



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Community Safety Committee **DATE:** July 5, 2001
FROM: Jim Hancock Sandra Tokarczyk **FILE:** 8075-20-08
Fire Chief Manager, Community Bylaws
RE: FIRECRACKER AND FIREWORKS REGULATION BYLAW NO. 3322

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That a Fireworks/Firecracker Advisory Task Force be formed to review the issues relating to fireworks/firecrackers and present their recommendations back to Community Safety Committee in October 2001.

Jim Hancock
Jim Hancock
Fire Chief

Sandra Tokarczyk for
Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws

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Community Bylaws	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>[Signature]</i>
RCMP	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Administration & Programs.....	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Law	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

In December 2000, Council received two letters from concerned Richmond residents regarding fireworks safety. Their specific concerns were:

1. How they can protect themselves in relation to improper discharge of fireworks (they don't feel safe in the community); and
2. The city's response to a specific incident relating to the discharge of fireworks.

Both citizens have proposed, that in addition to a total ban on sales, a total ban of discharging fireworks and firecrackers be introduced in Richmond.

Representatives from Fire, RCMP, Parks, Law and School Board met to discuss the issues outlined in their letters.

As a result of the meeting staff identified the following issues:

1. Richmond's existing *Firecrackers and Fireworks Regulation Bylaw No. 3322* is outdated and it fails to reflect both the Provincial and Federal Fireworks Acts. The bylaw also fails to reflect current community activities relating to the discharge of firecrackers (eg. Chinese New Year and openings of businesses) and fireworks that fall outside of the designated October 24, to November 1, timeframe.
2. There isn't easy access to detailed data relating to the issue of fireworks complaints or emergency responses (eg. landscape materials, structural, injuries, attempted arson).
3. A need to review the emergency response procedures between Fire and RCMP; the legislation in place; and education approach for both staff and the public.
4. A need to review the use of fireworks in the community, outside of those which received an event permit.

ANALYSIS

Protecting the Citizens and Their Property - Use of Fireworks/Firecrackers

Further data analysis, public input into issues and possible solutions as there are varying opinions and options available. A task force is suggested to look at the various issues and options. Examples of some possible options that the task force would review are:

1. Total ban of discharge and sales of fireworks/firecrackers (allowing for only community sponsored events);
2. Continue with the existing legislation, however, increase education; and
3. Look at introducing increased restrictions on residential properties.

City's Emergency Response Procedures

Citizens (don't know who to call Fire or RCMP and when to use 911).

Our response to a malicious incident that occurred in October 2000, could have been addressed more effectively. This incident involved a Roman Candle placed through a letter slot. RCMP were notified and responded and the officer who came to investigate stated that police are unable to act. The appropriate approach would be to treat this as an arson attempt.

There is also an opportunity for Fire and RCMP to conduct joint training sessions around the issues of fireworks/firecrackers. The aim would be to review and develop the: education, prevention and response, and enforcement approaches. The outcome would be to increase the sense of community safety.

Existing Legislation

The improper use of fireworks can actually fall within the three levels of governing bodies.

Municipal:

The current *Firecrackers and Fireworks Regulation Bylaw No. 3322*, was adopted in 1965 at a time when there were no public displays and residential lots were substantially larger. The By-law prohibits the use of Firecrackers. The current fines for contravention of the bylaw and the language contained within the bylaw, are outdated.

Provincial:

The provincial Fireworks Act, Chapter 146, stipulates the timeframe for the discharge of fireworks whereas the Richmond Bylaw is silent, although Richmond has used this section of the Act as a guideline for enforcement.

Federal:

The Federal Fireworks Manual stipulates a clear safe distance for the discharge of fireworks as well as makes provisions for the use of firecrackers.

Data Gathering

Determining the scope of the problems relating to fireworks is difficult at present because we are not currently collecting detailed data that is easily extracted. However, we would look towards Provincial statistics to help us determine the scope of the issue and reflect upon actual emergency responding staff feedback.

FORMATION OF TASK FORCE

It is recommended Fire, Bylaw, RCMP, Parks, School Board and citizens form a task force to bring recommendations forward to Committee for their October meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None other than staff time.

CONCLUSION

We are concerned that some Richmond residents may not feel safe in their community as a result of the current circumstances. There are many differing points of view relating to the discharge of fireworks/firecrackers and opportunities to improve our education; prevention; and enforcement programs relating to this issue. A task force is the preferred method of reviewing these issues.

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Chief Fire Prevention Officer



Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws

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