

Tiny eyeing issue of floating homes on horizon



[Derek Howard](#)
about an hour ago



Stock image

[Listen to this article](#)
00:04:56

If you thought fences on beaches and short-term rentals were problematic for Tiny residents to deal with, get ready for the next wave.

Floating accommodations on waterways were brought to council's attention during a recent committee of the whole meeting, touching upon problems faced by the Township of Georgian Bay in their struggles with handling the issue.

A request from the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources, and Forestry (NDMNRF) seeking input on managing "camping" and the use of floating accommodations in municipalities was brought to Tiny council through staff who had been monitoring the issue.

"The ministry is seeing increased interest in the use of waterways by various types of vessels (i.e., watercrafts equipped for overnight accommodation)," cites the NDMNRF request. "In some cases, the ministry has heard concerns relating to vessels that are primarily designed for accommodation and not navigation."

Deputy Mayor Steffen Walma shared concerns that floating accommodations could become as problematic as short-term rentals.

"(As) municipalities, we foot the OPP bill," Walma remarked. "If we see this trend increasing, we'll probably see increased OPP costs, and we'll likely be on the hook for some of that. If there is a licensing perspective, that should be considered in the budget for that portion as well as increased septage.

"If we're talking boats with accommodations, all of the refuse from those boats is pumped out, and I would guess – I don't know with certainty – that that would fall under septage and not go into the sewage treatment facilities that likely get spread on the farmers' fields, so we'll see increased traffic in that to some capacity," Walma added.

Coun. Gibb Wishart noted that residents running into building code issues with increasing their property footprint could see a floating solution in moving a structure onto the waterways.

"Many saunas have showers," stated Wishart. "And when they find that the municipality says: 'You need to get rid of some of your accessory buildings,' and they say: 'Okay, we'll take the sauna and put it on a floating accessory'; suddenly you've moved the shower out onto the bay.

"And you can bet your life they don't catch that grey water."

Wishart stated that because floating accessories are not boats, don't have motors, and can't travel like watercraft, it would require pump-out services to travel to them, adding "good luck if you're out on Giant's Tomb."

"Township of Georgian Bay already has had some considerable headaches with this. And I'm surprised we haven't," said Wishart.

Mayor George Cornell said that the issue was [an area of topic at a recent Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association](#) (FOCA) annual general meeting, concerning interference with boating and visibility among their discussions.

Cornell shared that [the Gloucester Pool Cottagers' Association](#) based out of Port Severn had raised awareness to people putting shipping containers on waterway docks, as brought up at FOCA.

Public works director Tim Leitch admitted that along with planning director Shaun Persaud, Tiny staff had been aware of the issues ongoing in the Township of Georgian Bay, which is why they felt compelled to add the NDMNRF request for Tiny council to digest.

"There's also in the legislation that they only have to move – I believe it's every 30 days – 100 metres," remarked Leitch. "So technically, somebody could just be on our shoreline all summer long and not have the proper safety equipment.

"It is a concern, and we're seeing that growing concern, as councillor Wishart talked about, up in Georgian Bay Township where – I've seen it myself – where people just take something, tie it to shore, leave it there all summer long."

The matter was discussed in-depth at a Township of Georgian Bay planning council recently, following a development services department report that examined the authority and tools looking to control, and enforce if necessary, floating accommodations.

Compliance of floating structures was discussed at Township of Georgian Bay council recently [following a February planning council report](#) that examined tools and enforcement after an instance last summer on Little Lake generated multiple complaints. Use of a floating structure as a dwelling unit is [deemed illegal in the zoning bylaws of Township of Georgian Bay](#).

Tiny council approved staff looking into responses "for matters including wastewater management, duration of use, increasing human pressures on waterways, impeding access to public land and

waterways, and municipal bylaws” for the NDMNRF request, with an ask for council to see the comments at the next meeting prior to submission.

A summary of the compliance of floating structures report and discussion can be found on the council agenda page [of the Township of Georgian Bay website](#).

The NDMNRF request for input regarding floating accommodations on waterways overview can be viewed within the agenda page located [on the Tiny Township website](#).

Archives of council meetings are available to view [on Tiny township's YouTube channel](#).

**Add to the
story**

**Have a story
idea?**

**Letter to the
editor**

**Report a
mistake**

**Ask a
question**