

DATE: February 22, 2021

TO: Chair and Directors
Electoral Areas Services Committee

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Bylaw Enforcement Semi-Annual and Annual Report

Purpose

To keep the Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC) informed of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) bylaw enforcement files and activities.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

For information purposes only.

Executive Summary

This report references January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. Some highlights of this reporting period include:

- A total of 33 Municipal Ticket Informations (MTIs) were issued in 2020;
- The illegal dumping program received 92 reports of dump sites in 2020;
- Bylaw staff completed 102 patrols of CVRD parks;
- 130 hours were spent directly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by bylaw staff;
- Provincial Court Prosecutions against three properties under the same ownership was initiated. The charges include - unsightly, zoning, and building violations;
- A Consent Order was achieved on a long standing zoning and OCP violation file, the consent order will ensure compliance long term.

The Bylaw Enforcement Policy requires that detailed reports are maintained on all bylaw enforcement activities, in addition to regular reporting of enforcement activity.

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Background/Current Situation

This semi-annual report is for the period of July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

- Within this reporting period there were 110 files opened.
- Within this reporting period there were 137 files closed.

Further to the above file statistics, within this reporting period bylaw staff have fielded:

- 536 phone calls related to specific enforcement files.
- 536 phone calls of general enforcement inquiries.

Bylaw staff continue to notice an increase in online and email complaints, inquiries and communication with the majority of new files generated by complaints submitted electronically. Staff utilized the dedicated website pages for each bylaw service to keep residents informed on bylaw changes or notifications.

In addition to the statistics for the last reporting period, the following information outlines bylaw enforcement activities for all of 2020.

- There were a total of 252 new files generated.
- Of these, the largest number of files refer to noise with 54 files opened.
- During 2020, there were 243 files closed.
- Staff fielded a total of 928 calls related to specific enforcement files.
- Staff fielded a total of 843 calls related to general enforcement enquiries.
- 90 inquiries related to COVID-19 were received.
- Over 760 complaint acknowledgment, follow up and warning letters were issued.

Some notable statistics for CVRD Animal Control for this reporting period include:

- 1120 dog licenses sold in 2020.
- CVRD Animal Control officers investigated 82 barking dog complaints, 26 aggressive incidents and 142 dogs at large.
- CVRD Animal Control were also involved with 17 incidents where animals were impounded and they conducted 788 CVRD park and trail patrols.

Options

This report is presented for information purposes only.

Financial Factors

The financial costs associated to bylaw files for 2020, including this reporting period, are \$35,460 in combined legal fees for enforcement files relating to zoning, noise, animal control and unsightly premises.

Legal Factors

Bylaw staff prepare and process all disputed MTIs issued by the CVRD Bylaw and Building staff as well as any issued by RCMP or Animal Control officers. Staff utilize the Province's Civil Resolution Tribunal process (CRT) to collect all unpaid MTIs and have been successful on each case to date. Throughout 2020 when the Provincial Courts were closed down due to COVID-19, staff established a procedure with our local Court Services that allowed the processing and attendance of court related items.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

Compliance is achieved on unsightly premises files while working with property owners and tenants that may be living in hazardous or unhealthy living conditions. A sound methodology in negotiating compliance achieves the aim of supporting a quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety and well-being.

Intergovernmental Factors

Often compliance is achieved on our enforcement files with the help of outside agencies such as RCMP, Corps of Commissionaires for Animal Control, Agricultural Land Commission, M'akola Housing Society, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure along with their road contractor, BC Hydro, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resources, Islands Trust, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

In 2020 Bylaw Compliance staff continued to work with local community integration specialists, through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction as well as increase working relationships with the RCMP on properties where there was a heavy criminal element, or a higher perceived safety risk to CVRD staff.

Interdepartmental Involvement

Bylaw Compliance continues to work closely with the other branches of the CVRD with a variety of enforcement issues, including building bylaw infractions, illegal dumping, enforcement in CVRD parks, and assistance in issuing and prosecuting any required MTIs.

The illegal dumping program across the Comox Valley Regional District and Strathcona Regional District saw a slight decrease from 94 reports in 2019 to 92 in 2020. This was the third year in a row with a slight decrease. There was also a noticeable decrease in large sites consisting of construction type debris.

Additionally, bylaw staff maintained an open tracking file noting observations during CVRD parks patrols to assist the parks department with enforcement and visibility. Bylaw staff opened five files based on complaints related to park activities and spent 42 hours patrolling with a total of 102 Parks patrols completed.

Citizen/Public Relations

Throughout the CVRD's office closures and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, bylaw officers continue to process and respond to all bylaw complaints and inquiries in a timely manner. All complaints regarding COVID-19 were responded to as a priority, forwarded onto the appropriate agency, and logged to track time spent.

Attachments: Appendix A – 2020 Annual File Statistics

2020 Bylaw Stats

