

Bylaw enforcement keeps Township staff busy

By Mark Pavilons

Enforcing King's bylaws keeps Township staffers busy from one end of the municipality to the other.

A staff report highlighting activities in 2019 noted a high volume of inquiries, complaints and requests for services.

Citizen complaints were high on the list, and increased 26% over 2018. Last year, staff responded to 1,344 complaints and the trend indicates it's growing substantially.

Parking complaints top the list at 382 (28%), followed by clean yards at 305 (23%). Miscellaneous calls (11%) and zoning (11%) were next, with calls about signs the next highest on the list.

Other top complaints by the public include problems with fences, debris left on roads, illegal dumping and noise.

Staff have created a map highlighting the location of the majority of parking complaints. Parking for longer than three hours in the three main villages was the main culprit.

Staffing hasn't changed since the complement grew to four officers in 2016. The Township is looking at hiring a new bylaw enforcement officer to improve response times and proactively address parking issues.

Staff deal with many things across the municipality, including sign permits, removing election signs, issuing parking tickets and making court appearances.

In 2019, staff issued 249 sign permits, the bulk of which were temporary mobile signs and special event signs.

A more efficient internal process was implemented last year regarding sign permits, but staff noted there are still challenges with special event type signage. Some of these can be time-consuming and involve York Region if they're placed on regional roads.

Officers also look out for signs that are placed without permission or contrary to guidelines.

Staff were busy in 2019 removing bag signs for the federal election.

King's bylaw division works closely with Vaughan Animal Services in responding to animal calls, licencing, pet tags, etc. In 2019, some 911 dog tags were issued, while 37 cat tags went out.

Bylaws are enforced under the Municipal Act and Provincial Offences Act. While staff work with residents to try to resolve the issues, it sometimes results in legal action. In the case of companies failing to do proper remedial action, King staff will contact an outside company to do the work, and bill the offending party.

There is increasing pressure on the Township to move to an administrative monetary penalty system (AMPS), due to the high number of unpaid parking tickets.

The Township also brought in some new initiatives in 2019. They included a Toys for Tickets program where motorists could bring in toys instead of paying parking fines. That generated some \$475.

The first-ever microchip and rabies clinic was held in King and this was quite successful. In all, 107 rabies vaccines were administered and 27 microchip implants were done.

King also created a pilot program that issued parking permits, allowing on-street parking for residents. A total of 346 permits were issued.

Some new bylaws are being created and will be brought to council in the future. They include a property standards bylaw, fence bylaw and parks bylaw (regarding cannabis).

Staff will continue with strategic and proactive enforcement campaigns.

The success of municipal enforcement and compliant requires constant monitoring and presence. As King's population grows, service demands will also rise. Staff are evaluating this impact on resources and will make recommendations to council if and when added resources become necessary.

Service enhancements and increased demand for evening and weekend enforcement will continue to drive expectations of a higher level of enforcement activity in King, staff wrote.