

Town receives numerous illegal fireworks complaints during Diwali

By Zachary Roman

Fireworks are often used to celebrate Diwali, the Festival of lights.

In Caledon, the personal use of fireworks is now illegal, after a by-law prohibiting them came into effect on April 26 when Caledon's Council ultimately voted in favour of it.

In a statement sent to The Citizen, the Town of Caledon said its municipal law enforcement team was preparing for an increase in firework activity on October 24 (Diwali) and pre-deployed by-law officers throughout the Town.

There was indeed an increase in firework activity, and the Town said this led to a number of tickets being issued.

When it was passed, Caledon's fireworks ban received opposition from some Caledon residents and the Canadian National Fireworks Association, who stated people would simply use fireworks anyways.

Councillors Annette Groves (now the Mayor-Elect) and Tony Rosa (re-elected as Ward 5 Councillor) were the only ones in opposition to the by-law passing, expressing their concerns that the Town would be taking away from the enjoyment of neighbours getting together.

Resident Ruth Wheelwright wrote to Council at the time, saying "Whether it's Diwali, Canada Day, Victoria Day or Labour Day, please let us celebrate in a safe and respectful manner."

The Town said municipal bylaw enforcement coordinators worked until midnight on the 24th, covering the phones and dispatching calls to by-law officers. Caledon's Fire Services team were also called in to educate residents on the fireworks ban, and fire crews were deployed to patrol within Caledon.

"Additional education campaigns about the by-law and its enforcement were executed on the Town's social media channels and in local newspapers leading up to October 24," reads the Town's statement. "On Monday, October 24 the Town received numerous complaints pertaining to fireworks and a number of tickets were issued. The by-law team thanks those who took the time to report fireworks in their area. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting the illegal use of fireworks by calling 311 or visiting Caledon.ca/reportaproblem."