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HAMILTON REGION

Burlesque bylaw needed, Hamilton councillors told

By The Hamilton Spectator

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City staff has been asked to put together a bylaw that makes a distinction between burlesque and strip tease.

Coun. Matthew Green said the city needs to "clearly define adult services as it relates to a distinction between strip clubs and others that offer burlesque."

The city's planning committee passed the motion Tuesday, a move that comes after two burlesque performers were charged in August under a Hamilton bylaw as "adult entertainers."

Toronto residents [Ashley Keefer and Kayla Kunkel were charged](#) under the city's licensing bylaw during a burlesque routine at Ten Decades bar in Hess Village.

Hamilton resident Lydia Greenly argued burlesque performers shouldn't be the target of municipal law enforcement.

"I don't believe they should be punished for creative expression because of outdated, loosely worded bylaws that can be applied by a bylaw officer looking to meet their monthly 'expectations,'" Greenly told councillors Tuesday.

The main difference between burlesque and stripping, she said, is burlesque entertainers wear nipple pasties and a G-string rather than removing all their garments.

"The focus with burlesque is not just on physical act of burlesque dance itself, but on the humour of the broader performance," Greenly said.

"If Hamilton amends the bylaw, it will bring more business to the Hamilton core, it would show that Hamilton is open to artistic expression, and it would allow the local creative community to thrive."

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