

Lights should be installed along Aurora's trails in safety bid, resident contends

Should Aurora's trails system be fully lit?

That was a question coming out of a recent Community Safety Town Hall event hosted by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, in conjunction with York Regional Police, held at Aurora Town Hall.

Responding to the YRP's presentation on crime reporting, area resident Stephanie McCleave said the community "desperately" needs lights within the local trail system to help get a handle on crime.

"Newmarket has lights on their entire trail system for those houses like mine that back onto the trail," she told Police and community members assembled on March 21. "It is pitch-black at night and there is a lot of activity that can be made in that trails system. If we can put cameras on those lamp posts that would be helpful."

Police responded that lighting in situations like a trails system would fall to the municipality, and, in response, Mayor Tom Mrakas said that has always been a hot-button issue.

"We don't have lighting on our trails and that is something we talk about constantly, not only at Council but through the Trails Committee we used to have," he said. "This is not to minimize it, but, at the same time, you have to remember that 50 per cent of the people don't want lights in their trails because it impacts the lighting that comes into the backs of their homes."

"I live off of a trail and I know exactly how dark it is, and I agree with you. These are discussions that we're going to continuously have at Council and it is something we might move towards doing, but there is also the realistic thing of the costs, that it is going to take all the trails because we can't just do certain trails; we're either going to do all of them or we're going to do none of them."

"These are conversations we're going to continue to have. Council is pretty firm on not moving forward with lights at this time but that could happen in the near future."

Some of Aurora's trails have lights in certain segments.

Trails in Fleury and Machell Park are fully illuminated, while the Holland River Valley Trail and Nokiidaa Trail are illuminated on the north side of Wellington Street.

The upcoming trail in Highland Gate Park will be fully lit when completed, the Town notes, adding that all pathways are lit in parks where there are amenities such as playgrounds and field courts.

Most trails that are in a "natural setting" are unlit, and these include the Klaus Wherenberg Trail, Oak Ridges Trail, Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area, and the Willow Farm, Lakeview and Wimpey Trails.

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