

May 5, 2022

Dear Council Members of the Town of the Blue Mountains,

This deputation is in regards to the amended motion passed by the Committee of the Whole on April 26th that would permit Astec (BTI) a temporary exemption to the Town's Noise By-Law prohibiting operating noise outside the hours of 7 am and 7 pm Monday to Friday by allowing an exemption for the hours from 7 pm to 11 pm on these days.

Like other residents, I continue to strongly urge Council to refuse any exemptions from the longstanding Noise By-Law to Astec. I am a full-time resident and submitted a deputation when this matter was originally brought before Council in October 2021. Despite being assured by a number of Council members during that meeting that myself and other residents would be engaged in the development of the Staff Report, this did not occur, and I even tried to directly reach out to the staff members responsible for the report. Furthermore, I understand that only one meeting took place with a couple of households. A quick door-to-door petition by neighbours to share information on this issue led to over 30 residents expressing their concern and requesting Council not to approve this motion. I am deeply concerned that the process to-date has left many residents unengaged and uninformed on this issue and that this will continue to be the case with the amended motion that has been proposed.

It's important to note Astec did not inform residents when they sought permanent exemption to the Noise By-Law last October nor have they engaged residents since then, and that many residents and their families who have lived in the area for decades cannot recall any engagement from the company.

With that track record in mind and an already generous and longstanding Noise By-Law in place, I do not believe that the amended motion as it stands can be viewed as a fair and balanced compromise between both parties, which is how it was presented during the last Committee of the Whole meeting.

Notwithstanding my opposition to granting the exemption and without prejudice to my right to continue to oppose the temporary or any permanent exemption in the future, I respectfully request that Council's motion is strengthened with the following measurable requirements:

1. Astec must make clear the implications of extended allowable hours of operational noise.
2. Astec must share data from any noise assessments conducted by the company in the last 5 years, and information on implications of this temporary exemption to the company's current approvals under the Ministry of the Environment.
3. Astec must meet the conditions of the motion before it is permitted to temporarily extend its hours. The noise detection equipment and Community Engagement Committee must be in place prior for them to be considered meaningful measures.
4. Astec must share how it plans to engage residents in the establishment of this committee, and meeting minutes must be available within a week of meeting, reviewed and approved by all committee members. Once approved, the meeting minutes must be publicly available and shared with not only Council but also local residents.
5. I would recommend that this committee meet on a more frequent basis than quarterly. It's critical that this is a committee where progress can actually be made in improving the relations between both parties and that there are tangible results in implementing noise mitigation strategies.
6. As this continues to be a by-law matter, it would be helpful and appropriate for senior staff members from the Town's By-Law office to participate in the committee. Astec (BTI) is part of a multi-national corporation and it's important that local residents are not left to try to resolve local by-law matters which fall under the jurisdiction of the Town without its involvement.

Thank you,
Alexandra Hall
■ Bay Street East