand sanitizing stations, masking and physical distancing. "We know that the community is looking forward to the re-opening of the Municipal Centre and our other currently closed facilities. We're looking forward to it, too. We have to, however, do it in as safe and responsible a manner as possible, under the guidance of York Region and Provincial health authorities. The last thing we want to do is rush the re-opening and possibly set us back after so many months of hard work and diligence in flattening the curve." Mayor Steve Pellegrini noted essential services never slowed at the Township and they've been "very prudent in our operations." The mayor is proud that all staff are working and earning their pay cheques. "I can look any taxpayer in the eye and say that everyone on our payroll is working," he noted. Some staff have been redeployed and the Township is doing some belt-tightening, in anticipation of a zero tax increase in 2021. The layout of the municipal building allows staff who wish to be in the office to remain contained. The mayor pointed out technology allows staff and councillors to do their jobs effectively. Just recently, the mayor has decided to meet with residents on their front lawns, in keeping with social distancing measures.