

Shelburne Council budgets for additional bylaw officer next year

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Shelburne Town Council is adding the cost of a new full-time bylaw enforcement officer into the Town's 2020 draft budget.

During their meeting on Monday (Nov. 8), Shelburne Town Council received a report reviewing bylaw enforcement services from director of legislative services Jennifer Willoughby, which recommended the additional position.

The junior municipal law enforcement officer position is estimated to cost \$70,432, and would look to include after-hours and weekend enforcement relating to parking, noise, and clean yards.

"A lot of the concerns that we hear are due to the inability for after-hours and weekends," said Coun. Lindsay Wegener. "For the most part they correlate very much so to property maintenance, and parking. Hiring a junior officer, it hopefully will help alleviate some of that and give us more assistance in making sure that there's compliance with certain bylaws."

Council, at their July 26 meeting, requested a review on bylaw enforcement services including current practices, regulatory bylaws, and updated applicable legislation.

As part of the review, Shelburne staff have developed a new clean yards bylaw, where enforcement mechanisms will be very different.

The clean yards bylaw, which will not be replacing the property standards bylaw, will see shorter time frames for compliance and no right to appeal the intent.

"A clean yards bylaw sets minimum standards for properties including regulations regarding litter, waste, and property maintenance to help ensure that properties are safe, clean, and attractive in relation to adjacent properties," said Willoughby.

During the meeting, council also received information regarding reactive and proactive approach to bylaw services.

According to the report to council, the cost of reactive enforcement is generally significantly less than a proactive approach. The proactive approach can also come with difficulties such as perceived targeting, harassment, increase court times by staff resulting in lost time in field enforcement.

Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson said he doesn't believe the reactive approach is working in Shelburne, after himself and his council colleagues have received many complaints and concerns to the reactive approach.

"To me it doesn't seem like it's working for us, I would prefer to see a more proactive approach to addressing some of the issues that I think we have here in our town," said Anderson.

Chief Administrative Officer Denyse Morrissey said a number of the complaints council is hearing fall under the umbrella of the clean yard bylaw.

The clean yards bylaw is expected to be presented to council at their Dec. 13 meeting.

"If that doesn't address what you hope to achieve then you can allow us to come back again," said Morrissey.

?There is no municipalities in Ontario that we're aware of that operates on a proactive approach because that requires you to enforce every bylaw that you have on a proactive basis.?

Municipalities in Ontario enforce their bylaws on a reactive basis, with investigations conducted on a complaints, which can be generated from many sources, received by the municipality.