

## **Kawartha Lakes council seeks costing of interdepartmental assistance with short-term rental program**

Report by municipal law enforcement and licensing manager states workload of divisions such as building and septic, planning and fire prevention has increased.

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While Kawartha Lakes councillors are pleased with the impact the municipality's Short-Term Rental Licensing program has had, some are concerned with the extra cost and workload placed on other departments. A report has been requested for the new year.

City of Kawartha Lakes photo

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By [Catherine Whitnall](#)Reporter

More increases to Kawartha Lakes' short-term rental program fees may be necessary in order to ensure it remains revenue neutral.

Council passed a motion Tuesday requesting a report be presented in the new year identifying costs associated with the program's impact on the workload of other divisions.

According to a report prepared by municipal law enforcement and licensing manager Aaron Sloan, while the short-term rental (STR) business licensing program is lead by his department, it is assisted by staff in many other divisions including building and septic, planning, fire prevention services, communications, economic development, information and technology.

Sloan told council the biggest challenge experienced by the program since its soft start in 2023 has been processing applications.

The STR business licensing program was fully implemented in January 2024, and by the end of October 2024, staff had issued approximately 422 STR licenses.

Staff is also tracking approximately 278 STR business locations that are unlicensed due to one or more issues including building and septic, lack of building permit, capacity limits, fire safety concerns and suspension or revocation due to accumulation of demerit points.

An anticipated influx of renewals in the spring 2025 is expected to impact workload. Sloan suggested additional staff may be needed.

Ward 4 Coun. Dan Joyce noted when the task force began developing the STR program, making it "revenue neutral" was a priority.

Financially, the implementation of the program has met and exceeded forecasted revenues of approximately \$400,000. Revenues for 2025 could reach \$420,000.

While this is good news, Joyce expressed concerns over the financial "cost" to the assisting departments.

"I'm definitely concerned there and I would like to see a report from these different divisions, what it's costing them to support bylaw in this STR licensing process. If there's a cost there, we need to cover it as well," said Joyce.

Sloan made note of the request, however, there is a possibility they may be offset by the 2.1 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase included in the licensing bylaw approved by council in June 2023.

A number of councillors shared the positive impact the program had this past summer and Sloan echoed the sentiment.

Between the May and Thanksgiving long weekends, 433 STR complaints — including 15 after hours — were reported. Bylaw officers also patrolled 62 particularly “troublesome” properties.

For the first three long weekends of the year, Kawartha Lakes OPP response rate was “very low in the grand scheme of the service they provide the municipality,” Sloan said to council. He added out of the 15 after hours reports to bylaw, roughly one quarter were responded to by OPP.



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