

168 Bradshaw Road
Seguin ON, P2A 0B2



Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association

February 16, 2017

Township of Seguin
5 Humphrey Drive
Seguin On P2A 2W8

Attention: Seguin Planning Department

Re: Short Term Cottage Rental Report DPS-PL-2017-138

The Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association (OLRA) would like to give its input on the topic of Short Term Cottage Rentals (STCR) as per the Seguin Report DPS-PL-2017-138 and the survey OLRA undertook of its members in November of 2017 on this topic (see attached OLRA Survey – Nov 2017 on STCR).

This issue arose in particular because of the recent commercialization of a handful of residential zoned cottage properties in Seguin, which were advertised as full-time vacation rentals and the issues that renting activity caused for neighbours. Such a commercial renting activity in a residential neighbourhood can bring a revolving door of vacationers using the property for short stays, much like a mini-motel.

The OLRA Board decided to survey our members on this topic. 120 OLRA members responded to our survey. Here is a summary of the main results:

96% said they do not rent their properties.

Of the 4% who said they have rented, none of them rented their properties full-time. Most said they took measures to educate their renters on how to be good lake stewards and on Seguin's by-laws (i.e. re: noise by-laws and fire bans).

96% said it would decrease their enjoyment of their property if a neighbouring property was turned into a commercial short-term rental property (like a mini motel). (Q7).

72% said it would decrease their intentions to invest in their property if a neighbouring property was turned into a commercial short-term rental property (like a mini motel). (Q8).

84% of respondents said Seguin should enact a by-law to regulate or prohibit the commercialization of residential lakefront properties into short-term rentals.

48 comments were also submitted as to “why or why not” (Q12) Some of the comments expressing the common sentiments are listed below.

please! reduce the rentals. they don't care at all about the lake and are very disruptive

We love the lake because we take good care of it and the environment surrounding it. I would like to enjoy many more years of this area and hope that my grandchildren and theirs will be able to as well.

Regulations are required to ensure ecological levels and overall enjoyment to those who have invested to be on the lake.

People should be able to rent their place to help offset costs of owning a cottage

I recently completed a major addition at a cost of over \$200,000.00. I would not have considered the addition if any of my neighbors turned their cottage into rental cottage.

We are planning to retire at the cottage and neighbouring commercial, short term rental business would have a significant impact. Furthermore - we are seeing lake water quality issues already and the added load of more people would add even more stress.

Otter Lake is at it's capacity and we have enough people on the lake who have no clue on how to boat.

My experience with renters elsewhere has not been positive. They are generally rowdy fun loving guests who don't respect others as they probably won't be back.

Based on the feedback of our members, OLRA recommends proceeding with the following Regulatory Option in the Seguin report: Option 3. Continue to monitor the STCRs issue and enforce the regulations of Zoning By-law 2006-125 as they exist today on a complaint basis (Carling, Georgian Bay).

OLRA specifically does **not** support Option: 6. Amend the Zoning By-law and establish a Licensing By-law to permit STCRs, subject to specific regulations and licensing requirements (Niagara Falls, Niagara on the Lake, Blue Mountain).

Seguin is very unlike the above three jurisdictions that have chosen to create short term licensing programs for residential properties. These three jurisdictions have large tourist attractions (i.e. the Blue Mountain ski hills and Niagara Falls), which may not be harmed by more intensive use of residential zoned properties through short term renting.

96% of OLRA's members surveyed do not rent. It makes no sense to potentially increase the taxes for all Seguin property owners by creating and maintaining a licensing program to regulate so few.

In addition, Seguin could lose what makes it special. As the "*The Natural Place To Be*", Seguin's main attraction is its natural scenery and clean lake waters. These attractions are why OLRA's members invest in their cottage properties and love being at the lake with their friends and families.

Otter Lake is a lake trout lake that is already deemed to be over its recreational carrying capacity according to the Seguin Official Plan. In short, the attraction and value Otter Lake has for the property owners surrounding it is in a delicate balance between the health of the natural ecology and the negative impact humans have on it. Increasing human impact on our lake through short term cottage rentals is clearly not what OLRA members want, nor is it good for the long-term health of our lake.

Therefore, as well as supporting Regulatory Option 3, **OLRA asks that Seguin undertake an education program to raise the awareness** of all lake shore property owners **of Seguin's existing by-laws and who to call when issues do arise**. Such educational material would help OLRA and other lake associations in our efforts to educate all those who enjoy time at the lake as to the best ways to do that and would complement the existing Seguin brochures: *Blue Green Algae – What You Need to Know* and *Good Neighbour Practices* and Lake Stewardship Program.

Regards,

Kerry Mueller

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