

**Editorial submission to Paxton Herald in response to 6/23 statement on proposed/and updated noise ordinance for Lower Paxton Township**

I would like to respond, on behalf of the Stray Winds Area Neighbors (SWAN) organization, to the comments published on the front page of the Paxton Herald on 6/23/10 with regard to efforts being made to update the current Lower Paxton Township noise ordinance.

Two of our members and their families, including my family, have had to deal with the disrespectful and inconsiderate actions of our neighbors, where our own rights to peace and privacy in our own homes were disregarded, time and time again.

Imagine what it would be like, coming home each day, wondering if you would have a peaceful evening, or one filled with noise - whether incessant screaming/yelling, revving of a loud vehicle, or music -- all loud enough to be heard in some, if not all, parts of your home ? Also imagine calling the police, time and time again, only to have officers indicate that their hands were proverbially tied and they "couldn't do anything"?

Maybe you've been at a stop light and heard one of those "boom cars," complete with a loud muffler and equally loud stereo with amplified bass. When the light turns green, you can get away from the noise....but imagine what it would be like to live next door, day in and day out, to disrespectful neighbors who feel it's \*their\* right to infringe on your family's right to privacy so they can be as loud and as disruptive as they want ?

You're not left with many options - maybe, if you can afford it, you can hire an attorney to ensure that your family's rights to privacy remain paramount. But, lawyers aren't cheap, and when you live in your own home, you expect a certain level of peace and privacy.

It's a pretty bad situation, isn't it?

Try living in that environment for a few weeks, months and even years.

That is why we have encouraged the township to pursue changes to the current noise ordinance. Public Safety director David Johnson has worked diligently to come up with changes that would not only protect a resident's rights to privacy in his/her home, but also give police officers more enforcement power, in the event an offending neighbor fails or refuses to stop noises that affect a person's right to privacy and peace in their own home.

Many towns and cities across the nation and globally have enacted various laws designed to curb noise disturbances, including ones to curb the "boom cars" that studies, including those by the World Health Organization, have shown cause significant hearing loss and increases in stress and blood pressure levels in all ages, from babies to elderly persons. Keep in mind that these "boom cars" aren't going away, and more and more municipalities are taking steps to curb their operation to protect their citizens from repeated and unwanted noise and privacy violations.

I'd like to address the comment about birthday parties "going after 9 pm." First of all, most people *\*are\** respectful of their neighbors and, as a common courtesy, would alert them to a planned outdoor event or party and would refrain from loud music or other disturbances after nightfall. Secondly, the draft ordinance would allow a resident to apply for a temporary permit, under certain rules and conditions that allows "non compliance" with the noise ordinance. Again, most get together and parties in neighborhoods wouldn't even need such a permit, provided that people in the township use common sense and respect their neighbors! Furthermore, a loud party after 9 pm would be in violation of the current (unamended) noise ordinance in the township.

I would suggest that Lower Paxton residents take a look at the draft ordinance that is currently being considered by the Board of Supervisors. You may find that it provides everyone with more rights to privacy and peace of mind than the current noise ordinance includes.

Tara Meade