

April 24, 2023

Mayor Randy Greenlaw
Deputy Mayor Peter Lavoie
Councillor Lori Hutcheson
Councillor John Bard
Councillor David Clark
Councillor Richard Schell
Councillor Robert Young



Township of Oro-Medonte,
148 Line 7 South,
Oro-Medonte, ON.
LOL 2E0

Dear Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors

Re: Short Term Accommodation Enforcement Report, Agenda Item 12 c), April 26, 2023

This letter is to provide some further context to supplement Report DS2023-029 (“Report”) to Council from the Township’s Manager, Municipal Law Services, Curtis Shelswell, concerning Short Term Accommodation Enforcement. We also provide two points of clarification which emphasize the current negative impact of short term accommodations on the quality of life for residents of Oro Medonte. The path in arriving at this point has involved a long wait for residents. We are supportive of the intent of the Report and urge the allocation of all available resources to enforce an end to the problem of unpermitted temporary short term accommodations operating in residential zones in Oro Medonte.

The Oro-Medonte Good Neighbours Alliance and its supporting 13 Residents Associations from across the Township have been working to build better, safer and stronger residential communities. To this end, over the last three years we have been devoted to seeing that all constituents including members of Council are informed about the best planning practices related to temporary short term accommodations. What began as an education quest back in 2019, gradually transitioned into supporting the Township and its Zoning By-law which has prohibited temporary Short Term Accommodations (STAs) in residential neighbourhoods since at least 1997 when it was originally enacted.

In the meantime, neighbours of disruptive STAs have continued to be impacted, suffering these disruptions needlessly for 6 years. In 2020 we presented several detailed and comprehensive joint submissions to the Township on behalf of our supporting Residents Associations, calling on the Township to enforce the existing Zoning By-law and shut down prohibited STA uses. As you know, the Township’s enforcement to date has not resulted in any STA operator being taken to court and shut down. Effective enforcement of the Zoning By-law is long overdue.

We are therefore pleased to read that plans are now being made to proceed with a concerted effort to enforce the Township Zoning By-law. We are fully supportive of the planned enforcement program, and the Residents’

Associations will be relieved that help is finally on the horizon. We thank Council and Staff, particularly Mr. Shelswell as the Chief Municipal Law Enforcement Officer, for putting the enforcement plan together.

After reviewing the Report, we found two matters that should be addressed.

First, the Report states that problems with STAs began in 2018. In fact, the record demonstrates that problems began in earnest in 2017, not 2018, when at least 13 very disruptive STAs were reported to the Township. One neighbour of a disruptive STA, the LeMays, submitted a letter from their lawyer in November 2017. The letter noted that 'commercial accommodations' were specifically excluded from dwelling units and put the Township on notice that STA uses were not permitted in shoreline residential zones. This STA was one of several egregious operations that repeatedly disrupted entire neighbourhood communities. There was no effective action taken by the Township to stop this particular illegal land use and the problem ended only when the property was subsequently sold several years later.

Second, the Report states that the safety of Township staff is crucial when undertaking enforcement against STAs. It must be emphasized that the safety and security of the neighbours of disruptive STAs is equally as important and must also be of paramount concern. Disruptive STAs are not just a source of 'nuisance and noise'. Significant resident safety concerns arising from disruptive STAs have been frequently reported to the Township by neighbouring residents. Neighbours are fearful of both the visitors and of some STA operators, with good reason based on the behaviour they have experienced. These resident safety concerns are serious and significant and have been well documented for 6 years, including by three fact witnesses at the OLT hearing in March 2021.

The concerns of Municipal Law enforcement (MLE) Officers for their safety are long standing. Mr. Shelswell, in a report to Council in August 2020, reported that MLE officers were fearful for their safety when attending STAs at night when disruptive STA occupants were present. On page 7 of the Report now before Council, Mr. Shelswell once again expresses concern for the safety of MLE officers. He emphasizes that support from the Ontario Provincial Police will be a crucial component of the enforcement undertaking. If MLE Officers are concerned for their safety when attending an STA, what about the neighbours who are live nearby and are exposed on a continual basis? We believe that the matter of resident safety and security must be added as a critical and paramount concern to the issues already identified in the Report.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Council and Staff for seeing that enforcement of the existing Zoning By-law is being planned so that it can be carried out on an effective basis. We urge persistence and sufficient resourcing of these enforcement efforts as we can all fully expect that STAs will continue to operate in residential neighbourhoods this coming summer in violation of our Township's Zoning By-laws.

Yours truly

David Johnston,
On behalf of the
Oro-Medonte Good Neighbours Alliance
goodneighboursalliance@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.goodneighboursoromedonte.ca/>