

Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

To: Chair and Members,
Community and Protective Services Committee

From: Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and
Community-Wide Services

Subject: Fireworks By-law Options Public Participation Meeting Report

Date: August 15, 2023

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services, the following actions be taken with respect to the Fireworks By-law - PW-11:

- a) the report dated August 15, 2023 and titled “Fireworks By-law Options Public Participation Meeting Report” BE RECEIVED as information with regards to the community poll that took place on the Get Involved London website from July 12, 2023, to July 31, 2023; and,
- b) the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to REPORT BACK at a future meeting of the Community and Protective Services Committee summarizing public comments including the submission of a draft by-law amendment.

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the options to the current Fireworks By-law for Council and the public to consider at the Public Participation Meeting being held on August 15, 2023 (full details on the options are outlined in the [Fireworks By-Law Options Report](#)). Results from the Get Involved London community poll regarding the update to Fireworks Draft By-law – PW-11 are also highlighted in this report.

Previous Reports Pertinent to this Matter

- [Fireworks By-Law Options Report](#) - (June 13, 2023, CPSC)
- [Amendment of Fireworks By-law PW-11](#) - (June 21, 2016, CPSC)
- [Amend Fireworks By-law](#) – (April 26, 2016, CPSC)
- [Amendment of Fireworks By-Law PW-11](#) – (June 16, 2013, CPSC)

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The Fireworks By-law Options Public Participation Meeting Report is aligned with the following strategic area of focus and outcome from the City of London’s Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027:

- Wellbeing and Safety: London has safe, vibrant, and healthy neighbourhoods and communities.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Council Direction on Fireworks

At its meeting on June 27, 2023, Municipal Council resolved:

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services, the following actions be taken with respect to the staff report dated June 13, 2023, related to Fireworks By-law Options:

- a) the Civic administration BE DIRECTED to hold a public participation meeting at a future of the Community and Protective Services Committee (CPSC) in order to receive comments on proposed changes to the Fireworks By-law PW-11; it being noted that additional direction to the Civic Administration will be provided, following the consideration of comments and submissions at the public participation meeting;
- b) the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to report back at a future meeting of the CPSC summarizing public comments including the submission of a draft by-law amendment; and,
- c) the requests for delegation, as appended to the Agenda and the Added Agenda, from V.R. Anber and A. Kanji BE DEFERRED to the above-noted future public participation meeting with respect to this matter;

it being noted that the communications, as appended to the Agenda and the Added Agenda, from the following individuals, with respect to this matter, were received:

- V.R. Anber;
- A. Kanji;
- M. Luce;
- Brandy;
- D. Ronson and B. Amendola; and,
- J. Morton and A. Haase. (2023-P01)

1.2 Context

This report is a continuation of the June 13, 2023, [Fireworks By-Law Options Report](#) , and presents the results from the [Get Involved London community](#) poll. In addition, it provides an overview on the options previously presented to Council regarding the frequency and type of fireworks allowed in London.

Civic Administration has completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the lifecycle for reviewing the current [Fireworks By-law - PW-11-16002](#). Phase 1 involved receiving feedback via a survey regarding residents' opinions on fireworks in the community. Phase 2 involved reviewing other municipalities' policies and presenting a draft of the report. Subsequently, the current poll was implemented to capture the community's opinion on Options A and B (see below) that were presented to the Community and Protective Services Committee on June 13, 2023.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Overview of the Two Proposed Options for Consideration

Below are the two options Civic Administration proposed for Council and the public to comment on at the upcoming public participation meeting:

Option A would allow for consumer (backyard) fireworks to be discharged on Canada Day and Victoria Day only. This means that dates prior to or preceding Canada Day would no longer be allowed for discharge. In addition, this option would also allow for consumer (backyard) fireworks to be discharged on Diwali. Option A would also decrease the number of days allowed to sell fireworks from seven to five days and propose an increase to current fines.

Option B would allow for permitted display fireworks only to be discharged which has traditionally included Canada Day, Victoria Day, Diwali, and New Years Eve in London. This option would ban all consumer (backyard) fireworks, ban the sale of consumer fireworks in London, and propose an increase to current fines.

Further details on the proposed options outlined above can be found in the [Fireworks By-Law Options Report](#)

2.1 Summary of a quick poll on Get Involved London Site

Londoners were invited to participate in a quick poll on Get Involved to choose an option ("Do you prefer") based on the two (2) options outlined above. Of the 1,635 contributors who voted in the poll, 52.2% chose Option A and 47.8% chose Option B.

Poll Statistics and Results:

- There were 8,200 visits to the City’s Get Involved London community engagement website.
- There were 1,635 engaged contributors who participated in the poll, “Do You Prefer Option A or Option B?”.
- There were 2,341 informed visitors who downloaded a document or visited a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page.
- Of the visitors to the site, 6,257 visited at least one page where information was provided.

Overview of Free-Text Comments Received:

- Ban backyard fireworks and the sale of personal fireworks.
- The rules do not work, no one follows them.
- Difficult to enforce and no enforcement.
- People do not abide by the current by-law.
- Fireworks are set off at all hours – four or more nights straight on holiday weekends.
- Tried calling the emergency line and no one answers.
- The purchase and discharge are uncontrolled.
- Reduce environmental impact – only allow city-controlled displays.
- Disruptive to sleep, persons with post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Damaging impacts on the environment and animals, both wild and domestic.
- Too many people making noise, getting louder and louder.
- Suggestion of a drone show, drones are excellent and quiet.

2.3 Next Steps

Based on Council’s direction, Civic Administration will draft a revised Fireworks By-law for consideration at a future Community and Protective Services Committee meeting. Depending on the changes made to the current by-law, the revised by-law will also include enhancements to enforcement, sale of fireworks and a proposed increase to the current fines. It is intended that a new By-law be in place in the first quarter of 2024.

While this work is underway, Civic Administration continues to respond to and educate the community on the safe discharge of fireworks and the current municipal by-law that remains in full effect.

Conclusion

Civic Administration recognizes that the discharge of fireworks has become a concern to our community and that changes to the Fireworks By-law may be required. Based on Council’s direction, Civic Administration will bring forward a revised Fireworks By-law for consideration at a future Community and Protective Service Committee meeting.

Prepared by: Matt Hepditch, Deputy Fire Chief

Submitted by: Richard Hayes, Acting Fire Chief

Recommended by: Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services