

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF DISCHARGE FIREARMS BY-LAW

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

February 13, 2017 Glanbrook Municipal Service Centre,

4280 Binbrook Road, 7pm

A meeting was arranged for members of the public to provide comments to City staff as part of the comprehensive review of the Discharge Firearm By-law. Public Notice of the meeting was posted on City Website on January 16, 2017, including links to the City's Discharge Firearm By-law and consultation maps. Personal invitation was sent to the identified stakeholders (clubs, organizations, associations), and those individuals recognized as having interest to this review.

The following was available, greeting those attending the meeting:

- Large consultation maps for viewing
- Information board for posting questions (for Q & A)
- City map to identify attendees place of residence
- City staff to field any questions prior to the presentation

The meeting commenced with a Power point presentation by R Ustrzycki outlining the goal, objectives and direction of the comprehensive review; followed by a Q & A to respond to any general questions, and compile any comments/concerns for review by the Working Group; closing with an open session for participants to dialogue with City staff.

Buffer Zone

The reasoning behind the 100m buffer zone questioned. The audience was provided with the current provisions in the City by-law (100m buffer zone), and research of best practices in other jurisdictions (100m firearm/ 50m bow). One attendee raised concern with the recent introduction of higher velocity, more powerful crossbows. Considering the City by-law enforcement records for 5 years (2 complaints: 0 charges), most acknowledged that the 100m buffer zone for firearms has not been problematic, and the overall conciliation was for a 50m buffer zone.

Consultation Maps and Expansion Areas

The comments to the consultation maps as forming part of any by-law were varied/mixed. Many of the participants agreed that the maps in the current By-law are

confusing and need to be changed. It was the suggestion of one of the participants that there seemed no need to include a map in any by-law and there should only be reliance on the general provisions (i.e. buffer zones). However, everyone was in agreement that any maps consider the recent and future development.

City staff clarified that the denoted prohibited/regulated areas follow physical/natural boundaries (roads, property lines, etc.). It was pointed out by an individual that the tract of land south of Golf Club Road, between Trinity Church Road and Hendershot Road did not seem to follow any recognizable boundary (to be analyzed by City staff).

Enforcement

There was a general concern expressing their frustration with the lack of response and understanding of the various enforcement agencies responding to a contravention. A more collaborated/joint effort and cohesive understanding by these agencies is needed when responding to complaints. More direction and public education is needed how to, and who to report any concern.

Overview of By-law

The current By-law is not clear and hard to understand. A suggestion that crossbows be included in the definition of firearms was not well received by the majority. It was the consensus of the participants that the definitions in the By-law should be examined to eliminate any ambiguity.

Additional exemptions are needed to identify shooting/gun clubs and ranges. The audience was directed to the current By-law exemptions for licensed gun clubs (shooting ranges regulated by the Firearms Act) and the provisions for exemption permits.

The mapping is outdated and confusing in its present form. It was the consensus of the participants that the overall structure of the By-law and its mapping must be simplified with more emphasis to public education and communication. There was concern with the unavailability of information for the public (i.e. maps, by-law, regulations, contact information for various enforcement agencies)

Exemption

Members of shooting ranges/clubs suggested that the By-law should continue to recognize these sanctioned uses, and there should be more effort to identify the various exemptions to the recreational use of firearms.

Public Engagement

Participants were appreciative of the open consultation/dialogue with the City and were speculating when a new by-law was anticipated. Staff outlined the process going forward, and that the public would still have the opportunity to address Committee/Council as any reports/recommendation are submitted.

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF DISCHARGE FIREARMS BY-LAW

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

February 14, 2017 Rockton Fairgrounds (812 Old Hwy 8), 7 – 9:00pm

A meeting was arranged for members of the public to provide comments to City staff as part of the comprehensive review of the Discharge Firearm By-law. Public Notice of the meeting was posted on the City Website on January 16, 2017, including links to the City’s Discharge Firearm By-law and consultation maps. Personal invitation was sent to the identified stakeholders (clubs, organizations, associations), and those individuals recognized as having interest to this review.

The following was available, greeting those attending the meeting:

- Large consultation maps for viewing
- Information board for posting questions (for Q & A)
- City map to identify attendees place of residence
- City staff to field any questions prior to the presentation

The meeting commenced with a Power point presentation by R Ustrzycki outlining the goal, objectives and direction of the comprehensive review, followed by a Q & A to respond to the many general questions put forward. The session concluded with an open session for participants to dialogue with City staff to answer any specific questions and collect any additional comments/concerns for review by the Working Group.

Enforcement

There was a general concern expressing the frustration with the various enforcement agencies responding to a contravention. The public’s experience is that enforcement agencies are only focused and familiar with their respective legislation, and do not have a universal understanding of all the relevant legislation. There is no apparent sharing of information between these agencies, or when responding to complaints. It was suggested that a firearm hot-line be available to the public to report contraventions. It was also proposed that a process be considered where hunters are unreasonably harassed by unfounded complaints. The common thread to the varied concerns is that more public education and training of enforcement staff is needed.

Consultation Maps and Expansion Areas

The comments to the consultation maps as forming part of any by-law were varied / mixed. Most of the participants found maps to be beneficial, but agreed that the current

maps in the By-law are confusing and need to be changed. It would be very helpful if copies of the maps were provided to the hunter when renewing their tags/licenses. There was one suggestion that copies of the maps and by-law be mailed annually to residents in the rural area.

Buffer Zone

The participants were directed to the current provisions in the City by-law and the reasoning behind the 100m buffer zone; and staff findings to best practices in other jurisdictions (100m firearm/ 50m bow). There was concern that conservation lands are taking away hunting areas and that the 100m distance should be reduced for public trails or conservation lands. The conservation lands should be improved by posting those areas where the discharge of firearms is prohibited.

There was one suggestion that the City mail the various hunting regulations to all the affected residents annually; and that all prohibited areas/zones in the City be properly posted/signed.

Concerns with current By-law

The current By-law is not clear and hard to understand. It was the consensus of the participants that:

- definitions in the By-law should be examined to eliminate any ambiguity
- overall structure of the By-law and its mapping must be simplified with more emphasis to public education and communication.

There following a concerns expressed by individuals that did not necessarily represent the group as a whole:

- The discharge firearms should be allowed on all NEC where lands cannot be developed
- There should be separate definitions/restrictions for different firearms (high powered rifles, shotguns, air guns)
- Crossbows should be included as a firearm and not considered as a bow
- the meaning of a structure better defined (should not include a small garden shed in the backyard)

Exemption

The provisions exempting farmers protecting their livestock/crops in the current by-law is confusing and should be better defined to help identify their obligations (circumstances to allow hunting on their lands). There should be more effort to identify

the various exemptions to the recreational use of firearms and that shooting ranges/clubs be better defined in the by-law

Public Engagement

Many of the participants were appreciative of the open consultation/dialogue with the City and were speculating when a new by-law was anticipated. Staff outlined the process going forward, and that the public would still have the opportunity to address Committee/Council as any reports/recommendation are submitted.

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF DISCHARGE FIREARMS BY-LAW

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

March 1, 2017 Ancaster Old Town Hall

310 Wilson St. E., Ancaster, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

A meeting was arranged for members of the public to provide comments to City staff as part of the comprehensive review of the Discharge Firearm By-law. Public Notice of the meeting was posted on the City Website on January 16, 2017, including links to the City's Discharge Firearm By-law and consultation maps. Personal invitation was sent to the identified stakeholders (clubs, organizations, associations), and those individuals recognized as having interest to this review.

The following was available, greeting those attending the meeting:

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The meeting commenced with a Power point presentation by R Ustrzycki outlining the goal, objectives and direction of the comprehensive review, followed by a Q & A to respond to the many general questions put forward. The session concluded with an open session for participants to dialogue with City staff to answer any specific questions and collect any additional comments/concerns for review by the Working Group.

Enforcement

The public expressed their frustration reporting the discharge of a firearm. There is no apparent direction/instruction for the public to contact the appropriate enforcement agency. There was a sense of dissatisfaction to the apparent disconnect of the enforcement agencies experienced when reporting contraventions.

Better instruction/information is needed, which agency (police, MNR, By-law) to call, and under what circumstances. The information/communication should also include facts concerning the safe use of firearms.

Consultation Maps and Expansion Areas

Most of the participants found the consultation maps to be beneficial, and agreed that the current (old) maps in the By-law are confusing and need to be changed.

Several persons were concerned with the activity at one particular property, and proposed that the boundary to prohibit firearms be extended to the tract of land north east of Copetown, west of Inksetter Road, within Concession 2 and Regional Road 52.

Another participant suggested that the rural area of the Stoney Creek mountain, currently prohibited for the discharge of firearms (bows allowed), be permitted to control the deer population.

Buffer Zone

The participants were directed to the current provisions in the City by-law and the reasoning behind the 100m buffer zone; and staff findings to best practices in other jurisdictions (100m firearm/ 50m bow). There was conciliation that reduced distances be applied to bows, shotguns and muzzleloaders.

Concerns with current By-law

The current By-law is not clear and hard to understand. It was the consensus of the participants that any changes to the by-law should:

- Provide better wording and understanding of the by-law
- Expand/ provide a full definition of a bow
- Eliminate any ambiguity in the definitions
- Simplify the overall structure of the By-law and its mapping
- Emphasis/have improved public education and communication.

There was a suggestion expressed by one individual that the by-law restricts the use of high power firearms for target practice.

Exemption

The by-law should continue to exempt farmers protecting their livestock/crops, and that there should be more effort to identify and explain the various exemptions to the by-law.