

Community Services Committee
11 June, 2012
City of London
London Ontario

Dear Committee Members

We are writing to request that your committee not consider changing the existing noise bylaws. With the exception of repeat and regular offenders, such as Rock the Park and Sunfest, the existing by law has gone a long way to making living in or near the centre of London, specifically near Victoria Park and Harris Park, tolerable. We live at Regent St. and St. George and the sound from both festivals reaches our home, despite closed double pane windows and air-conditioning. We have often wondered how the very ill and their families at St. Joseph's Hospital are adversely affected by such noise.

The noise bylaw, as it now stands, sets reasonable sound and time levels that most festivals have been able manage. The fact that in 2011 some festivals, especially Rock the Park, dramatically exceeded the decibel level (from the permitted 90 decibels to 105.7 decibels some 38 times over one weekend in the case of Rock the Park, for example) shows that some festival operators have no regard for the laws set by the city of London. There is no guarantee that, should the decibel and time restraints be lifted, the same repeat offenders will not continue to break the law and, perhaps, return to the City of London next year asking for yet another increase in the noise levels. Rather than raise the legal limits on noise and hours, concert organizers should be encouraged to move their venues indoors or beyond residential areas where they would not offend. Cost is obviously not an issue as the festival organizers are prepared to absorb the loss of their deposits as part of their operating expenses. Repeat offenders should not be allowed to book another concert in a London public space.

Should the sound and time levels be raised for events held on public property, event organizers for private properties - such as O week at UWO and similar events at Fanshawe College - will also demand a change in the restraints imposed on them by the city's noise bylaws. This will only serve to further London's negative reputation as a "party town".

Changing the existing noise bylaws is the thin edge of the wedge and would only serve to return London to where we were a few years ago before the noise bylaws were established. Existing bylaws, the fruit of many hours of research and consideration by City Hall staff, councillors and the public, must be obeyed by everyone in London.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Ratcliffe

Rodney Millard

cc: K. Kearns, W. Coxhead, R. Fair, M. Brown, J. Fontana, B. Armstong, N. Branscombe, D. Henderson, H. Usher.

Re: Amplified sound and Hours of operation of special Events

To the Members London City Council,

The Woodfield Community Association, located in Ward 13 in the city's core, strongly urges you to leave the amplified sound decibels levels and hours of operation for special events unchanged (Option A). The current hours and levels of sound arrived at during an open public participation process have been a meaningful and fair compromise between the needs of the residents and the needs of event organizers. There is no need to make any changes.

The many events in Victoria Park are welcomed by the WCA, as they are well run and not too disruptive to the neighbours who rely on the cessation of noise at a reasonable hour (11 pm). This closing time also benefits local bars and restaurants as it encourages people to leave the park and go into local venues to continue the evening's activities. Extending the hours or increasing decibels will negatively impact those who live nearby. It is simply not reasonable for local residents to have to listen to events operating to midnight or 1:00 am. Please keep in mind that the regulations are for "amplified sound" which includes not only all types of music, but public announcements and speeches as well. Events that use amplified sound include not only concerts, but auctions, bingo games, races, contests, fundraisers, and protests.

If the City of London wishes its downtown core to be vibrant and attract a growing population, it must be liveable. Any changes to the levels and length of noise will make the core less liveable.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Dickinson
Planning Chair
The Woodfield Community Association
Home Phone: (519) 439-0004

Dear Sir

I am along time resident & property owner in the core.

There should definitely a limit to the sound levels- I vote no change but I also would favor a lowering of the current level to the 70 decibels currently in force for Springbank Park. It is important to be consistent and fair, so event planners can not ignore and circumvent basic regulations for health maintenance by choosing a different venue where regulations are more lax.

Downtown is now progressing and attracting more residents, largely in high rise / condos. It is important to balance conflicting needs but allow all individuals an opportunity to sleep.

Levels of bass are especially disturbing.

Thank you for the opportunity to express an opinion

Louise White
133 Central Ave
London
519- 438-4823

June 17, 2012

Dear Committee Members;

I am writing briefly in regards to the current discussion underway about the Amplified Sound and Hours of Operation of Special Events held in downtown London. I have considered the options put forward in the report to the Community Services Committee from Bill Coxhead dated May 29, 2012. I have considered the impact of the proposed changes on my household. Considering the options A, B and C described in that document, I would like to encourage the Committee to take up option A, which is no change to existing regulation.

I live south of downtown near the intersection of Wellington Street and Horton Street, and in the evenings we hear any event in Harris Park or Victoria Park that has amplified sound, we hear the Western Fair, we hear the Blues festival held at York and Clarence, and last year we heard an especially loud (and late) event held for Western's Orientation week in the parking lot across York Street from the Convention Centre. Knowing that these events are important to the City, to the downtown and to the guests at these events, I have no objection to them continuing as they do now. (Well, that's not quite true: the Orientation event went far too late!)

Given that we already hear a significant amount from downtown events, however, I do object to them getting louder or running later. As I said, we already hear these events, and so having them louder would simply be more disruptive, while having them run later would simply extend the time we had to put up with them! The noise from downtown events is, already, a quality of life issue- and so 'louder and later' is simply not appealing.

And I would like to add that, as indicated in the report sent to the Community Services Committee, the majority of events (19/25) did not exceed the noise limitation in 2011. It thus does not appear to me that there is a particularly pressing reason to change the by-law. And so I support Option A from the report- not changing the by-laws regarding the volume and duration of outdoor festivals in downtown London. Changes do not seem necessary, nor are they in the best interest of maintaining a vibrant residential core.

Sincerely,

Wendy Russell
285 Simcoe Street
London Ontario
N6B 1J4

I am a lifelong resident and property owner in the core. I echo the attached comments (keep limits as is or reduce) as well as having the following concerns:

It is a scientific fact that every increase of 10db is perceived as doubling the sound level. Hence going from 90db to 100db is a 100% increase, not 10% as some might incorrectly surmise.

If these events have violated the limits 38 times, what makes anyone think they will respect a 100db limit? The \$500 fine is absurdly low and is akin to buying a license to increase sound levels arbitrarily; the fine should be at least \$5000. As well, the fine payment should be donated to a hearing loss charity.

Hearing loss is only one side effect of prolonged increased volume. Blood pressure is increased as well as other negative physiological changes occurring. Your example of 120-140db level for symphonies is erroneous because those peaks are transient and last for mere seconds; hardly a proper comparison for amplified instruments and p.a. systems emitting consistently high sound levels for 5 to 10 minutes per song and 2-4 hours per show.

I consider the volume not acceptable now, it's quite apparent even with all my doors and windows closed. Also, humans are not the only ones affected as there are many who are equally concerned for their pets.

Steve Olivastri
141 Central Ave
London
519-645-3045

Dear Ms Westlake:

As I am unable to attend tomorrow night's public meeting I would like to voice my OPPOSITION to the proposal to amend the bylaw regarding acceptable noise levels at public events. . As a resident of North London our family has already been negatively impacted by the allowance of such events in the first place, particularly at Victoria Park. Living on Waterloo St near Huron, it is already difficult to enjoy our home when these events are in progress, particularly if our windows are open. To allow an extension of both the noise levels and the timeframes within which such noise can take place further negatively impacts those living over a large surrounding area--- literally tens of blocks in every direction, when many in the impacted area are already very angry and disturbed by existing conditions.

Now the proposal is to allow noise levels which are demonstrably unsafe, particularly over an extended time, for those who merely seek to profit from the events, and who have already demonstrated a complete disrespect for the existing by-law requirements and a callous disregard for those of us who have borne the impact of their actions.

Counsel needs to consider the quality of life of its citizens and our communities first and foremost-- not pander to the greed of those who profit at our expense! To allow for these amendments to an area of the City which is already under siege (I refer to the student noise issue) would be unconscionable. Say NO to this proposal in its entirety!

Respectfully Submitted.

Charles Joles
1022 Waterloo St.

Hi Judy and other City Councillors,

Are you able to voice my position and that of Paul (see attached) at tomorrow's meeting since neither of us can attend.

My point is this. Why do those who do not live in communities affected by this noise get a vote on this issue?? It's like any other issue. This noise carries 2 kms away from where it's produced today. The council members and residents in those communities alone should be allowed to decide. Not people from Byron, Westmount, Hyde Park, Huron Heights, etc... When someone asks for a variance for a building permit the local residents who are impacted are consulted - not the city wide residents. Why are event organizers upset? Because of the fines which they pass onto and build into the costs of their events anyway. I haven't hear people who attend the events saying that the lack of volume or limited hours are deterring them from attending. Have you? It's loud enough for them when they are there. Even too loud perhaps for some. So let's not make a change to appease these effective lobbying event organizers. Let's make it suit the communities' needs and concerns who hosts the events. Noise pollution and loud noise negatively impact the quality of life of tens of thousands of Londoners who live in communities near these venues. Some will make decisions to live away from the core if such decisions continue to be made to suit business interests. Please do not increase the hours or noise levels. They are amply sufficient as they stand.
Thank you.

Sent from Dennis Pellarin's iPhone

To the Members of London City Council,

I strongly urge you to leave the amplified sound decibels levels and hours of operation for special events unchanged (Option A). The current hours and levels of sound arrived at during an open public participation process have been a meaningful and fair compromise between the needs of the residents and the needs of event organizers. There is no need to make any changes.

The many events in Victoria Park or Harris Park are welcome, as they are well run and not too disruptive to the neighbours who rely on the cessation of noise at a reasonable hour (11 pm). This closing time also benefits local bars and restaurants as it encourages people to leave the park and go into local venues to continue the evening's activities. Extending the hours or increasing decibels will negatively impact those who live nearby. It is simply not reasonable for local residents to have to listen to events operating to midnight or 1:00 am. Please keep in mind that the regulations are for "amplified sound" which includes not only all types of music, but public announcements and speeches as well. Events that use amplified sound include not only concerts, but auctions, bingo games, races, contests, fundraisers, and protests.

If the City of London wishes its downtown core to be vibrant and attract a growing population, it must be liveable. Any changes to the levels and length of noise will make the core much less appealing.

Yours sincerely,
Shelley Kopp
519.641.2272

Subject: By law of Special Events do not change!
Date: Tue, 19 Jun 2012 03:12:12 +0000
To the Members London City Council at City Hall,

Why would we in Woodfield and any other neighbourhood, as this is important to them as well, want the amplified sound decibels levels and hours of operation for special events change! There is no need to make any changes in the Special Events Bylaw, leave as is!

We lived with Victoria Park's noise for years and to have a working By-law to keep amplified music sound levels down and the hours for when events end, is a blessing!

We are trying to get the downtown area alive again and to have people living in the NEW apartment buildings, and then have Music going on longer than 11:00 PM. during the Summer would not be a good selling point.

The Amplified sound decibels levels and hours of operation for Special Events must not be changed.

Yours sincerely

P. Stone a member of the Woodfield Community Association.

Please note that I reside at 80 Thornton Avenue, London and neither my husband or I can attend the meeting Tuesday night regarding the amplified sound change proposal.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO HAVE THE NOISE LEVEL OR HOURS CHANGED AT ANY TIME OR ANY PLACE THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

IT IS ABSOLUTELY UNNECESSARY. IT JUST PROMOTES HULIGANS AND DISTURBS OUR PEACE.

DIDN'T THE CITY LEARN FROM THE FANSHAWE INCIDENT EARLIER THIS YEAR!!! LETS NOT ENCOURAGE THIS TYPE OF WILDNESS.

Please submit this on our behalf.

Sincerely
Jennifer Howard and
Glenn Hillis
80 Thornton Avenue
London ON N5Y 2Y3

To the Members London City Council,

As a resident of the core and one time general manager for a music festival in Victoria Park, I believe the current sound levels and time limits are appropriate to enhance the programming of the core while maintaining a lively but sustainable residential community. Festival planners always have the option to go "unplugged" at 11:00, as one festival did several years ago to the delight of the crowd.

Please keep the core livable!

Regards,

Sylvia Curtis-Norcross
Riverforks community

Sylvia Curtis-Norcross 519.673.1524 #29 Becher St. London On Canada N6C1A4

Submission for Public Participation Meeting: June 19, 2012 at 7:00 P.M. at City Hall:

Submitted to Community Services Committee: Comments Related to Options re Section 13.0 Noise Policy on the Special Events Policies and Procedures Manual:

1. Allowable Sound/Decibel Levels at Special Events:

Option A (no change) is preferred both by ourselves and our neighbours. In fact it would be better to lower the permitted sound levels further. In the recent past people living 5 km. and more from downtown have been able to hear on many occasions the words spoken from the microphones as well as the music itself, and they have been annoyed by it and sometimes prevented from sleeping.

The members of the committee must realize that an increase of 10 dB from 90 dB to 100 dB does not mean an increase of approx. 10% in the volume of the music. The decibel scale is a logarithmic scale: AN INCREASE OF 10% MEANS THAT THE SOUND LEVEL IS DOUBLED. The perception of such an increase may be even greater than this. Such an increase will certainly be a serious matter for those in the park near the speakers, particularly for children, unless the city plans to restrict their access to the festivals.

2. Hours of Operation at Special Events:

Option A (no change) is preferred both by ourselves and our neighbours.

Any benefits to the downtown merchants that may result from the festivals will not be increased because of a later hour for loud music.

Many people in our city wish to see more residential development downtown. Loud and late sound levels will prevent people wanting to live there.

Also, many people like summer festivals, but the council's main responsibility is to the people who live and have invested in the houses of London and who vote for the protection of the quality of their communities.

An increasing percentage of these people are older citizens who appreciate the quiet enjoyment of their properties.

Perhaps the people who hear the loud music at late hours do not make up a majority of the population. If these people are a minority, in a democracy they still have rights. If the music is made louder and longer (sound pressure levels doubled, for example), many more people than now will become annoyed, and we might expect a growing number to support moving festivals out of the downtown park areas.

Bill and Norma Exley
1014 Wellington Street
London, Ontario.
N6A 3T4

(519)-432-9679

Dear Committee

With respect to "Allowable Sound/Decibel Levels at Special Events", I am writing to support Option A: "No change, maintain the current policy whereby all amplified concerts shall not exceed a sound pressure of 90 decibels beyond 30m (100 feet) from the front edge of the stage with no allowance for peaks/crescendos."

Changing the bylaw does not serve the public interest. In the first place there has been no request from any audience to increase the decibel level, so why change it? It conflicts with the City's efforts to create a liveable downtown, and does not respect neighbourhoods farther afield.

With respect to "Hours of Operation at Special Events", I would like to support Option A: "No change, maintain the current policy whereby the amplification of sound for Special Events will be limited to the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m".

This conflicts with efforts to create a liveable downtown. No business case has been made that demonstrates positive increases in business income from later events or any synergy with London's downtown bars and pubs. Quite frankly it is a solution in search of a problem.

If these changes are so essential to outdoor concert promoters perhaps the best thing will be to create a concert venue away from residential neighbourhoods in the industrial lands near London airport?

Sincerely

Christa Engelmeyer
17 Willingdon Ave.
London

Jun 18/2012

Dear London City Councilors:

I urge you to vote on the upcoming change to the special event noise bylaw - amplified sound and hours of operation of special events - by choosing Option A - No change, maintain the current policy whereby all amplified concerts shall not exceed a sound pressure of 90 decibels beyond 30m (100 feet) from the front edge of the stage with no allowance for peaks/crescendos. In addition I also urge you to leave the maximum performance time to 11pm.

Downtown London has tens of thousands of year round tenants, homeowners, and taxpayers in the immediate vicinity of these affected parks. Most student housing in my area - Waterloo/Pall Mall St within minutes from Victoria Park - have year-round occupancy. Google Map London and it becomes abundantly clear that the vast majority of streets surrounding the park are single and multi-family housing. The blocks around Victoria Park contain apartment buildings plus single and multi-family homes. Since the current bylaw came into place many more high buildings, covered in glass and metals, have been built. Hard surfaces bounce back sound waves. Sound easily reverberates off glass surfaces. Any increase in the decibel levels will be making it even noisier because the increased number of high-rise buildings, built in recent years, will be bouncing sounds off each other and amplifying the increased decibels both outside the buildings and in the homes.

This change to event noise and hours will not constructively help anyone. The events patrons may be sitting drinking and eating at the event site one or two hours longer than they did in the past. They won't be spending money at the local bars and eateries - business who pay city taxes all year. Will the staff manning the booths be willing to stay later or will they be forced to do so? Since the servers and sellers are in the most direct path of the sound as it travels how will this affect their hearing in the future? There will be more hours of wear and tear on Victoria Park which looked absolutely ragged after the last festival last summer from all the heavy trucks and the cars that were driving all over the grass and the heavy foot traffic. In many ways you are robbing Peter to pay Paul. Noise level increases and closing time changes will not attract more tourists. Current year-round taxpaying businesses won't be making money. Residents in the area will be disturbed. It's a no-win situation. Our festivals are mostly civilized, fun, family events. The neighbourhoods of downtown London are mixed use and full of people of all types who value their homes - rented or owned - and live a comfortable, quiet, relatively crime-free life. It is wonderful to be able to attend the events. If we want to hear the concerts we will attend the concerts. Please do not force them on us by making us listen to them if we are not interested.

I urge you to vote Option A in recognition that amplified noise is not necessary in a residential area and also to firmly shut the door to prevent future attempts by local bars/businesses from using this noise level change to increase their events. I am concerned that this might be used as a trojan horse attempt by some of the bars be able to have noisy entertainment year round and late into the night. Let's not create any sort of precedent which will make Downtown London - or any part of London - an unpleasant place to live in.

If you, personally, are not willing to have loud noise at high decibel levels, which your own report indicates is dangerous to everyone's' hearing, to occur within a few blocks of your own London home and interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of your home time and property I ask you to please vote for Option A to keep the enhanced quality of life we have in London at the high level we currently enjoy.

Thank you
Gillian Clatworthy
650 Waterloo St
London ON N6B 2R4

Re.: Section 13.0 Noise Policy – Special Events

As a resident living just north-east of the intersection of Oxford and Richmond Streets, I have an interest in the forthcoming decision on potential modifications to the special events noise bylaw.

I regret that I am unable to attend the meeting, but I ask that my perspective be taken into account.

I am among those who approve of the policy currently in place. I am prepared to accept that there will be a moderate disturbance from amplified sounds during specified festivals and events. At times, depending upon the prevailing wind, the sound of amplified music can be clearly heard in my yard. While this is not how I might choose to spend my afternoon or evening, I am prepared to accept that there needs to be some compromise in these matters.

I believe that the current basic policy of 90 decibels at 30 metres and no amplified sound after 11:00 p.m. is acceptable. 90 decibels at 30 metres is quite “generous” and exceeds the stated limit of 90 decibels at 10 metres currently in operation in Hamilton, Ontario as well as limits imposed in other comparable municipalities. From what I have been able to research, my understanding is that 90 decibels is about the maximum volume that is acceptable for the duration of most festivals and concerts without causing significant ear damage.

Many of us find it impossible to sleep with the sound of loud – notably bass driven – amplified music. While it seems acceptable to occasionally be disturbed until 11:00 p.m., it would be entirely intolerable to be kept awake until midnight or even 1:00 a.m. Such a change would result in lost sleep and, given the decreasing volume of other sources of noise in the city core after 11:00 p.m., would result in even louder vexatious amplification.

An associated concern is with crowd dispersal and (often alcohol-related) rowdiness. While most concert-goers are responsible citizens, loud events continuing to midnight and beyond are likely to increase the challenges of sustaining public order. As a taxpayer, I have deep concerns about having to pay for additional policing and other costs.

There is no evidence that London’s near competitors in the festival and outdoor concert market permit louder and longer concerts. In fact, most have more stringent regulations. I do not accept that London is unable to attract large-scale talent owing to the current regulations.

As a musician myself, who enjoys London’s cultural scene, I am pleased that we have achieved what I consider to be a sensible and balanced policy. While I am not always a fan of the music that waves and swells over my back yard, I am prepared to support my fellow Londoners who do enjoy such music. But I would be most concerned were we to permit either an increase in volume or the lateness of amplified sound. Perhaps those few concert promoters who have violated the bylaw need to be reminded of the seriousness of the policy. If the majority of concert promoters can govern themselves and their artists, then others should also be able to do so.

Despite the challenges of living close to the core, I am a firm advocate of bringing people back to the centre as residents as well as occasional concert goers. In order to continue to develop the core as a mixed residential area, it is essential that certain

balances be maintained. Among these is the current policy on noise at special events. Should the decibels be allowed to increase or concerts be permitted beyond 11:00 p.m., I am concerned that some of us would feel obliged to relocate.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you might have and so please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Nesbitt-Larking

787 Hellmuth Avenue

London N6A 3T6

I would like to register my opposition to any change that would allow events to operate at high noise levels until midnight or 1AM.

I live near the corner of Oxford and Colborne Streets (767 Colborne), a good distance from Victoria Park. Yet on summer evenings, I am able to hear quite clearly the music and even the announcements - the suggestion that I would be forced to listen to this for an hour or two longer seems unreasonable. Perhaps it would make downtown a nicer place to visit - but it would also make central London a nastier place to live, and this is surely not a desirable compromise.

It seems to me that the current system has been working quite well. The fact that only 6 events lost their noise deposits proves that most organizers are able to abide by the current rules - the fact that a minority seem incapable of doing so is no reason to change things.

Regards,

Jonathan Vance

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