

Licensing and Standards Committee

From: Ulla Colgrass <ulla@colgrass.com>
Sent: Monday, May 2, 2016 1:26 PM
To: Councillor Palacio; Councillor DeBaeremaeker; Councillor Di Giorgio; Councillor Karygiannis; Councillor Mammoliti; Councillor Matlow; Licensing and Standards Committee
Cc: Councillor McConnell; Councillor Cressy; Mayor Tory; Medical Officer of Health
Subject: Noise Bylaw proposals, MLS, May 19, 2016



Dear Councillors and members of the Licensing and Standards Committee:

The proposed changes to the Noise Bylaw are closely tied to the newly established Toronto Music Advisory Council that is proposing watered-down noise restrictions with less red tape and no community consultation to obtain permits for events in public spaces from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Exemptions and extensions to that time frame would be available.

The current bylaw protects us from noise at any time during night and day. That protection could now be gone. The assumption that we only need a peaceful home or work environment to sleep at night is laughable and insensitive. Toronto is a bustling 24/7 city, where people work night or day in businesses or at home, take care of children, recover from illness or simply expect privacy. That is why New York City prohibits intrusive noise at all times, and yet it is a most vibrant financial and cultural city.

The city of Austin, Texas is apparently the model for turning Toronto into a “music city” of the kind Rob Ford admired on his trip as mayor in 2013. This is what has happened in Austin after loosening their noise bylaws:

<http://kut.org/post/map-austin-noise-complaints-are-rise>

Noise complaints in Austin rose by 470 percent in five years! Out of 33,107 complaints, only 515 citations (1.5 percent) were handed out. If our parks, squares and public spaces were opened up for commercial events, we would do no better, given Municipal Licencing and Standards’ poor record of noise control to date.

Toronto has many noise issues. Neighbourhood associations throughout the city are deeply concerned with proposed noise by-law weakening. YQNA is focusing on commercial use of our public spaces, because we have so many of them on the Waterfront and they are extremely popular with tourists and residents from all wards.

We fervently request that our parks, boardwalks, waterways and squares remain open to the public as intended. Barriers, ticket sales, large trucks with stages and equipment and crowds up to 10,000 simply cannot be accommodated in our small public spaces. We already have a dozen outdoor performance spaces offering hundreds of concerts each year. Some already create serious problems, and they cannot be expanded or further commercialized by a watered-down noise bylaw.

YQNA requests that these issues be included in any amendments to the Toronto Noise Bylaw:

1. Studies on health and quality of urban life, including Toronto-specific studies, become the basis of any amendment.
2. The Toronto Board of Health contributes to and supports any changes to the Bylaw.
3. Amplified sound must be restricted to the site of the event and not disturb entire neighbourhoods.
4. Responsibility for intrusive noise must rest on makers of noise, not on residents' complaints or noise logs.
5. No multiple permits for large outdoor events can be given without public consultation and councillors' permission.
6. Any measurements of decible sound must be in dBC (larger sound spectrum) and not dBA.
7. Noise control measures of construction must be part of building permits.
8. The Noise Bylaw must be enforced, and more substantial fines set for violations.

Sincerely,

Ulla Colgrass

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