

Greetings Ms. Bunn,

Could you please see that the attached letters are added to the agenda for the CPSC meeting on July 26, 2022? I would also like to request delegation status to speak to the committee on both topics ~ one addressing the fireworks by-law and the other addressing public signage by-law.

I grant permission for my correspondence to be added to the agenda.

Thank you.

Kindest Regards,

Deanna Ronson

**To:** Mayor Ed Holder, Members of the Community and Protective Services Committee

**From:** Deanna Ronson

**Re:** 9th Meeting of Community and Protective Services Meeting, July 26, 2022, Fireworks By-law PW - 11

Greetings Mayor Holder and Committee Members,

We are writing to you on the topic of fireworks and London's Fireworks By-law PW - 11.

While we are grateful that City Staff has initiated public engagement on the matter, we have a few concerns.

First, we feel that the City's survey "Your Thoughts on Fireworks" was poorly designed.

a) the question asking if residents support a ban on fireworks is very black and white. It groups all types of fireworks together, including consumer and professional fireworks and does not allow people to support a ban that would distinguish between types of permitted and restricted fireworks.

b) there is no collection of demographic information. For example, it may be important to know how many people who self-identify as living with a disability are negatively impacted.

Second, aside from pursuing feedback from Londoners, we request that the Community and Protective Services Committee present a motion directing City Staff to research alternative forms of light displays similar to a motion put forward by Council for the Town of Collingwood.<sup>1</sup>

We ask that the CPSC request that City Staff research alternative forms of light displays to traditional fireworks for the following reasons. Traditional Fireworks:

\*create pollution in our air, land and waterways (<https://bit.ly/3BI0qrE>)

\*start tens of thousands of accidental fires every year (U.S. stats, <https://bit.ly/3wUhukW>)

\*can cause respiratory distress in humans (<https://wbur.fm/3xTwDUF>)

\*cause injury, disorientation and death in wildlife (<https://bit.ly/3Br8Sp8>)

\*can cause exacerbation of symptoms in persons with PTSD, cPTSD, Autism, and other disorders (<https://bit.ly/3roYcTJ>)

\*cause thousands of injuries to humans every year, including death (<https://bit.ly/3hPAY5M>)

Regionally and nationally, there has been a trend toward alternate forms of fireworks/light shows.

For Canada Day, 2022, the City of Waterloo contracted North Star Drone Shows (<https://www.northstardroneshow.com>) to provide a drone light show for the City's celebrations. North Star's prices for a custom-designed Drone Light show range from \$16,905.00 (for a 50 drone show) to \$196,075.00 (for a 500 drone show).

This year, the City of London spent approximately \$19,000 on the Canada Day Fireworks show. Given this budget and perhaps some local corporate sponsorship, it would be easy to make a switch to drone shows. If Waterloo can do it, then, so can we.

Earlier in June, 2022, the Hyde Park Business Improvement Association hosted a laser show for its PondFest.

The HPBIA contracted a company out of Montreal for its show, LaserTech Canada (<https://lasertech-canada.com>). The laser show was approximately \$15,000. The HPBIA had a budget for the show, plus one corporate sponsor. The organization works with LaserTech to get special permits including clearing with fire/police. LaserTech worked with Transport Canada to get air space clearance. The only potential barrier to a laser show is that a 30' minimum clearance is required for optimal viewing of the lights.

An additional alternative is "Quiet" Fireworks. In 2018, Banff, Alberta switched to quiet, or "low noise" fireworks; the Calgary Zoo switched in 2012 and Collechio, Italy in 2015. "Quiet" fireworks produce the same light show without the loud "bang."<sup>2</sup>

While our group's main focus right now, is seeing that City Staff begin the appropriate research so that we can begin deliberations later this Fall or by early 2023, we also have a three-year plan that we would like to see implemented.

Year 1, a shorter sales period for consumer fireworks, especially from the pop-up sales vendor, fewer sales points and tighter regulations on the type of consumer fireworks that are sold. (Please see attached Appendix - Licensing Questions for more details.)

Year 2, a full ban on consumer fireworks (sales and detonation), while licensed displays of regular fireworks and other larger organizations (holding permits) continue.

Year 3, a full ban on traditional fireworks, with the City and other organizations employing alternative light shows using either quiet/no noise fireworks, laser light shows or drone light shows.

In order to achieve the goals above, City Staff will also need to research how successful bans have been achieved in municipalities across Canada and the U.S.

We believe that the three-year plan above is not only reasonable, but also viable and feasible with your help.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Deanna Ronson  
Becky Amendola  
Co-founders of Londoners for Quiet Fireworks

## Appendix

### Licensing Questions Attachment

Here are some questions about the licensing of vendors which we believe will help facilitate the ongoing discussion:

- 1) Where would the public see a list of the vendors by address along with a copy of the license/contract they have with the city?
- 2) What steps does the city routinely take to make sure the vendors are in full compliance with all of the requirements contained in the Fireworks By-law?
- 3) Are full inspections of the vendors' premises regular and routine, or are they only done on a complaint basis?
- 4) How does the city compile the inspection results and how would the public access these reports?
- 5) What requirements has the city placed on the vendors in terms of their public education requirements at the point of a sale?
- 6) How does the city make sure that only the products listed in the by-law are available?
- 7) How much revenue does the city receive from each vendor, and how would the public view this data?
- 8) How does the city determine the number of licensed stands that are licensed, and how are these allocated to the vendors. Is it first come, first serve, are there location limits as to how close they can be, is there a lottery if more vendors apply than space? Or are unlimited licenses available so long as a vendor has procured space from a property owner?
- 9) Many of the stands are decorated with very large graphic and colourful representations of the product. These displays face the street prior to the opening date for the 7-day window period. Are these displays otherwise in compliance with the signage bylaw, and can they be further limited to the seven-day window period for sales?

10) When the stands are open during the seven-day window period, there are also large flags and banners placed on or near the municipal roadway. Are these so close to the street permitted? Or is advertising limited to the private property they have let? Are additional permits required from the city for flags, banners and other trade-ads that are clearly designed to attract the attention of passing motorists?

11) Has the impact of encouraging passing motorists to make a quick turn off in order to make an impulse purchase been considered? Have traffic engineers looked at the safety of quick turns, U-turns, and in-and-out from lots been considered?

# Endnotes

## <sup>1</sup> NOTICE OF MOTION

15.1.

Consideration of Alternate Forms of Light Displays, Councillor Doherty

**WHEREAS** there is a growing concern about the negative impacts of fireworks on wildlife and domestic animals, in which the loud noise causes panic responses that can have dire consequences on animal health and well-being;

**AND WHEREAS** the loud noise from fireworks has been demonstrated to be disturbing to the elderly and people living with autism and post-traumatic stress disorder;

**AND WHEREAS** traditional fireworks also have serious environmental impacts caused by noxious gases and pollutants that poison the air, the water and the soil, making them toxic to birds, wildlife, pets, livestock, and also create a risk of fire;

**AND WHEREAS** many municipalities throughout Canada, the US and Europe, including Banff, Caledon, San Francisco, and London have banned traditional fireworks outright or and have chosen to use other forms of light displays including "quiet" fireworks or drone displays;

**AND WHEREAS** the banning of traditional fireworks in Collingwood would be consistent with our commitment to the health and safety of our residents and our declaration of a climate crisis;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of the Town of Collingwood direct staff to consider alternate forms of light displays for special events and to include these recommendations in the 2023 budget discussion. (<https://collingwood.civicweb.net/document/104723/>)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-banff-ditches-big-bang-canada-day-fireworks-to-protect-wildlife/>