



## **Motion C24(461) Zoning Confirmation Letters**

Planning Advisory Committee  
September 16, 2025

Planning & Development



**EAST HANTS**

## Background

- At their December 2024 Regular Meeting, Council passed the following motion:

**C24(461)**     *Moved that staff be directed to prepare a report on the potential exemption & refund of the \$75.00 fee required to obtain a municipal zoning confirmation letter that is now required to register under the provincial Short-term Rentals Registration Act.*

## Background

- The province of Nova Scotia introduced regulations for short-terms rentals across the province and now requires all owners and operators of short terms rentals to register under the Nova Scotia Short Term Rentals Registry.
- These regulations came into effect September 30, 2024. As part of the provincial registration, short term rental operators are required to provide proof of compliance with municipal land use bylaws for short terms rentals.
- It is under municipal discretion what the type of compliance looks like (zoning confirmation letter, development permit, etc.)



## Background

As per the Nova Scotia Short-Term Rental Registration Act, short-term accommodations must register to operate in Nova Scotia if they provide accommodations for 28 days in a row or less. Registration is not required for the following:

- Only long-term accommodations (like a year-to-year lease, month-to-month lease or more than 28 days in a row)
- Accommodations at campgrounds that are not roofed (like campsites where travellers bring their own tents or trailers)
- Accommodations that are only for temporary workers (like temporary workers in healthcare and building trades)

## Background

- As part of the new regulations, hosts must confirm that their accommodation complies with municipal land use bylaw regulations. The province has indicated this is a one-time letter and hosts will not have to obtain their proof of compliance letter each year
- Section 6(1)(e) of the Regulations under the Act states the requirement for registration is “*confirmation from the municipality that the accommodation the applicant seeks to register complies with applicable municipal land-use by-laws;*”
- East Hants does not specifically regulate short- term rentals, however as part of the process to ensure compliance, the development officer reviews each property to ensure it is zoned accordingly for a residential use, there are no outstanding bylaw violations against the property



## Background

- In East Hants, all requests related to zoning confirmation and compliance, including those where short-term rental hosts are required to provide proof of compliance with Municipal Land Use Bylaw, are addressed through the issuance of a Zoning Confirmation Letter.
- Other municipal units may provide other forms of compliance to the province depending on how short-term rentals are regulated across each Municipality or Town. In some cases, Municipalities regulate short term rentals under the Land Use Bylaw or through a Licencing Bylaw. In these instances, development permits or other regulatory approvals may be required and those permits can be used to provide proof of compliance to the province. Fees for those permits may be required.

## East Hants Zoning Confirmation Letters

East Hants charges a \$75 fee for zoning confirmation letters. The table below shows the number of zoning confirmation letters for short term rentals since the new regulations were adopted in September of 2024.

Zoning Confirmation Letters Issued for Short Term Rentals	
2024	51
2025 (As of August 2025)	26
Total	77

## Refunding Fees for Zoning Confirmation Letters

- Zoning confirmation letter requests for short-term rentals are currently received through email.
- When refunds are requested, they are typically processed and issued by cheque. The refunds would then be mailed directly to the short-term rental host. To ensure the refunds are being sent to the correct address, confirmation of mailing addresses would need to be required for each host.
- This process would involve both the planning and finance departments as each refund is required to be processed individually. It may be challenging to re-establish contact with each short-term rental host in order to process the refunds, which may result in refund delays or hosts not receiving a refund.



## Conclusion

- The requirement to provide a proof of compliance to the province is a one-time letter. Hosts do not need to have a new letter produced each year. The requests being received today for letters, are for new short-term rental operators in East Hants
- Staff are recommending that no change be made to the current process and requirement to issue zoning confirmation letters for short-term rental host to meet the provincial requirement to obtain proof of compliance with Municipal Land Use Bylaws and to not issue refunds to those hosts who have obtained a letter. The fees charged for a zoning confirmation letter are for the staff time and resources to produce each letter

## Recommendation

- Make no changes to the current requirement for a zoning confirmation letter and the fees associated with obtaining a zoning confirmation letter



## Alternatives

1. PAC and Council may wish to refund all zoning confirmation letters issued for short-term rentals and exempt future requests for letters from the \$75 fee. An amendment to the fee policy would be required indicating that zoning confirmation letters produced for short-term rentals are exempt from the \$75. Staff do not recommend this option due to staff time and resources to produce these letters and to have all letters refunded
2. Amend the fee policy to exempt Zoning Confirmation Letters obtained for short-term rentals to be exempt from the \$75 fee moving forward.