

Council to vote on bylaw that would ban personal use of fireworks

By Zachary Roman

Depending on who you ask, the Town of Caledon's proposed ban on the personal use of fireworks is cause for celebration.

While Caledon's Mayor and Council have expressed support for the ban, the Canadian National Fireworks Association (CFNA) has publicly expressed its opposition.

Town of Caledon staff first brought a report on updating the Town's fireworks bylaw to Council at a November 30, 2021 General Committee meeting. The report presented three options to Council, one of which was to implement a formal ban on the discharging of fireworks ? with the exception of events and theatrical pyrotechnics.

Council will vote on a bylaw that would implement that option at its April 26 meeting. The other two options were to ban fireworks in the Town altogether, or to limit their use to residents with a property a half-acre in size or larger.

The staff report on fireworks was created after the Town received repeated complaints about firework usage from residents.

They complained of fireworks causing excessive noise and property damage.

According to the report, residents also complained of fireworks being discharged when not allowed, and that the fireworks were creating debris.

?This type of activity is impacting the enjoyment of area residents and causing concern to

residents with pets and livestock,? reads the report.

CFNA president Perry Logan wrote a letter to the Town denouncing all three new fireworks bylaw options presented in the staff report at the November 30, 2021 meeting.

Logan said he and CFNA were disappointed in the Town bringing the ideas forward, claiming ?99.9 per cent? of fireworks users follow safety regulations.

?We are seeing another staff report that highlights concerns and very little in the way of solutions,? wrote Logan.

He also said a fireworks ban has never been successful in any community in Canada due to people in power not understanding what the problem with the misuse of fireworks actually is.

?Banning fireworks will not stop delinquent use as proven in other communities. Better education and public awareness campaigns at the retail location is proving to be successful.?

Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson has said even the education is not working.

He said the litter and mess the Town had seen that year from fireworks was the worst ever and that people had set off fireworks under school buses and cars.

?It's not burning down the neighbourhood but it's the next thing to it. If we can somehow show that fireworks can be discharged in a group setting in a controlled manner in a safe way, I'm all for it, but right now, it's the wild west,? said Thompson at the time.

In Logan's letter, he wrote that the CFNA understands the use of fireworks increased during the pandemic. He said this has led the CFNA to ?push harder for better education and training requirements at the point of sale.?

A public notice from the Town regarding the vote on its new fireworks bylaw was published the week of April 7.

The notice said if the proposed bylaw is passed, not only will the discharge of fireworks for personal use be banned in Caledon, but the sale of consumer fireworks will be banned as well. If passed, a permit system will be implemented for large fireworks displays at community events and for motion picture and theatrical pyrotechnics.

According to the notice, the following rules would apply for such displays: a minimum safe distance of 300 metres must be kept from schools, nursing and care facilities, industrial, fuel dispensing facilities and agricultural facilities containing livestock; a licensed display supervisor must be present; sufficient liability insurance must be obtained; safety inspections must be performed; and fireworks must be planned for acceptable times and locations from dusk to 11 p.m. unless otherwise approved.