



## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

**Wednesday, October 20, 2021**

### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## **City's Emergency Control Group debriefs on tornado response**

*Barrie* - A tornado debrief meeting was held today with members of the Emergency Control Group. This group is comprised of senior staff at the City, as well as representatives from Barrie Police and Barrie Fire, including the Police Chief and Fire Chief.

The purpose of this meeting was to review the tornado response and recovery operations and identify things that went well and areas for improvement. Members of the Municipal Emergency Control Group as well as other key players in the incident were asked to provide feedback on areas we performed well and areas where we could improve our operations. The goal is to create a Severe Weather Emergency Plan for the City of Barrie which incorporates some recommendations from this process.

One theme that was consistent with most of the feedback was how quickly the City responded. The Emergency Control Group were able to meet and make decisions quickly due the infrastructure being in place for a virtual EOC. The activation of a virtual EOC for the COVID-19 response undoubtedly aided in the response to this event.

Another consistent theme was that Emergency Incident Communications was effective. It was also identified that the use of the onsite trailer and St. Gabriel's School was helpful for residents and site cleanup by the City's Operations department was efficient.

An event of this size and scope will always provide opportunities for improvement. An incident site this large creates a lot of site control and communications challenges. While the consensus is we managed the incident effectively, there are still areas we could further refine. One of the outcomes is the development of a detailed Severe Weather plan specific to weather events that could happen in Barrie.

The incident caused a large outpouring of support from the community. The City was almost immediately overwhelmed with donations and offers for volunteers. While this was much appreciated, it did become challenging at times to coordinate. The Salvation Army took over managing the needs of residents and acted as a point of contact to access the supports that were required. The City could consider formalizing an agreement with the Salvation Army for large scale emergencies.

Other improvements mentioned included better coordination on-site between all responding agencies and better internal communications.

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