

July 22, 2016

To: Norman DeBono, London Free Press
Councillor Tanya Park, City of London
Orest Katolyk, Chief Municipal Law Enforcement Officer

Letters to the Editor, London Free Press
London City Council
Mayor Matt Brown

**Re: London Free Press Article July 18, 2016
Proposed Change to Noise By-law**

I am disappointed in the results of City council's planning and environment committee meeting approving a two-month trial allowing amplified music and dancing on the patios in the core.

When my mother and I moved downtown in 2015, we were confident we'd enjoy living here. It was especially important for my mother. She is 90 years old and within walking distance of her health care providers as we do not drive. We also enjoy nearby activities and shopping at the market, drug stores, and mall. We are close to our Parish Cathedral and walk in Victoria Park on non-festival days. We explored this beautiful heritage neighborhood and made some fascinating discoveries along the way including restaurants with relaxing atmospheres.

Dancing on patios accompanied by amplified music does not present a relaxing environment for dining. Up until now several of my friends and family enjoy eating out at least 1-2 times per week in the core. We may be forced to stop this and go elsewhere in the city.

We understood there would be excessive noise in the summer until 11 p.m. during Sunfest, Home County and Ribfest yet the booming bass and music have lasted much longer (Home County music stopped at 11:45 p.m.). We were surprised that there is approximately one festival, sometimes two, per week. Furthermore, we must tolerate the noise of crowds dispersing after closing. Several people are obviously intoxicated – they yell, hoot and at times, fights break out. The streets in the core are littered with garbage and broken beer bottles for several days afterwards.

The booming sound of the bass causes our building to shake. This is disturbing when trying to get to sleep. One can only imagine how distressing this would be for seniors, albeit all residents, to experience this until the early morning hours in the entire downtown core! How do you propose to address individuals who have to get up early and/or work the next day!

In addition to the problem of Victoria Park, is a parking lot next to the Elsie Perrin building. The restaurants on the southeast side of Dundas and Wellington have outdoor patios bordering the lot. Nightly, we hear booming music and the noise of partying well past 2 a.m. On occasion, fighting breaks out in the parking lot. In addition, vehicles pull into this parking lot at various times. I have watched people get out of the cars, meet for a few minutes, then get back into their cars and drive on. I am suspicious of drug deals but unable to prove it.

Every weekend, intoxicated patrons of the bars walk east-bound on Queens and Dufferin. They carry on in the same manner, yelling, fighting, and causing all kinds of mayhem. Sometimes, this goes on until 3 a.m. In September, it is much worse and the frat house on Queens Avenue is often noisy.

The Free Press article quoted, "Coun. Tanya Park encouraged residents to call police if there is a noise problem". Noise complaints aren't treated as emergencies unless danger is present. I have contacted police in the past

regarding party noise and dispatch assured me an officer would attend but it might be 2-3 hours before an officer was available for a non-emergency. On another occasion, I contacted police for someone in apparent distress – a man was screaming and swearing for over an hour. Police arrived very quickly and dealt with the situation. I have to agree with law enforcement's assessment of these situations. Our municipal government must take a more active role in establishing laws in the first place, not placing more responsibility on our police force to control something that doesn't have to exist in the first place. Watered-down by-laws serving only special interest groups are just not fair and are confusing for all.

In the article, "city staff recommended a trial period in August and September, stating amplified music will help attract more youths to the city to live and work and make the city attractive and vibrant." A festival atmosphere can be very pleasant, but fuelled with alcohol it becomes chaotic – a threat to peace and safety. There is nothing attractive and vibrant about that!

If the city wants to attract young people to live and work in the city, we must address the obvious urban decay with drug dealers/users loitering around the downtown streets. I often go to the market and on my way, observe individuals urinating on the side of the Market Tower and in the laneway between Dundas and Market Lane. Drug users are openly dealing/using drugs and drinking alcohol wrapped in paper bags. I have seen individuals using the bushes bordering the building as a "toilet" and in broad daylight! This is a public health menace not to mention downright disgusting.

Furthermore, there are too many empty buildings with "for sale/rent" signs. Several restaurants started up just to close down after a few months. Businesses cannot thrive here when residents are not here to support them.

London needs to offer good-paying jobs to attract young adults. Recently, I met some graduating students and they were disappointed that the only place they could find a job was at Tim Horton's and other fast-food restaurants. They seemed far less interested in the "bar scene" than in whether or not they could earn enough money to survive here. They felt they could not equate minimum wage jobs with the high rents in the core.

Why would responsible young adults want to live and work in London and tolerate this chaos? Why would anyone want to live where the noise keeps them awake at night when they have to get up in the morning for work? Why would they want to have to worry about their personal comfort, health and safety?

I am pleading with Council to rethink this very carefully. Put yourselves in our place and think how you would feel to be awakened late at night, to have your enjoyment of your space trashed by screaming and yelling from drunken citizens and have your safety compromised. Think of this, not only for yourselves, but for your families and your children/grandchildren. Do not drive out all of those residents who already live and work in the core, those who financially support this area.

London has a lot to be proud of. Why don't we build on that and include the input of all residents, not just special interests? We must be fair and balanced, assuring residents of enjoyment of space and above all, their safety.

Sincerely,

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