

On 2020-07-05 9:16 p.m., Hutchison,Rob wrote:

Corrine,

I respect your choice not to wear a mask. I also respect the need to protect the community in a pandemic. I have read the letter from the Ontario Civil Liberties Association. They are right to raise the issue of the infringement of civil rights in the context of general prohibitions or directions by governments or other authorities affecting civil actions. However, while I almost always agree with OCLA, in this case, I think their claim about the efficacy of face masks is overreach; based on the sources I have accessed, while the positive effect of face masks to limit the spread of COVID-19 is limited to minimal it is not nothing. In this context (more on that below), it would appear reasonable to take whatever precautions necessary to limit virus transmission. (My reading indicates that claims of the negative effects of face masks are not scientifically founded.)

Moreover, our community and society is facing a second wave of virus spread. This is occurring within the context of a significant number of people appearing to have lost their sense of self-discipline and awareness regarding virus transmission and especially social distancing. This means that the virus health of the community which at one point had plateaued is now at increasing risk of greater transmission, covid cases, short and long-term harms to health, overtaxing the health system and deaths. In addition, it may be noted that the requirement for face masks also serves a symbolic purpose to remind the public to take the necessary precautions to limit transmissions. In this context, the requirement to wear a face mask inside commercial buildings (a limited application) appears to be a reasonable limitation on our civil rights for the time being, especially given the apparent factual limitation to the OCLA's argument noted above.

Thank you for your contribution to our ongoing civic discussions. It is valuable.

Rob

Rob Hutchison

Councillor – King's Town District