

JamesTown Burger King

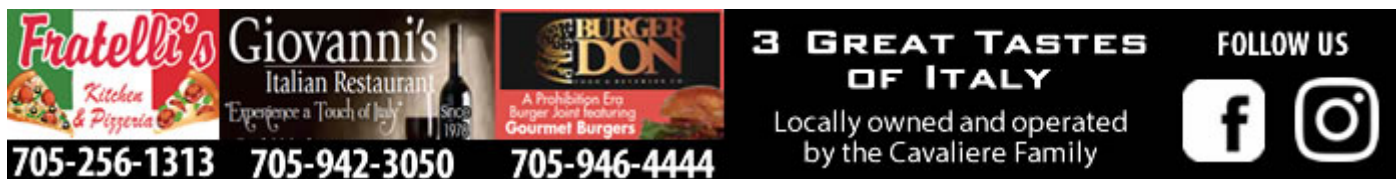
By **Ernest Skinner** - May 26, 2018



A few weeks back it was announced that the city was going to look into tackling the issue of making sure property owners kept up with their properties in the Jamestown area, specifically. There is obviously nothing wrong with that and it is a great forward-thinking initiative. Having said that, it made me think that the city needs to also tackle bad properties citywide and not just focus on one area.

For instance, the former Burger King building is an eyesore of graffiti, garbage, and probably squatters (in the abandoned shack at the rear of the building). A friend of mine who lives on Blake

street behind that area told me he has scene garbage strewn around and abandoned needles and syringes on the property. His concern was for the children in the area.



I recently brought this issue up with councilor Matthew Shoemaker and he told me that the city only has only one Property By-Law Enforcement Officer. Matt and I are both of the agreement that the city needs to invest in at least one more officer as the city is too large for one person handle this type of job.

We are a city that is very active in terms of drive-through traffic (international bridge, Trans Canada HWY) and thus appearance and first impressions can make or break you. If we want to quit being a one pony town, we need to clean up the facade as best as we can. You won't see areas like this in Petoskey, Charlevoix etc. ; they thrive on tourism and codes and bylaws are enforced. This is why we go back year after year after year.

Now, for whatever reason the Burger King building hasn't been able to sell, it is of my opinion that the property owner needs to maintain the building/property and keep up with certain standards (facade etc). The city thus also has a responsibility to enact by-laws to require these commitments. Fines and penalties go a long way in the cities budget, and to let these buildings across town get

away with letting them look run down and unappealing,...well it doesn't help our bottom line of trying to sell our fine city.

Now, I don't think property owners have to sit outside and paint over graffiti every time it happens or have his lawnmower running and waiting for the grass to exceed 7 inches, but there has to be a set general standard and a process and time frame once an infraction has been deemed to have occurred to be corrected and brought back into standard.

All over town, there are buildings and properties that have been left to decay and that is where enforcement needs to be brought in.

According to Matt, time after time someone in council has brought up a motion to hire and second By Law Enforcement Officer, only to be shot down as "it's not in the budget".

I disagree; there is plenty of money in the budget. Every time you turn around council is voting yes for a consultation or study of this or that. These consultation fees are many times \$50 000 or more. This would be a decent salary for another body to make help keep and make Sault Ste. Marie beautiful again.

If these owners were fined for infractions, the money would be piling up in the coffers and at the same time, the facade of our city would change.

I encourage the future council coming in this Fall to hire another Officer and make them diligent in enforcing the standards as they would do for other infractions such as parking meter violations.

We have a beautiful city and need to keep it that way and not let passiveness erode it over time.

Ernest Skinner Jr.

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Ernest Skinner was born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie and attended Humber College after high school. He has a passion for other cultures and has traveled throughout Mexico and many South American countries.. He has written many articles over the years that deal with events happening here in Sault Ste. Marie. Reading about ancient civilizations, world politics, and mysteries of the unknown are also defining factors that are his general makeup. Outside of being serious, he has a bright sense of humor that was molded from shows like Seinfeld to The Simpsons.

Ernest is a SaultOnline.com columnist