

---

John H. Thomson  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



---

Executive Fax: (519) 376-2456  
Operations Fax: (519) 376-6131

May 06, 2025

Mayor Boddy &  
Owen Sound City Council Members  
808 2nd Avenue East  
Owen Sound, Ontario  
N4K 2H4

**Via Email**

Mr. Mayor and Council,

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of a motion that was made at our April 23, 2025 Police Service Board meeting.

**Moved by I. Boddy, seconded by C. Merton.**

*"That the Owen Sound Police Service Board (OSPSB) write a letter requesting City Council to convene a meeting with the River District Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and all downtown business owners to discuss current business conditions in downtown Owen Sound. Invitations should also be extended to representatives from the Owen Sound Police Service, local provincial and federal prosecutors, and the area's Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP)."* **CARRIED**

**Background**

Briefly, discussions around the table leading up to this motion included.

- It is no longer acceptable for shoppers to feel unsafe in the River District. At one time it could have been said that shoppers and visitors just felt uncomfortable downtown, but that feeling has changed and it is now a feeling of being unsafe and this no longer acceptable. These feelings can also be extended to business owners who are having to lock their doors during business hours to control those entering their place of business for non-business related purposes. The downtown core is truly suffering from these feelings regardless if they perceived or real.
- A review of the City's Nuisance Bylaw revealed it is meant to:
  - a. safeguard the quality of City communities and neighbourhoods;
  - b. protect the safety, health and well-being of the public; and

- c. ensure the continued enjoyment of public and private property for residents, visitors and property owners in the City.
- The Board discussed ongoing concerns regarding the limited effectiveness of current community programs and the challenges posed by a compliance-focused approach to bylaw enforcement. As summer approaches, a need for a shift towards proactive enforcement is required.
  - The position of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has changed and it no longer supports the decriminalization of drug possession in small amounts unless there is proper support in place for people who use drugs.
  - An e-mail received in general correspondence spoke to the unacceptable “drug use downtown”.
  - As the warmer weather approaches, there will be an increase in activity in the River District, not only with more visitors but also with the public display of drug consumption. A proactive plan needs to be implemented and supported.

Thank you for making arrangements for this important meeting.

Yours truly,

John  
Chair

Cc: Owen Sound Police Service Board