

February 13, 2012

Members of The Community Services Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to your committee about the Annual Review 2012 of the Special Events Policy and Procedures Manual. I am here representing my husband and myself as well as some affected neighbours in the Blackfriars community - some of whom are here with me tonight. We are specifically concerned with the issue of the noise levels and hours of duration of the special event, "Rock the Park" in Harris Park.

Over the years we have worked diligently with the city staff and also at times with the event organizers to find a workable balance between the needs of the Blackfriars residents (whose homes abut Harris Park and who are therefore most directly affected by the noise emanating from the concerts) and the obvious desires of the managers of "Rock the Park" to deliver a successful concert for the citizens of London and thereby to raise money for the extremely worthwhile charity, "Bethany's Hope". As home owners we have chosen to live downtown and as such we obviously support Council's goal of developing a vibrant Downtown where increasing numbers of people actively choose to live. To date we feel strongly that we have managed to find this balance; but we equally strongly would oppose any attempt to make this Downtown and our neighbourhood of Blackfriars less liveable by modifying the balance we have worked so hard over the years to achieve.

Therefore, we would like to make the following points:

- The current permitted sound level of 90 decibels already rattles the windows of our house which abuts the walkway on the west side of the river opposite Harris Park.
- Sound is exponential - not linear. Every 10 decibel increase in sound is a 10 fold increase in intensity. In other words if the sound level from "Rock the Park" were allowed to increase from the current level of 90 decibels to 100 decibels, the sound as it is received by the human ear would be not 10% louder, but 10 times louder.
- As our cities get larger and more and more clamorous, physicians and audiologists are all noticing and beginning to study the effects of accumulated increased sound levels on the human ear; and it is now being shown that many teenagers - esp those who are exposed to prolonged higher levels of sound through earbuds etc - have the measured actual hearing of people their parents' age. We old fogies have all heard the adage from our children "If it's too loud, you're too old!"; but the acknowledged fact is that prolonged high levels of sound permanently damage the human ear. I have several clippings in my file that attest to this fact.
- I know that we are frequently perceived as "spoil sports", but many of us enjoy these concerts in the parks of London. In fact my husband, John, is the bass player of the Nihilist Spasm Band ; he is also a physician and as such always wears earplugs during rehearsals and concerts to protect his hearing! We can live with the status quo which has been worked out with the community over the years. In fact we are not even particularly opposed to the administrative recommendation of removing the requirement for the event organizers to pay for an extra monitor at the sound board. We are not trying to be petty. However we are categorically opposed to any change in the current noise levels and/or hours of duration to the Special Events held in London parks - esp in Harris Park. Please vote to allow the existing balance to prevail!

Thank you.

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