

June 7, 2022

Mayor J. Murray Jones  
Deputy Mayor Karl Moher  
Councillor Shelaugh Landsmann  
Councillor Heather Watson  
Councillor Tom Watt

Dear Council:

I am writing with respect to the issue of short term rentals (STRs) in our Township. I want to protect the way of life my family has always treasured on Stoney Lake and leave a legacy for my grandchildren who are 8th generation on the lake. Short term rentals are a threat to that legacy and the lake community.

The tradition of cottaging in the community took on new intensity with the financialization of housing in Ontario. Buyers have snapped up properties all over the lake for exorbitant prices, driven up the price of housing, don't live in them and are turning them into a new term "ghost hotel". I did not buy my property beside a commercial venture and my expectation is that Council will not allow STRs to exist in residential areas.

Hosts are making thousands of dollars in rental income and not paying the township adequately for sucking all the resources out of our area. A small number of us pay personal property taxes for roads and public works, infrastructure, waste and recycling, fire and emergency services, police services and other municipal services. Projections for services are based on the population of townships. There are 7620 people living here, not the extra weekly population x 52 from numerous STRs. Are all the additional people from STRs who invade this area every year accounted for in the township's planning? I ask for proof of such planning or a business case for how the Council will pay for the extra services if they allow STRs to remain in the township. As a taxpayer, I am not willing to subsidize the additional services required for what are commercial ventures. If Council wants to have STRs in this township they must come up with a solution that benefits their residents not some non-resident owner of a rental property.

The two economic benefits of increased accommodation options for visitors and benefits to the tourism sector are vastly outweighed by the detriments of STRs:

- Environmental issues such as lake health, fisheries, ecosystems and septic systems;
- Parking;
- Noise;
- Building Code and Safety such as fire inspections, alarms, egress, etc.
- Loss of housing stock;

- Housing Affordability;
- Compatibility with surroundings;
- Competition with traditional accommodation providers;
- Landfill use and Recycling
- Fireworks
- No on-site management

A study on the Impact of Short-Term Rentals on Canadian Housing completed by McGill University highlights the detriments of having STRs in your community. The key findings were:

Short-term rentals have been a major cause of housing financialization in Canada, providing revenue outside traditional rentals; the majority of short-term rentals are owned by large-scale commercial operators and not by private individuals and the financial incentives of short-term rentals place pressure on housing, leading to long-term rentals being converted into short-term ones. One key finding was STRs are growing faster in rural and small towns.

The fabric of the lake has changed in recent years. Many of the long-time cottagers are gone. Respect for the lake has disappeared and been replaced with renters who have no vested interest in protecting the lake. They are the new invasive species.

I request that Council consider banning STRs from operating in waterfront residences, require owners running STRs in the township have a commercial license and a process to rescind that license if there are legitimate complaints documented against a rental property. The time is long past due to put an end to short-term rentals disrupting our lives and causing untold damage to our lakes. Douro-Dummer's web page says it all - A Place to Call Home. I trust Council will uphold that motto to support and protect the community for its residents who live here not bully consortiums and ghost landlords looking to make a fast buck. As residents, I believe we are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

Respectfully,

*Suzanne Coros*