

## MANAGEMENT REPORT

**Date:** April 30, 2024  
**To:** Infrastructure, Transportation, and Safety Sub-committee  
**From:** Neil Anderson, Fire Chief  
**Report Number:** ITS24-010  
**Attachments:** Fireworks By-law 73-2006

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**Title:** Amend Fireworks By-law 73-2006

**Objective:** To seek City Council approval to amend Fireworks By-law 73-2006 to recognize the Diwali religious festival to the list of approved events for fireworks celebrations and to amend the regulation of sparklers by not including them under the Family Fireworks definition.

**Background:** The current Fireworks By-law allows for family fireworks on Canada Day and Victoria Day only.

The Fire Department has received an increase in inquiries from families that have requested to set off *Family Fireworks* as part of the Hindu religious ceremony commonly referred to as the "Festival of Lights". The Diwali Festival is celebrated over a period of 5 days, in October or November annually, with the dates varying annually.

Based upon the existing by-law, such requests have been denied.

Further, it is noted that under section 1.6 that 'sparklers' is included under the definition of Family Fireworks. Sparklers are used for many celebrations, including in restaurants with some desserts and birthday celebrations. They continue to be sold by many vendors and are used by families throughout the year, despite being regulated as being included as a family firework.

**Analysis:** To reflect the inclusive spirit of Stratford staff are recommending that the first day of Diwali, the Hindu religious ceremony commonly referred to as the "Festival of Lights", be added to Sections 5.1 and 11.1 of the Fireworks By-law as an eligible day. Sections 5.1 and 11.1 would be amended as follows:

5.1 No person shall set off Family Fireworks in the City, except on the designated days of Victoria Day and Canada Day ***and on the first day of the Diwali Festival annually***. In the event that weather conditions such as rain, fog, smog or wind, *on the*

*designated days (Victoria Day or Canada Day or the first day of the Diwali Festival) make it impractical and/or unsafe to set off family fireworks, the next day preceding or following these days shall be the designated day.*

11.1 The act of setting off of Family Fireworks on private property by the owner, tenant or authorized person Victoria Day, Canada Day **or the first day of Diwali** for their own personal display shall not be deemed to be a Display Fireworks.

The Stratford Fire Department is also recommending removal of sparklers from article 1.6 as a regulated family firework but continues to encourage safe use of them, external of buildings, and with adult supervision.

In all cases, alternatives to fireworks (glow sticks, flashlights, etc.) will always be encouraged and welcomed.

### **Financial Implications:**

#### **Financial impact to current year and future year operating budgets:**

There are no financial impacts to budget anticipated from this report.

### **Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

#### **Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships**

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

### **Alignment with One Planet Principles:**

#### **Health and Happiness**

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

#### **Culture and Community**

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the Fireworks By-law 73-2006, as amended, be further amended by:**

- **Amending section 1.6 to remove sparklers from the definition of “family fireworks”.**
- **Amending section 5.1 to “No person shall set off Family Fireworks in the City, except on the designated days of Victoria Day, Canada Day, and on the first day of the Diwali Festival annually. In the event that weather conditions such as rain, fog, smog or wind, on Victoria Day or Canada Day or the first day of the Diwali Festival make it impractical**

**and/or unsafe to set off family fireworks, the next day preceding or following Victoria Day or Canada Day or the first day of the Diwali Festival shall be the designated day."**

- **Amending section 11.1 to: "The act of setting off of Family Fireworks on private property by the owner, tenant or authorized person on Victoria Day or Canada Day or the first day of Diwali for their own personal display shall not be deemed to be a Display Fireworks."**

**AND THAT the City Clerk be directed to prepare and list an amendment to By-law 73-2006, for consideration at a future Regular Council meeting.**

**Prepared by:** Neil Anderson, Director of Emergency Services Fire Chief  
**Recommended by:** Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer