

Subject: [Fwd: Re: Helpful Interpretation - Fireworks Regulation Bylaw]

Date: Tue, 16 Mar 2004 22:56:45 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Subject: Re: Helpful Interpretation - Fireworks Regulation Bylaw

Date: Tue, 16 Mar 2004 19:59:15 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Gary Calder <Gary_Calder@dnv.org>

CC: Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Senior Management Committee <managecomm@dnv.org>,
Brian Stegavig <Brian_Stegavig@dnv.org>, "Gord Tomlinson (E-mail)" <gord.tomlinson@rcmp-grc.gc.ca>

Dear Chief Calder,

Thank you for including me in the list of recipients for your e-mail. While I appreciate you are only clarifying a point of uncertainty that was raised at last night's Council meeting, this does not change the fact that your new Fireworks Regulation Bylaw is unnecessarily heavy-handed and amounts, essentially, to the elimination of family fireworks through over-regulation. Allow me to explain further:

The Family Fireworks Package

As Councillor Walton aptly put it, roman candles are THE items that everyone enjoys in a fireworks display. Allowing only 20 percent of the value of a family package to include roman candles is ridiculous. In a \$30 family package that amounts to a \$6 roman candle (you know full-well that the best roman candles cost \$10 and up). In other words, a responsible adult holding a permit issued by the fire department would have to buy a \$100 family package in order to get a couple of basic \$10 roman candles.

The Permit

As I stated in my e-mail on this matter, I SUPPORT the permitting requirement. When I talked to you in December you reassured me that the new bylaw would simply involve adults having to pick up a permit from their local fire hall in order to legally purchase and discharge Halloween fireworks. The vendors would have to keep a sales inventory available for inspection to insure that items are not sold to minors. This would have been simple, straightforward, and supportable. What we got is something quite different. Were it not for Councillor Nixon raising the matter of where to get a permit, you would have had residents find their way to the Lynn Valley fire hall rather than the convenience of their local hall (permits should also be available at community policing stations and the District Hall). It makes me wonder if we can expect any other little surprises in the application of this new bylaw.

Public Safety

I know there are those whose sensibilities are bothered by the thought of responsible citizens lighting fireworks in a simple celebration during a festive event, but the safety element is really overplayed. When the fire department proposed banning fireworks in the '90's, I phoned Lions Gate Hospital's records department to inquire about the numbers of injuries reported due to fireworks. I was told they had none. (Backyard barbecues, by comparison, are the cause of many bad burns.) Of course hospital records don't count minor injuries where people might have gone to their own doctor or a clinic. However, it must also be noted that it is the readily available ILLEGAL firecrackers, bottle rockets that are most likely to cause an injury. With the ban on roman candles, the illegal items from the States are going to become even more popular with kids.

Public Input

I am sure it hasn't gone unnoticed that I am the only member of the public who has spoken-out on the issue of fireworks regulation. Even though every Halloween individual families across the municipality gather in their yards after trick-or-treating to enjoy a little magic with fireworks, I predict this new bylaw will result in the tradition just fading away ... which I'm sure is what is intended. I think most responsible adults with busy lives will find the new regulations too much of a bother, especially when limited to just one or two basic roman candles in a reasonably-priced family package. It's just not worth the time or bother. What a shame.

Conclusion

It is too bad, Chief Calder, that you and the Superintendent went so far in this bylaw -- which would have been fine without a ban on the sale of roman candles outside of family packs. We could have tested the new permitting and enforcement measures this year to see how effective they are, and assessed the situation incrementally rather than a reactionary and punitive ban on roman candles.

Sincerely,
Brian Platts

Gary Calder wrote:

Dear Mayor and Council:

We contacted Mr. John Martin, Technical Advisor, Federal Explosives Regulatory Division to request an interpretation and written confirmation of the minimum firing distances for "Consumer Fireworks".

He has confirmed verbally and in writing (below) that "Consumer Fireworks", as defined under our proposed Bylaw, are exempted from the REQUIRED 35 metre minimum firing distance Regulation and are subject only to a RECOMMENDED 20 to 30 metre safety zone.

Through this clarification of the Regulations, neighbourhood Consumer Fireworks displays may take place without fear of being in violation of Federal Regulations.

Respectfully submitted for information.

G.D. Calder
Fire Chief

-----Original Message-----

From: Martin, John [<mailto:jomartin@nrcan.gc.ca>]
Sent: March 16, 2004 11:45
To: Gary Calder
Subject: RE: Clarification of Display Fireworks Manual

There are no minimum distances set for "Consumer Fireworks" ERD have recommended 20 m and 30 m, however it is only a recommendation not a regulation. I will drop a poster and pamphlet contains some recommended safety tips.

-----Original Message-----

From: Gary Calder [mailto:Gary_Calder@dnv.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2004 9:03 AM
To: John Martin (E-mail)
Subject: Clarification of Display Fireworks Manual

John-

As discussed we require an interpretation of the Display Fireworks Manual in order to be sure of the meaning of Section 2.1, Table 1, Page 11.

Please confirm that the "Consumer Fireworks" as defined in our Bylaw are exempt from the 35 metre minimum distance from firing points to the public requirement as noted under "Ground-Level" fireworks (heights of less than 15 m) in Table 1.

Should this be the case, we would rely on the manufacturer's instructions on the Consumer Fireworks packaging to recommend a safe minimum distance from the firing point.

Kindly reply that we have correctly understood this interpretation.

Best regards.

Gary Calder
Fire Chief
District of North Vancouver

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