

SF-25-40

Dear Safety and Facilities Services Committee,

Currently, there are several bylaws that are not in line with Ontario court rulings and the city's own recommendations to residents found on the city website and applications/renewals for being a Bee City. This creates unnecessary conflict between citizens and bylaw officers.

Currently bylaw has a "no reprisals" policy - this means that a resident who has had a bylaw complaint against them then has the consequence of having their rights removed from them and is no longer an equal citizen to their neighbours (as they are not allowed to make bylaw complaints). This is in contravention of acceptable equity practices, human rights and should not be a common practice.

Currently, bylaw has a policy that they will not issue orders to citizens without complaints (however, this is not followed with regards to uncleared sidewalks and parking enforcement). This policy enables residents to "weaponize" bylaw against neighbours that they do not like as they are able to target specific individuals/houses.

I propose that citizens be allowed to maintain their right to make bylaw complaints to ensure that no individual citizen is allowed to be targeted and they maintain the same rights as everyone else to better their community through bylaw (ie. a citizen should be allowed to make a complaint about a public safety concern even though bylaw has had a complaint about them) and no important public safety concerns are going unaddressed. I propose that the high number of bylaw complaints (and subsequent funding) that Oshawa has be decreased by starting a policy where all complaints are dealt with in the same manner as uncleared sidewalks/parking enforcement (ie. if someone receives a complaint/order about their property all properties with a similar issue on that street will also receive a complaint/order). This will prevent neighbours from "weaponizing" bylaw as they must first consider whether it is worth targeting an individual neighbour when bylaw will also look at the entire street for the same issue. This has the potential to decrease complaints, confrontations between neighbours, and confrontations between citizens and bylaw officers. Studies have shown that bylaw enforcement has been used to target marginalized communities. A pilot program would be suitable.

Currently there is no body that oversees Bylaw enforcement, with city council members and commissioners stating that they can not get involved with bylaw matters. While, in practice, this seems like a good decision, this does open the door to mishandling of matters as even the Directors of Bylaw are themselves part of the Bylaw department. Even police departments have an oversight body. Creating an oversight committee/organization (similar to the current advisory committees) with quarterly reviews would assist citizens in their interactions with officers and assist officers in their duties. This would assist councillors/residents in knowing what is occurring within the city, increase faith in bylaw from residents, and identify any gaps between bylaws and enforcement that need to be rectified. A pilot program would be suitable.

I have previously provided information packages (during the June 2025 City Special Council Meeting) to city council members, the mayor and different department heads and commissioners regarding the changes that should occur and specific reasons why these should be altered.

Thank you,
Emily Noel **M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec.14(1)**