

To: Mayor Josh Morgan, City Council  
From: Chelseay Helka  
Re: Fireworks Bylaw Review on the Agenda

Hello Mayor Morgan and City Council. I am incredibly disappointed with the recommendation that CSPC has made in regards to the fireworks bylaw. I am still urging the counsel to vote for option B and to ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks.

I would very much appreciate my story below being taken into consideration when it comes to making your decision. I have experienced the trauma that fireworks can cause and I believe that nobody should have to go through an experience such as I did.

On May 18th, around the time school began, students from Saunders High School began lighting fireworks inside Westmount Mall. The first one was lit only feet away from my two-year-old daughter and me, so we quickly left the mall. There were some people screaming for them to stop, because "there was a baby nearby". However, many of the students laughed and thought it was funny.

As I went into the parking lot, the hoard of students followed and continued lighting them in the front vestibule to the mall, the parking lot, and the parking garage. This created loud booms throughout the building. Not only was this scary for me, but I couldn't imagine how everyone in the parking lot and the parking garage felt. There are many seniors who seek services in that mall, and are not able-bodied enough to quickly remove themselves from a situation, such as this.

I heard that these events continued on for some time after I left. I called the mall security twice to report my concerns and was uncontrollably crying while doing so. I went home that day absolutely shaking, and it took me a couple weeks to build up the courage to go back to the mall and when I did I went with someone. I can't believe that explosives are able to get into the hands of minors. After a few weeks passed, I was at White Oaks Mall, only to have fireworks lit in the parking garage near me. I instantly spiraled into a panic attack because of what I went through previously.

I often dread holidays, because the fireworks are never contained to the times stated in the bylaw. I work early shifts, and wake up at 4 A.M.. Some nights, they go off all night long—some even directly in the parking lot outside my complex. I often get told to "mentally prepare" or "get over it", because it's only on holidays. Not once, since living in London the past 9 years, have fireworks ever been contained to the bylaw times. It is also not easy to report bylaw violations and when you do you're lucky to be able to speak with someone, and I personally have never seen or heard anyone face repercussions for not following the bylaws.

My toddler has been woken up numerous times and cries uncontrollably, because of fireworks set off directly beside our house. My cat and dog both wander with worry every time. It is not

realistic to be able to medicate my pets when the fireworks have never been contained to the bylaw times.

My household has two people who are on the autism spectrum, including myself. Not every person who is autistic is bothered by fireworks, but I have always been startled by them. After the incident in May, I am no longer able to tolerate them in the slightest. Earplugs and white noise machines don't help me. I am on a waitlist to talk to a therapist, but in the meantime, I am dealing with the repercussions of fireworks on my own.

Fireworks may be beautiful to the eyes but they often end up in the wrong hands. They are continuously used without regard for others' sleep, mental and physical well being, and without safety precautions in place. This is terrifying!

I know that you have received a huge push against option B from the Hindu and other communities. I very much respect all cultures but this is a huge safety concern and should be handled as such. Keeping our communities physical and mental health and safety should be top priority.

Please vote for option B, and ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks.

Thank you for your time,  
Chelsey Helka