

Date: August 28, 2023

To: Mayor Josh Morgan, and Members of the London City Council

Re: Meeting of City Council August 29, 2023

Dear Mayor Morgan and City Councillors,

I am writing to ask is that the Mayor and City Councillors vote for Option B of the proposed Fireworks By-law: to ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks.

I attended the Community and Protective Services Committee meeting on August 15, 2023, and was heartened to see so many members of the community in attendance.

I, myself, spoke in favour of Option B, noting the indiscriminate lighting of fireworks at all times of year, outside of Canada Day and Victoria Day, as well as the effects of fireworks on the environment, and on people with PTSD and Autism.

Councillors David Ferreira and Sam Trosow spoke eloquently about the issues of personal safety, and about the promise made to the public about being environmentally sensitive. In short, banning the sale and use of consumer fireworks is a matter whose time has come. I encourage City Council to be forward-thinking and demonstrate the vision that neighbouring communities, such as Woodstock and Brampton, have shown.

Several city councillors have expressed concern about the enforcement of such a bylaw. I would like to cite Brampton City Councillor Keenan, who led the motion to ban the sale of consumer fireworks in Brampton. In his submission, he states:

*"When presenting the possibility of this ban with London, you will receive many residents, or even fellow Council members, asking how you will be able to enforce such a ban. The strategy that I put forth, alongside our leadership team, was to use other city departments on major nights to help spread the word and educate those whom were still setting off fireworks. We had parks & rec monitoring the parks, and fire prevention and public works employees providing education and street patrols. When residents weren't listening to those city officials, then By-law would visit those calls and enforce fines.*

*Without a doubt however, the biggest impact to our community to date was including the year-round ban to sell fireworks within Brampton. The accessibility of purchasing the fireworks at local stores, or within trailers parked in commercial parking lots, needs to be taken away. I repeat, the only way that a ban of fireworks will work, is if it is in tandem with the sale of the product."*

I note that Brampton has a large South Asian Community. I understand the wish of people of Hindu faith to celebrate Diwali. One of the best definitions of religion, and religious practice, is the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist. When that freedom to practice infringes on the freedom and well being of others to go about their daily lives in peace, quiet, and safety, it is reasonable for elected officials in a democratic society to intervene and propose alternatives.

Sparklers and Spinning Wheels, and lit lanterns, are worthy alternatives to exploding fireworks. Londoners, including our South Asian community and businesses, and local businesses, can adapt, as Bramptonians are.

In closing, I thank you for your consideration of this matter, and ask that the Mayor and City Council vote for Option B of the proposed Fireworks By-law: to ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks.

Yours Sincerely,

Jeff Orchard