

Report to Council

Report Title: Vacant Buildings By-Law

Prepared By: Mike Murphy, Fire Chief and Terry Tuck, Chief Building Official

Department: Fire and Building

Date: October 15, 2019

Report Number: FIRE2019-03 **File Number:** C11FIRE, C11BU, C01

Attachments: Draft Vacant Building By-law

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number FIRE2019-03 - Vacant Buildings By-Law, prepared by Mike Murphy, Fire Chief and Terry Tuck, Chief Building Official and further approves a By-Law coming forward.

Report:

Background:

It has been recognized that vacant or abandoned buildings/structures can potentially attract criminal activity and become a threat to public safety. Unfortunately, there are some vacant buildings throughout the Municipality of Brockton, both in urban and rural areas that have been left vacant for some time.

These vacant buildings pose a safety hazard to all of the general public, as they pose a fire hazard which could potentially cause damage to other neighbouring properties.

Analysis:

Vacant buildings/structures that are not secure and open to unauthorized entry have a high probability of intentionally set fires. When fires occur in these buildings, they present a host of unusual problems to firefighters. Since the buildings are uninhabited, fires may develop for significant periods of time before they are detected and reported.

Firefighters may encounter open shafts, stairways, pits or holes in floors that would not be found in occupied structures. All of these factors contribute to the danger these structures pose to firefighters operating in them.

The removal of equipment or structural components and deterioration of the building due to age or weather can weaken the structure creating the potential threat to public safety due to the collapse of portions of the building, falling debris or rapid structural failure early in a fire.

Staff have prepared a By-Law to regulate vacant buildings in the Municipality of Brockton. The draft By-law would require owners of vacant properties to take reasonable precautions to prevent acts of vandalism or fire. If, in the opinion of the Fire Chief, Chief Building Official or By-law Enforcement Officer reasonable precautions have not been adopted, a letter would be sent outlining the requirements for the property owner. If no steps were taken, the Municipality of Brockton could make arrangements for the steps to be taken (such as windows boarded up, etc.) and recouperate the costs of such expenses by adding them to the property taxes.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? N/A
- Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? N/A
- Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? N/A
- Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? N/A
- Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity? N/A

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?
N/A

This By-Law will allow the Municipality to be fully cost recoverable for potential expenses incurred, as there are significant costs associated in responding to intentionally set fires in vacant and/or abandoned buildings.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Mike Murphy, Fire Chief



Terry Tuck, Chief Building Official

Reviewed By:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sonya Watson", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer