

From: Sharon Deebrah

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 2:07 PM

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Subject: [EXTERNAL] London Fire Works Ban. Agenda item 6.1 for Council Meeting August 29, 2023

Attn: Council Agenda: I give permission for my rebuttal submission to be added to the council agenda of August 29, 2023 (along with my previously submitted letter) under the fire works ban Agenda Item 6.1

Rebuttal to attached letter:

I am writing to provide a rebuttal to the arguments presented in the attached letter currently circulating, regarding the discussion at the Public Participation Meeting held on Aug 15 concerning the proposed changes to the fireworks bylaw. While I appreciate the nature of the letter, I believe it is important to address some of the points raised.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the concerns that were raised about the impact of backyard fireworks on the mental health of individuals and pets. It is important to note that the impact of fireworks is not limited to mental health individuals and pets, but also extends to individuals with autism, PTSD from injuries, accidents, respiratory issues, cardiovascular problems, and auditory harm. I am in support for the proposed ban on fireworks in our community, and to highlight an important aspect that often goes overlooked in this discussion—the well-being of our veterans who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is crucial to consider and address these concerns. However, I respectfully disagree with the assertion that Option B does not address the issues faced by individuals with PTSD.

The attached letter argues that banning loud noises is unlikely to be a cure or solution for PTSD symptoms. While this is true, it is important to note that Option B does not aim to be a cure for PTSD. Instead, it seeks to mitigate potential triggers that can exacerbate symptoms and cause distress to individuals with PTSD. By limiting the use of loud noises, Option B aims to create a safer environment for those who may be vulnerable to the triggering effects of fireworks.

Furthermore, the letter mentions a survey by Statistics Canada which does not mention fireworks as a cause or trigger for PTSD. While it is true that fireworks are not specifically mentioned in the survey, it is important to recognize that triggers for PTSD can vary among individuals. While sexual assault may have been the most commonly reported worst event among those diagnosed with PTSD, it does not mean that other triggers, such as loud noises, should be disregarded. Each individual's experience with PTSD is unique, and it is important to consider the potential impact of fireworks on individuals who may be sensitive to loud noises.

The argument is also made that banning small-scale fireworks during Diwali celebrations, as proposed by Option B, would be excessive and punitive, and would directly impact the ability of the Hindu and Sikh community to practice their culture and religious beliefs. While I understand the importance of cultural and religious practices, it is necessary to strike a balance between celebrating these traditions and ensuring the well-being of all members of the community. It is possible to explore alternative ways to celebrate Diwali that do not involve the use of fireworks, while still honoring the cultural significance of the festival.

I have concerns regarding the potential misuse of physicians' names without their permission. It is important to note that using someone's name without their consent is unethical and can lead to serious consequences, including investigations by the relevant medical authorities e.g College of Surgeons and Physicians resulting in them losing their license. It is crucial to respect the privacy and professional integrity of healthcare professionals and not name drop for selfish personal gains. I would encourage the listed physician to contact the writer with a stern warning as the writer suggests they are in support of the arguments incorporated in the attached letter. For the record, the Canadian Arm Forces have their own doctors who should be included in this decision and policy making.

Furthermore, it is vital to consider the impact of fireworks on various individuals, including war veterans and those with disabilities such as Down Syndrome. These individuals may experience heightened sensitivity to loud noises, which can trigger anxiety, panic attacks, and other adverse effects. It is important to prioritize the well-being and safety of all individuals, regardless of their background or religious affiliation.

Ironically, Diwali is traditionally associated with making choices that benefit the environment and promote the wellness of others, while avoiding harmful effects. Advocating for loud and potentially harmful fireworks goes against the very essence of the festival. It is important to approach the celebration of religious and cultural traditions with sensitivity and consideration for the well-being of all individuals involved. A gentle reminder that Diwali is a festival of lights, a celebration of: Good over evil and knowledge over ignorance.

Misinformation and the manipulation of religious sentiments for personal gain can have negative consequences, including casting a negative shadow on religion itself. It is essential to engage in honest and open discussions, based on accurate information and a genuine concern for the well-being of all members of the community. By way of name dropping a list of doctors serves as a form of intimidation to coerce politicians and policy makers in their decision making.

Fireworks, while visually stunning and a source of joy for many, can trigger intense anxiety and distress for those who have served our country selflessly. The loud explosions and sudden bursts of light can transport them back to the battlefield, where they faced unimaginable challenges and witnessed the horrors of war. It is crucial that we consider the impact of fireworks on our veterans' ability to reintegrate into society and feel safe within their own communities. By banning fireworks, we are taking a meaningful step towards creating an environment that is inclusive, understanding, & supportive of those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom.

While it is important to acknowledge that fireworks are enjoyed by many, it is equally important to prioritize the well-being of those who have dedicated their lives to serving our nation. There are alternative ways to celebrate and mark special occasions that do not involve loud explosions, such as laser light shows or music festivals, which can still bring the same sense of wonder and joy without causing undue distress to our veterans. Our veterans deserve our utmost gratitude, respect, and support. By embracing a ban on fireworks, we can demonstrate our commitment to their well-being and create a more inclusive society where they can thrive. Together, celebrate our freedom with empathy, compassion, and consideration for all.

Let us strive to create an inclusive and respectful environment where the needs and safety of all individuals are considered and prioritised. While it is important to acknowledge that fireworks are enjoyed by many, it is equally important to prioritise the well-being of those who have dedicated their lives to serving our nation.

Lastly, the attached letter suggests that banning fireworks may increase marginalization, stigma, and stress, and could lead to adverse mental health outcomes within the Hindu and Sikh population. While these concerns are valid, it is important to recognize that the mental health of individuals veterans with PTSD should also be taken into consideration. It is possible to find a middle ground that respects cultural practices while also considering the well-being of individuals who may be affected by fireworks.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to provide a rebuttal to the arguments presented in the letter. I kindly request that this rebuttal be considered alongside my original letter during the Council meeting on Aug 29. It is my hope that the council will carefully consider all perspectives and make a decision that best serves the interests of the community as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sharon Deebrah

Encl.

I acknowledge that I live and work in on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenousaunee, Lunaapeewak, and Attawandaron peoples.