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Bylaw enforcement officer needed

By Elaine Della-Mattia, Sault Star
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City staff has been asked to examine options to create another bylaw enforcement officer position for the city without increasing the municipal full time equivalent staff contingent.

The motion, moved by Ward 3 Coun. Matthew Shoemaker and Ward 4 Coun. Marchy Bruni was passed by city council Monday.

For several years city staff has argued that the lone bylaw enforcement officer position is not enough to effectively enforce the city's bylaws but hiring the officer would require an additional expenditure of wages and benefits during tight economic times.

Shoemaker said his resolution is different because it asks city staff to examine options that would see an additional bylaw officer hired without increasing the budget.

Shoemaker said he doesn't have any specific ideas on how that can be achieved but is hoping that staff will look at its functions internally and determine how best to proceed.

It was suggested that by shrinking city council by two members, the honorarium saved there might be diverted towards a new bylaw officer

Tom Vair, the city's deputy CAO of community development and enterprise services, agrees there has been a demand for another bylaw enforcement officer for some time. Attempts to create that position during the 2017 budget deliberations was unsuccessful.

Vair said attempts are being made to determine if the position can be funded by generating more revenue but it's too early to tell whether it can be achieved.

“Issuing tickets with fines are not very popular,” Vair said.

He said other ideas to be able to budget for the position or shuffle other job descriptions or responsibilities have not yet been examined.

“There's nothing obvious at this time. We had reduced costs significantly and created efficiencies this past budget,” he said.

Shoemaker said he believes the position is important to the community.

“Other than PWT issues like snow removal and potholes, its the bylaw enforcement issues that we receive the most calls on like dirty yards and rodents and long grass,” he said. “It's probably the second largest complaint we receive as councillors and something that bylaw office have investigate.”


Shoemaker said the enforcement aspect is just as important as having the bylaws themselves.

While he's hopeful any orders issued result in a correction of the problem, non-compliance can also result in fines, generating revenue for the city, he said.


“We've had the discussions about bylaw officers in the past but it seems to have fallen by the wayside,” he said.

He's hoping the resolution will bring the issue to the forefront again.

A report is expected back to council in about three months.



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