

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Corporate Services

Municipal Governance

Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Nancy Havens, Manager, Licensing Services
Date: September 12, 2022
Subject: Short-Term Dwelling Rentals Survey

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

At the June 6 Council meeting, Council directed administration to conduct a Let's Talk survey to obtain feedback and comments on short-term dwelling rentals (STRs) in the Municipality, and that the information and feedback gathered be reported back to Council by September 2022.

Comments

On July 27, 2022 the public consultation for feedback regarding STRs was available on Let's Talk Chatham-Kent. The review by the public was open until August 22nd on Let's Talk C-K. Promotion of the public consultation on social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) was posted on July 27, August 9, 15 and 18. A media release was circulated on August 15, 2022 requesting feedback to the survey. The Chatham Voice published the media release on August 15, 2022.

AirDNA is a website that claims to provide accurate and comprehensive vacation rental data and analytics in the world. The site indicates that there are 178 active rentals in Chatham-Kent with 84% advertised under Airbnb and 8% under Vrbo. Attachment A is a map created by AirDNA showing the locations of STRs. Administration conducted research on sites such as Airbnb.ca, booking.com, Bluepillow, FindHotel.net and Kijiji to confirm the number of STRs, and concur with AirDNA's findings of 178 STRs in Chatham-Kent.

Administration spoke with a representative of Airbnb so that Airbnb could reach out to the Chatham-Kent hosts to encourage participation in the survey.

The number of STRs in Chatham-Kent per Ward is as follows:

Ward 1 West Kent	31
Ward 2 South Kent	72
Ward 3 East Kent	17
Ward 4 North Kent	16
Ward 5 Wallaceburg	4
Ward 6 Chatham	38
	178

Survey Results

The full survey results are in Attachment B. Here are some highlights from the survey:

- 144 participants in the survey
- 140 were residents of Chatham-Kent
- 87 (63%) of the participants were from Ward 2 – South Kent
- 40 (27.8%) of the participants were owners of a STR with 22 of those participants being from Ward 2
- 73 responded that they use STRs for vacation purposes mainly
- 85 support the STR industry, 39 do not support the STR, 19 unsure
- Top four benefits of STRs:
 - Brings additional visitors and supports local economy
 - Makes Chatham-Kent a more appealing destination
 - Supplements other accommodation options
 - They are important source of income for residents
- Top four drawbacks of STRs:
 - Number of people at the property
 - Noise
 - Parking
 - Garbage
- 43 participants have experienced disruptions
 - 28 occasionally (1-3 times)
 - 15 frequently (4 or more times)
- Top four disruptions:
 - Number of people at the property
 - Noise
 - Parking
 - Garbage
- Other disruptions noted were trespassing, disobeying traffic laws, fire pits, drugs and alcohol use, septic issues, lowers property values, negative impact on quality of life, and increases rent due to lack of availability.
- Top four responses to how were disruptions handled:
 - Did not do anything
 - Talked to property owner

- Contacted Police
- Contacted By-law Enforcement
- Other ways disruptions were handled: put up signs on my stairs to my beach, talked to renters or management company, spoke with Councilors
- The Municipality permits rentals of dwellings in most residential, institutional, and agricultural zones. 74 participants think the Municipality should further regulated STRs by:
 - Amending the Licensing By-law to include STRs with an annual licence fee
 - Amend Zoning By-law to restrict STRs
- 70 participants think the Municipality should not further regulate STRs

Overall, support for licensing STAs was almost evenly split between those that agreed with this approach and those that disagreed.

Regulatory Review

In 2017, a working group of administration reviewed the by-laws and regulations regarding housing and room rentals.

Here is a link to the Report to Council regarding the Regulatory Review of Housing and Room Rentals <https://pub-chatham-kent.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=1609>. There were several public meetings held during that process. As a result of the review, the following by-laws were amended: Zoning By-law, Consolidated Business Licensing By-law, Noise By-law and Public Nuisance By-law. Rental Dwelling Unit, Large (five or more bedrooms) and Rental Dwelling Unit, Small (four bedrooms or less) were added to the Zoning By-law. Rental Dwelling Unit, Large was added to the Licensing By-law to be regulated. The Public Nuisance By-law amendment introduced additional enforcement powers for Police to deal with nuisance parties. The amendment to the Noise By-law extended the time when amplified sound in residential areas is prohibited.

Municipal By-laws

Though the Municipality's existing by-laws do not specifically regulate or define STRs, the provisions and standards of the Municipality's Public Nuisance By-Law, Noise By-Law, Fireworks By-law, Property Standards By-law, Littering By-law, Responsible Animal Ownership By-law, Parking By-Law, Zoning By-Law, and the Ontario Building Code provide the Municipality with some tools to address concerns and complaints if there is a violation of these by-laws. Administration created a Short-Term Dwelling Rentals Guide to Municipal By-laws (Attachment C) to assist the public.

Why do we license?

Business licensing is a way for the Municipality to provide some consumer protection and maintain a safe environment for the general public through inspections. It also helps

to ensure consistency for business owners and customers. The business licensing by-law and other by-laws provide the rules and regulations for each licensed business. During service review in 2015, the business licensing fees were reviewed at cost recovery for inspections required. Numerous municipalities that license STRs do not require any inspection as a result of business licensing. Inspections may occur if complaints or if and when issues arise.

Other Municipalities – What are they doing?

Attachment D is information gathered from other municipalities.

Summary

Administration will promote the Short-Term Dwelling Rentals Guide to assist renters, owners and public with any matters that may arise. Administration will create a webpage where the guide will be located and updated to keep the public informed. In addition, a one-page quick reference guide will also be created for use by the public.

Consultation

An administrative team consisting of a representative from Licensing, Tourism, Building, Planning and Economic Development created the survey for public consultation, and reviewed the results of the information received.

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Attachments: Attachment A: AirDNA map of active rentals
Attachment B: Survey Results
Attachment C: Short-Term Dwelling Rentals Guide to Municipal By-laws
Attachment D: Other Municipalities information on STRs