

Municipal staff face ?persistent challenges? enforcing fireworks ban

Caledon banned personal use of fireworks in April 2022

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Caledon's fireworks ban hasn't started with a bang, according to staff.

At Caledon Council's March 5 General Committee meeting, Town of Caledon municipal law enforcement analyst Joel Assaly submitted a memorandum to update Councillors on the impact of Caledon's fireworks ban thus far.

Caledon Councillors voted to adopt a new fireworks bylaw at an April 26, 2022 meeting. The bylaw bans the personal use of fireworks in Caledon, as well as the sale of fireworks.

Assaly said in 2022, municipal law enforcement staff used Victoria Day and Canada Day as a grace period where they warned people that fireworks were no longer allowed but did not issue tickets. He said the grace period gave staff a chance to educate residents.

When the grace period was over, he said staff responded proactively and reactively to conduct enforcement on and around holidays that typically result in the discharge of fireworks.

Since Caledon's fireworks ban was implemented, Assaly said 124 complaints have been received by municipal law enforcement staff: 67 in 2022 and 57 in 2023.

These complaints have resulted in 42 issued charges and four investigations into the sale of fireworks.

Assaly said despite allocation of resources to deal with the fireworks ban and a phased approach to its implementation, there's been enforcement difficulties and safety concerns. He called the decrease of complaints from 67 to 57 marginal, and said ?persistent challenges? have emerged.

One such challenge is resistance and non-compliance from the public.

?Despite education and awareness efforts during the grace period, there continues to be a

persistent portion of the population which continues to discharge fireworks,? reads the memorandum.

Another challenge is difficulty enforcing the fireworks bylaw at large gatherings, which has also led to safety concerns for bylaw officers.

?The safety of municipal law enforcement officers is a paramount concern, especially in instances where large groups are involved in the unauthorized discharge of fireworks,? reads the memorandum. ?Officers have expressed credible safety concerns when intervening in situations involving significant numbers of people engaging in prohibited activities.?

Assaly said significant resources are needed to enforce the fireworks ban on major holidays like Canada Day and Diwali.

Due to the challenges outlined in his memorandum, Assaly said there's a need for ongoing public education about the fireworks ban. He said Caledon needs to implement a targeted communications strategy with awareness campaigns running both online and

in-person at community events.

He said the communications strategy needs to provide accessible information that stresses the importance of safety.

?Regular updates on enforcement progress and continuous evaluation of the communication strategy will contribute to building a culture of compliance and safety within the community,? reads the memorandum.

Assaly said Caledon's municipal law enforcement staff will continue to enforce the fireworks ban.

He said in addition to the communications strategy, Caledon needs to optimize resources for key events and develop a strategic plan for managing large events where managing illegal fireworks discharge is challenging.