



<https://www.goodneighboursoromedonte.ca>

January 4, 2023

## **An Update from the “Alliance”, A Thank You, and A Call for Help**

After an eventful 2022, the Oro-Medonte Good Neighbours Alliance (the “Alliance”) would like to provide you with an update on the Short-Term Rental (“STR”) situation in Oro-Medonte.

Prior to the municipal election in October 2022, we told you that we were not optimistic that the Township would protect our neighbourhoods. After six years of reporting problems, not one Short-Term Rental operator had ever been taken to court and shut down. Further, despite the best efforts of many individual concerned citizens, the Township continued to put forward policies and draft by-laws that, if implemented, would have legalized STRs in residential neighbourhoods. Matters were made worse because the Township repeatedly failed to inform homeowners that under the existing Zoning By-law, STRs were already prohibited in residential zones.

Three years ago, faced with this adversity, the Alliance was formed to provide a unified and amplified voice for residents across the Township on the STR issue. We informed homeowners and the Township about the issues related to short-term rentals including the best planning practices and the lessons-learned from other municipalities. We worked with neighbourhood residential associations to achieve a consensus to motivate action by Township Council. We obtained independent expert planning and legal opinions which confirmed that STRs were already prohibited in our residential neighbourhoods.

Throughout this ordeal, our motivation has been consistent and clear: no one should ever have to suffer at the hands of disruptive STR operators the way neighbours in Bass Lake, Bayview Memorial Park, Hawkestone, Horseshoe Valley, Jarratt, Maplewood, Moon Point, Shanty Bay, Simcoeside, Sprucewood Estates, and Warminster have suffered. Our advocated solution has also been consistent and clear: enforce the Township’s existing Zoning By-laws and resist the lobbying of STR operators seeking to profit from commercializing residential neighbourhoods.

The election of a new Council on October 24, 2022 has brought a fresh set of eyes to this lingering issue. We believe that with a fresh look, we will no longer be heading toward the legalization of STRs in residential neighbourhoods. Oro-Medonte voters elected new members

to Council who we believe have the credentials and the commitment to stop the operation of disruptive STRs in residential neighbourhoods. We now have hope that the missteps of the past can be addressed, and that the new Council will support and uphold the existing zoning by-law so that our communities can be protected and allowed to grow sustainably for the benefit of the generations that follow.

We could never have reached this point without the support of 12 residents' associations and without the support of many individuals within these associations, including you. Thank you for adding your voice and for standing with us and supporting our communities. By your actions, including informing your neighbours, signing petitions, displaying signs, speaking out at public meetings and community hall meetings, writing many letters to Council and voicing your deeply held concerns, you have made a difference. Your passion and your volunteer work have helped us all.

Regrettably, it has been a very long and costly struggle. For some, it has meant enduring more than 6 years of disruption. For the Alliance, it has been costly too. Joining as a party to the recent Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) hearing and now supporting our Township in its appeal of the decision to set the record straight has cost us more than \$70,000 in legal and related expenses.

These expenses are nowhere near the total costs incurred. A team of dedicated volunteers who have worked with the Alliance over the last 3 years have generously donated business, legal, and planning guidance that if billed as consulting fees, would be in excess of \$750,000. If not for their unwavering commitment, generosity, and expertise, there can be no doubt that STRs would have been permanently legalized in residential neighbourhoods in Oro-Medonte. Just as in the Town of The Blue Mountains, neighbouring taxpayers would have been vulnerable to the disruption caused by these incompatible uses and left with no relief. Just as in The Blue Mountains, neighbouring property values would have declined by more than 10%. We all owe this team of volunteers an enormous debt that we can never repay.

The Alliance's work is not over though. The STR operators continue to vigorously resist the Township, its By-laws, and the clear will of the overwhelming majority of residents. The appeal of the OLT decision is still ongoing and will be contested by the operators. In addition, the Township is now in the process of implementing a new Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

Faced with significant lobbying pressure and legal challenges by the STR operators, the continued unified voice of our residents through the Alliance is still needed. The Township will continue to benefit from our backing of its appeal of the OLT decision. Most importantly, it will be critical that we support the leadership of our new Township Council to ensure that the prohibition on STRs in our residential neighbourhoods established many years ago remains firmly in place and is effectively enforced.

Finally, we are most grateful for the many people who have graciously made financial contributions to the common cause and have been tireless in their fund-raising efforts. Unfortunately, we are still \$25,000 in debt, an amount that has been personally paid by the

directors of the Alliance. We therefore need your help to raise additional funds to clear this debt and to continue the work that remains. If you haven't already helped us, or even if you have already contributed, please consider donating to the Oro-Medonte Good Neighbours Alliance.

We are continuing to stand with you. We remain committed to building better and even more vibrant neighbourhoods where you and your neighbours can live, build and play peacefully, without fearing for our safety.

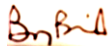
Only with your support will we be able to continue the work of the Alliance. You may donate at <https://www.goodneighboursoromedonte.ca/contribute/> or by contacting us at [goodneighboursalliance@gmail.com](mailto:goodneighboursalliance@gmail.com) to make other arrangements.

All the best to you and your family in the New Year. We look forward with optimism to the future of our township.

Thank you.



David Johnston,



Bryn Pressnail,



Kim Pressnail.