

Licensing and Standards Committee

From: Marten van Kerkwijk <mhvk@astro.utoronto.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, May 3, 2016 12:37 PM
To: Mayor Tory
Cc: Councillor Cressy; Licensing and Standards Committee; Medical Officer of Health
Subject: noise by-laws revisions

Dear Mr Tory,

I write to express my concern about the planned revisions to the noise by-laws, as these seem to move away rather than towards what I would hope is the goal: to lessen problems with noise -- much of which is easily avoidable.

Specifically, I would hope the revisions would tighten constraints on machine noise, especially from exhaust fans, air conditions and leaf blowers and the like, where quiet(er) versions exists or where it would be easy to put machines in places where the noise would be directed away from rather than towards the whole neighbourhood. Personally, I find the ever-increasing use of machines like those is making it more and more difficult to enjoy the outdoors, be it just sitting in the garden or sleeping at night (at least with windows open -- which, not having air conditioning, is needed at least in Summer).

It may be relevant to note that I grew up in Europe, where even in big cities such big machine noise is mostly absent (I lived in Amsterdam for years, and stayed for long enough periods in London and Paris to judge). In comparison, Toronto, like many cities in north america, is amazingly noisy. The difference seems almost exclusively a result of citizen demand (e.g., the mostly inaudible PCs that are now the norm started being available in Germany well before North America). I would strongly urge you to similarly adjust the noise by-laws to reflect citizen requests. It would not seem particularly difficult to set better constraints, perhaps getting there using appropriate incentives, and it is hard to see any downside.

With all best regards,

Marten van Kerkwijk

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