

Noise concerns continue in Montclair, committee formed

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The clock will begin ticking after next month's Montclair Jazz Festival, when municipal officials, event organizers and concerned residents seek to remedy loudness and safety concerns associated with large events in municipal parks.

Sean Spiller

As reported by The Montclair Times, concerns about volume and safety, particularly regarding traffic and parking, took center stage during the Montclair Township Council's July 22 meeting following the Montclair High School All-Class Reunion that occurred on July 19 in Nishuane Park. The discussion spilled over during 3rd Ward Councilman Sean Spiller's ward meeting on July 23 in the Montclair Public Library.

Permits have already been granted to jazz festival organizers for the event on Saturday, Aug. 16, Spiller said, meaning that municipal officials have until next summer to address issues. Nishuane Park hosts two or three major events per summer - the African American Heritage Festival, the jazz festival and the biennial MHS reunion.

Resident Beth Norman of South Brookwood Drive questioned the township's enforcement of a 1986 ordinance that prohibits volume exceed 55 decibels. Norman also expressed her concerns regarding public safety during large events.



In the short term, Spiller said that the township has introduced an ordinance setting mandatory driveway step-backs at a minimum of two feet. Enforcement of parking near fire hydrants can also make such events safer, Spiller noted.

In terms of an existing volume ordinance, Montclair's code is unclear, the councilman said. Despite acceptable decibel levels described in the 1986 ordinance, a 2012 ordinance sets volume restrictions at a "reasonable" level - an easily debated term.

Spiller said that he would withhold judgment on how the discrepancy between the two ordinances should be resolved until a committee, to consist of municipal officials and members of the community, explores options and comes up with recommendations.

In the meantime, resident Michael Norman invited Spiller to visit residences adjacent to Nishuane Park during next month's jazz festival to get a first-hand understanding of neighborhood residents' concerns.

Snow Problems in July

Volume levels near municipal parks were not the only noise concerns brought up during the ward meeting. During a 77-day period from mid-January into April, a Forest Street resident said that he was awakened 47 nights by the sound

of garbage trucks. The resident said that he was also stirred awake by the sounds of snowplows during the winter.

The resident asked if vehicles could be quieted down out of respect to sleeping residents.

Spiller said that, during the winter, municipal officials were encouraged to have as many snow cleanups as they could. The councilman said that he would look into whether the beeping sounds associated with vehicles could be lowered or turned off during early-morning hours.

A fellow Forest Street resident said that, despite paying for a permit to park in the municipal Midtown Lot at the corner of Forest and Glenridge avenues, spots are often taken up by customers of surrounding businesses. The resident said that, during the winter, he'd find himself forced to park in a more distant lot and walking to his home in the cold.

The township faced issues with municipal-lot parking this past winter, said Spiller, as some residents didn't relocate their vehicles following a snowfall and plows were forced to pile snow in lots, reducing the spaces and creating a larger demand for parking.

During snowfalls, Spiller said that permit holders are supposed to park in the parking deck on North Fullerton Avenue.

For general issues with the availability of permit parking, Spiller requested the resident to email exact concerns to him so that the township's Traffic and Parking Advisory Committee could look into them.

a nosy neighbor is a good neighbor

Montclair Police Captain James Carlucci and Officer Fredrick Cook of the department's Community Policing Unit attended the meeting, asking residents not to hesitate if they hear or see something suspicious. The Montclair Police Department depends on a partnership with the community, Carlucci observed.

Carlucci said that the department is usually able to respond to calls within five minutes, adding that calling from a landline is received better at the MPD's dispatch center than calling from a cell phone. Despite what some people may believe, Carlucci said, residents have the option to remain anonymous when phoning the police.

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