

## Building Enforcement in HH

During Covid-19, there has been an increase throughout Ontario of building activity including people building without a permit. HH is actively pursuing these offences. Municipalities have 12 months from when the offence first came to their knowledge, not from when you started construction, to commence with legal proceeding. HH apparently has a long list to pursue over the quieter winter months. HH is on a mission to put some teeth in its laws aided by our by-law officer and the building department and employees who must enforce the legislation the province and our council passes.

So if you are one of those who have been lulled into complacency from past practices in HH, its time to wake up and take the rule of law seriously.

Council passed the Administrative Monetary Penalty System recently and it has compliance teeth and financial impact for those who ignore our laws. And before you overreact, council and the by-law staff fully understand that it will take some time for this system to be fully functioning including a clear understanding by HH residents of the laws and the penalties for non-compliance.

If you aren't sure about that shed you are planning to build next to the property line or whether you need a building permit for that cottage addition or work on your shoreline, call or drop a note to our Chief Building Official, Martin Cox at (613) 338-2811 Ext. 255 or better yet, email him at [mcox@hastingshighlands.ca](mailto:mcox@hastingshighlands.ca)

Even better would be to check the website: <https://hastingshighlands.ca/services/building-planning/>

What was wrong with the old system of toothless laws? Well, as usually is the case, if you see that all of your neighbours are ignoring the law with no consequences, then after a while you will too

And that doesn't make for good community standards

We recently hired a municipal planner in HH who will be reviewing our by-laws for the first time since HH was created decades ago, as well as the County and Province legislation. This includes setbacks of buildings and septic, buffer zones, property standards and many more regulations around the appropriate uses for your property.

An update on this initiative in the future

Bill Cheshire Baptiste Lake

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