

To: Mayor Josh Morgan, Members of the Community and Protective Services Committee

From: Laura Green

RE: 12th Meeting of Community and Protective Services Committee August 15, 2023

FIREWORKS BY-LAW REVIEW on the agenda

There is no such thing as 'safe' fireworks especially in the hands of careless people.

On August 15, 2023, please chose OPTION B and support the ban of all consumer and backyard fireworks

Fireworks are dangerous explosives; they are NOT toys. They should not be easily accessible to the public. They should only be made available to responsible adults for an organized public event with a permit granted by the municipality.

In London, fireworks can be purchased in parking lots as well as in variety stores. Anyone can purchase these explosives. Is this the message we want to continue to send to members in our community? That it is ok to purchase explosives while grabbing a bag of chips and a soda pop at your local convenience store.

In a recent poll in 2022, 56.6% of Londoners voted in support of a ban of fireworks other than displays permitted on specific dates at an organized public event.

This leads to my confusion, why has the city still not banned consumer and backyard fireworks? and yet here we are again another summer with no ban in place and fireworks being set off nightly, for a whole week prior to Canada Day?

Do city officials believe that all individuals set off fireworks only on permitted dates and times? There is proof that this is not the case.

There is an obvious reason why this continues to be an ongoing issue before city council and it's because what is currently in place, is NOT working. Changes need to be made: OPTION B.

There is not enough enforcement to confront these people who light off fireworks and have no respect for neighbors or the cities by-laws. It doesn't matter if the time is set from 7pm to 11pm. These people have such disregard for the residents and by-laws. The city can set fines, but what good is it, if we do not have sufficient enforcement officers to immediately attend the scene and issue fines? After working in corrections for almost 20 years, it is evident that our justice system in London is strained and given the increase and severity in criminal activity in London, our officers are needed in other areas. Sending officers to enforce violations of fireworks by-laws would further clog up our already limited resources and would only turn into a pointless game of whack-a-mole. Especially when the easiest solution to resolve this problem would be to ban the sale of public and consumer fireworks.

Not only are these explosive dangerous but they also cause great trauma on wildlife, domestic animals, people who have PTSD, old people in rest homes and those on hospice. Some people leave their homes (like myself this Canada Day weekend) and hope they don't come back to a home that might have caught fire. Furthermore, people end up in trauma units losing hands and fingers when irresponsibly setting off fireworks.

Here are three of my own personal experiences I would like to share with you:

On July 1, 2023 (during the permitted times), my nephew (age 10) was with his cousins (three girls all under 12 yo) were watching fireworks at the park on Denview and Sunningdale along with dozens of other people when a few of the fireworks fell over and shot directly into the viewers. Thankfully, a tragedy was diverted in this case. However, what if it had it severely injured a child or any person for that matter. In situations like this, we need to be proactive, not reactive to a tragedy that could be easily prevented.

My residence backs onto Sir Arthur Currie elementary school parking lot where numerous firecrackers are set off for 10 days before and up to 10 days after the sale of public fireworks. Last week, my friend's toddler was visiting when she picked up a piece of debris from a firework. And like most young children, she went to put it in her mouth. A toxic piece of material that could have caused irreversible damage to a child.

Another incident last summer that occurred in the park in my neighborhood; people were setting off numerous fireworks at midnight (not during city permitted dates/times). After listening to them for 30 mins and trying to calm down my frightened dog, I got fed up and drove there to confront them! They were leaving as I pulled up and left a large mound of garbage that was lit on fire with flames up to 4 feet high. I had to call the fire department to put out the fire. But what would've happened if I was not there? The park could've been destroyed; tax payers hard earned money up in flames, in something that could've been prevented.

Falling debris from firecrackers cannot be contained. Debris has fallen on the property of many people; cars damaged from debris, lit debris falling on roofs and patio furniture (cloth) that can easily ignite and cause house fires and significant damage to neighborhoods.

Were amid an unprecedented wildfire catastrophe in our province. Some cities in Ontario have done the right thing and have banned fireworks this year because the risk of causing further damage is too high. But not the city of London. So I ask you, is entertainment for some more important than the safety of our city?

A scientist told Forbes that when the fireworks go off, the metal salts and explosives undergo a chemical reaction that releases smoke and gases into the air. That includes carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen—three greenhouse gases that are unfortunately responsible for climate change. [Festive Fireworks Create Harmful Pall Of Pollution \(forbes.com\)](#)

As you may be aware there have been recent events in the news (in Toronto and in London):

Toronto police charged a 16-year-old boy that threw firecrackers from the bus into a crowd waiting at a bus stop. The same boy lit and threw a firecracker on the bus, and one person sustained minor injuries. One day later, on May 25, the same boy boarded a TTC bus in Scarborough's Guildwood neighbourhood, lit a firecracker and threw it. Police said the bus had to be evacuated due to smoke.

In a separate incident, in a 22-second video of the incident posted to Twitter, a teen is seen smiling as she lights a large firework in the middle of the bus. She points the firework at the back of the bus as riders crouch down, cover their heads and start screaming. This bus was at full capacity. Imagine the fear these people suffered that day.

A recent incident on June 18, 2023, at 114 Arbour Glen Crescent, London where a person shot firecrackers at a person in his apartment.

“Police suspected the unit could be on fire,” explained Jeff Collins, district chief of the LFD. “It upgraded, became on fire and then we made entry, applied agent and knocked fire down.” Residents were concerned about damage to their nearby apartments, and also were concerned about pets who were left behind when they evacuated. “There is a lot of water damage throughout the eleventh floor, but fire damage was the contained to the unit,” said Collins. “This actually did escalate from a small event into a large event.”

My question for you is, how many people have to be suffering before we, the residents of London, become more important than backyard fireworks? Do you have a number in mind?

It is time to take fireworks out of the hands of irresponsible people. On August 15, 2023, please implement Option B.