

## **Bobbie Walthall**

---

**Subject:** RE: fireworks reg. agenda

**From:** Patricia Sinclair  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2016 12:34 PM  
**To:** Bobbie Walthall  
**Subject:** fireworks reg. agenda

To: City Commissioners  
From: Patricia Sinclair  
Re: Fireworks Enforcement  
Date: May 10, 2016

As perhaps the civilian most involved in getting our current fireworks ban, I urge the city to do more to enforce it and to prevent fireworks from entering the city by stationing police at key entrance points, and to really educate the public about the ban.

The memo from the LKPD is certainly different from the one last year saying they basically weren't going to enforce it.

Most people understand that if there is a truly serious matter in the city where police are needed, they will need to give that priority. But fireworks are a serious matter in many ways.

The year the ordinance was passed, a young couple barely escaped with their lives from a burning building and two young girls set their bedroom on fire with sparklers. Fortunately, the late Chief McSwain and former Fire Marshall Rich Barr gave the Lawrence Journal World the facts just as the paper was going to press, and the near-tragedy was covered.

I lobbied the City Commissioners, did a lot of research into fireworks themselves and their enforcement elsewhere, the county policy and procedures, the amount of money earned by county (next to nothing), endured humiliation and threatening behavior, some from fireworks vendors who do not live in Lawrence.

There are also state fireworks laws which were not being enforced by the LKPD such as lighting fireworks in the street or public places.

At the time of the ban, commissioners reported that they were receiving many more people asking for a ban than the opposite. People who threw neighborhood fireworks shows were not making all of their neighbors happy, but their neighbors hesitated to tell them.

While it may be that newer sections of town report fewer incidents, here in the Barker neighborhood, there are deep lots, dark streets, and many places to hide (concrete trail and remnants of woods at "Burroughs Creek,"

There are many bad things about fireworks other than the fact that they can do damage to structures, cars, etc, I understand that one group is already speaking out on behalf of veterans who may be adversely affected by them, and I believe that is true, but will leave that to them to speak and a tip of my hat to all vets. The lovely colors are caused by carcinogens (that is, cancer-causing agents) which coat animals and trees and roads and eventually wash down into the river, a source of drinking water for communities and wildlife. People with lung disease suffer. One commissioner said that his wife had a lung ailment and so they always had to go out of town for the 4th. Animals are frightened and tend to run off. As Pet World showed us, birds and other animals die quickly from inhaling smoke.

Prior to the ban, the LKPD said that they could not enforce it because they could not determine if a firework was an illegal one. Now they know, and they still do not want to enforce the ban and nobody in the city has been able to think up a way. At the time of the ban, the entire state of New York banned them and routinely stopped vehicles at the border. Each mayor who receives complaints after the 4th is not mayor by the next year, so no progress is made. I guess that this year will be different.

Don't let the statistics fool you. Most people do not bother to call since they know what kind of a response they will get. This is not, for the most part, an act of patriotism, since we get them for many July days and late at night, and for

many known and unknown reasons during the year. That means that dynamite is being stored at someone's house. The shift change is particularly bad timing.

If you tell people that you are not going to enforce a ban, or barely enforce it, that only encourages them, I have called from a dark road and said that a car with a spotlight was needed and been told that there was one that was being sent and I waited and waited and nobody came and there was no answer to another call. Then I ventured into the area of Burroughs Creek and folks were having a field day.

But this happens also when the offenders are right there. This should be easy to figure out legally and logistically. Plan ahead for this year, find ways to enforce the ban, and let the public know the law and that you intend to enforce it. Can someone be placed at the fireworks stands who notes what is being purchased and relays that to another officer? Can large signage be placed at the stands regarding legality? If someone has their expensive fireworks confiscated and also either goes to jail or has a large fine, then they might take this seriously. Please act now to help people, wildlife, our homes, and sleep.

## **Bobbie Walthall**

---

**From:** Richard Heckler <rheckler2002@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 09, 2016 5:13 AM  
**To:** Leslie Soden; Lisa Larsen; Stuart Boley; Matthew Herbert; Mike Amyx; Diane Stoddard; Bobbie Walthall; Tom Markus  
**Subject:** Fireworks

Then there are pets that go absolutely insane when explosions are heard. These pets try to get away by scratching down closet doors, then try under beds and in fact never being able to relax. Some pets become nervous wrecks. Shutting all of the windows and doors does no good.

Several hours of explosions can be a bit much for some pets.

If it is a nice day and some like to keep windows open. The home becomes inundated with the odor of "gun powder". Neighbors cannot allow windows to be open.

Then there are neighbors who need to go to bed yet the explosions keep them awake until early hours of the following morning.

I'm sure there are Nam vets and vets of the 36 year current war that become disturbed at the sound of explosions hour after hour.

"A VA report from 2011 said noise from fireworks could cause a reaction in veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, eliciting, in some cases, anxiety attacks and flashbacks."

Several hours of explosions could be a bit much for some vets.

If some continue to show zero respect for any of the above then banning the sale of any might well be the only alternative.

There there is the occasional house fire as a result of fireworks that the homeowners had nothing to with.

These explosions can begin July 3rd and continue through July 5th.

Dickie Heckler