

# South Bruce Pen. stands pat on short-term rentals

## Owen Sound Sun Times

August 22, 2013

By Rob Gowan

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula will not be moving forward with any licensing or zoning changes with respect to short-term accommodations.

At its meeting on Tuesday, council thanked the business owner who has brought the issue to their attention, but decided to take no action on the matter.

"It is going to open a can of worms and going to take a tremendous amount of town involvement to do it properly, both to set up what we want to do, which is the problem we are having over at Blue Mountains right now," Coun. Jim Turner said Thursday. "Then there is what the result is going to be. How much is it going to cost us to enforce this and police it."

The issue has been brought to council in the past by Frank Stolp, owner of Sunny Birch Cottage Resort in Sauble Beach.

At his most recent visit to a council meeting in May, Stolp said he is losing \$8,000 to \$10,000 a year because potential customers are choosing to rent residences in the community. Stolp, who is concerned about home rentals for a day, a weekend or a week, has argued that rental businesses should be zoned commercial like his is and properties zoned residential shouldn't be permitted to be used for what he considers rental businesses.

On Thursday, Stolp said he was not surprised that council decided not to do anything.

"What do you expect from people that are not interested in business and more and more cottages are for rent," said Stolp, who doesn't know what his next step will be.

Stolp said legitimate businesses in Sauble, such as his, are not renting to capacity because of rentals of residential properties.

"We are trying to do weekly rentals, but for most of us it is two or three nights, and believe me, that is like pulling teeth," said Stolp. "The prices we have to charge to get somebody is ridiculous. For families it is too much."

Turner said Stolp is the only business owner he is aware of that has brought the issue forward to council.

"I would tend to think that if I was running a motel in town I would be losing business to people that are doing short-term rentals, but they don't seem to be concerned with it," said Turner. "He is the only one to my knowledge who has raised the issue with council and he has been quite vociferous with his objections."

Turner, who added that he is not in favour of regulating people any more than they already are, said he would like to wait and see how Blue Mountains does in its efforts to regulate short-term accommodations.

The Blue Mountains started looking at regulating short-term accommodations back in 2008. Over the years, the town received many complaints about rowdy behaviour in and around the rental units including loud noise, improper parking, garbage strewn about and vandalism.

Blue Mountains council approved official plan and zoning bylaw amendments to regulate the so-called "party places," which were appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board in 2011. The OMB ruled in Blue Mountain's favour but the hearing officer's decision was then appealed. Last summer a Superior Court judge denied leave to appeal the OMB decision, allowing the town to proceed with regulating short-term rentals.

Under the official plan and zoning bylaws, short-term rentals are now directed to specific parts of the municipality away from traditional, detached low-density neighbourhoods and are required to conform to specific regulations in areas such as municipal services and parking.

The town is now working on a licensing program under the Municipal Act.