

\$1,000 a month will be added to property taxes of unregistered STA operators

About 40 short-term accommodations in Grey Highlands have not replied when contacted about its new licencing program.

Some houses operated on the Air BnB-type model had created such problems for neighbours that the municipality developed a bylaw and contracted enforcement out.

The firm tracks sites and then confirm locations and gets contacts. Last year in July and again in August, 72 operators were sent letters asking them to apply for a licence.

With many of those still outstanding, another letter is going out in January giving those operators until month-end before \$1,000 is added to their tax bill.

Another \$1,000 (plus interest) will be added each month until the property owner assures compliance, council heard in a staff report on Jan. 6.

The licencing process with inspections is handled by the building department while the community and economic development department is responsible for the overall program.

Due to COVID's impact

on tourism, Grey Highlands had deferred or waived some fees, but they resumed on Jan. 1.

There is no annual fee for a short-term stay where the host is present. Unhosted sites have a \$300 annual fee. There is an occupancy inspection fee of \$200 before a licence is given to operate in Grey Highlands.

On Sept. 2, council approved changes to set a 45-day limit after notification by the municipality for owners to get their licence application in and fulfill requirements under the bylaw.

Another change was to make sure that any verified complaints were registered against an STA property as part of the licensing demerit system.

As well, the municipality can deny a licensing application for an unlicensed property that has received three verified complaints under the demerit system.

Deputy-Mayor Aakash Desai has declared an interest and not participated in STA discussions as his family has an accommodation business.

Thanks
Fred & Gail