

Sandra Morrison



April 6, 2023

Mayor and Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
26 Francis Street  
PO Box 9000  
Lindsay, Ontario  
K9V 5R8

Dear Mayor Elmslie and Council,

My name is Sandra Morrison and have been a permanent resident of the City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) since October 2020. Although I am relatively new to CKL, I have a deep connection to this area and moving here felt like coming home. My G-G-G-G Great-Grandfather was William Ramsey. He served on the very first Township Council of Mariposa in 1842 and served as Reeve for three years. I have several sets of 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Great-Grandparents buried in the Salem Cemetery in Mariposa. I also have ancestors buried in the Valentia Cemetery. This is my home and where my people came from.

Recently, there has been a lot of discussion around Short Term Rentals (STRs). I was unable to attend the recent meeting held April 4<sup>th</sup> but would like my voice heard. I strongly support the proposed draft STR Bylaw and I don't want to rehash what has already been raised, however, do want to speak about an issue that I feel has not had sufficient discussion. Specifically, the need for capacity limits because of the impact that large groups (more than 8 guests) have on noise levels all day – not just between the hours of 11 pm and 7 am (the restricted window outlined in the current Noise Bylaw).

As background, when we purchased our home on Aino Beach Road, we were delighted that it was a dead-end street lined with single family dwellings used as permanent homes. We researched the area and searched for STR addresses and were happy that there were none nearby. We made an offer and moved into our dream home to 'pre-retire'. Our happiness was short-lived however, as we discovered that every resident of every community is but one real-estate transaction from living a nightmare. Our elderly neighbour had been recently widowed and five months after we moved in, she sold her home and moved to an Assisted Living facility.

The new owner started renovations immediately and it quickly became evident that he was intending to use the property as a STR. He converted the three bedroom bungalow into a 5 bedroom 'luxury cottage', added a hot tub, and in August 2021 began renting to groups of 12 to 15 people.

During the summer months (May to September), the property is rented in one week blocks. From September to May, it is rented almost every weekend (Friday to Sunday). In the last year, the owner and his family have used the property for their own personal use for a total of about three weeks. The rest of the time, it has been rented to a steady parade of 'guests'. While the owner does make an effort

to screen his guests, he is still renting to groups of 12-15 people – mostly groups of couples, friends, and large family units.

A typical group arrives on a Friday around 4 pm. They unload the groceries, beer, wine and other beverages that they brought with them (not purchased locally) and then move to the backyard deck, where they pour themselves drinks, socialize, laugh, talk and celebrate their vacation getaway. Most often they turn on music (which is ironic as it drowns out the quiet peace and tranquility that they came to the country to seek). Half the group then moves to the hot tub (it has a capacity of 8 people) and the rest stay on the deck. The ones in the hot tub, speak and shout loudly over the noise of the jets to converse with each other and the group on the deck. The ones on the deck, yell to converse with the ones in the hot tub. Then they turn the music up louder because now they can't hear it over their shouting. And the more they drink, the louder they get, the more they shout and the more they turn up the music. This goes on until 11 pm – usually with a break for dinner, where they are on the deck or in the kitchen with the patio doors wide open. If there are children with them, the kids run down to the water and shout back and forth with their parents on the deck or in the hot tub (a distance of about 150 feet). The next day, the group is in the yard playing badminton, football, or other games, on the dock, in the kayaks or in the hot tub again. The shouting back and forth, laughing and carousing continues all day. As the day progresses, again, the more they drink, the louder they get. Some groups pepper their shouting with obscenities, hoots and singing. One weekend last summer, the guests set up a giant Bouncy Castle in the backyard and kept it going all day. But at 11 pm, they stop and go inside.

So why am I telling you this? It is because none of this noise or impact on my enjoyment of my weekends or summer is currently against the Noise Bylaw. It is clearly nuisance noise but I have no recourse to deal with it.

Imagine living next door to a large family BBQ or party that goes from 9 or 10 in the morning until 11 pm at night – EVERY day from May until September (at least 120 days) and EVERY weekend from September until May – that's another 64 days. That is at least 184 days of a crowd of loud voices, laughing, yelling, and music. And just to clarify, groups of 12-15 people are indeed a crowd – crowd is defined as 'a large number of people gathered or collected together or a lot of people for the circumstances'. Twelve to 15 people is a lot of people for a house originally built to be a three bedroom bungalow. Imagine not being able to open your windows without hearing the noise from next door, no sitting on your deck enjoying a quiet evening listening to the birds, no quiet reading a book by the water, no working your garden and enjoying the buzz of the bees. I am a prisoner in my own home.

This is why capacity limits for STRs is critical. It is not a problem to share space with a single family or group of 8 or less, but as soon as it turns into a larger group, they can't help but be loud. Normal conversation in a crowd can't help but be loud and impact neighbours. Additionally, amendments need to be made to the current noise bylaw such that unreasonable noise (with clear definitions) AT ANY TIME of the day or night is prohibited – not just between 11 pm and 7 am. These two considerations, along with the other proposals in the draft STR bylaw will help to make all our lives better and allow us all to enjoy CKL. The other proposals will address the bottles/cans thrown into my yard, the trespassing guests who enter my fenced backyard to take pictures of my 'pretty' tree, the vomit I have to clean up after the bachelor parties – but I really need some recourse for the nuisance noise.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely

Sandra Morrison

