



## St. John's Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

206 Frecker Dr, St. John's, NL A1E 5H9

Web: [www.stjohnsrasc.ca](http://www.stjohnsrasc.ca) Email: [info@stjohnsrasc.ca](mailto:info@stjohnsrasc.ca)

January 23, 2023

To: Danny Breen, Mayor, City of St. John's

Sheilagh O'Leary, Deputy Mayor, City of St. John's

Jill Bruce, Councillor (Ward 1), Ophelia Ravencroft, Councillor (Ward 2), Jamie Korab, Councillor (Ward 3), Ian Froude, Councillor (Ward 4), Carl Ridgeley, Councillor (Ward 5), Maggie Burton, Councillor, Ron Ellsworth, Councillor, Debbie Hanlon, Councillor, Sandy Hickman, Councillor.

cc: Charles Ennis, President, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

From: Michael Morrow, President, St. John's Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Subject: Light Trespass and Light Pollution Regulations in St. John's

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The membership of the St. John's Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC), in common with RASC members across Canada, have an abiding interest and concern in the quality of the night sky. One of the Society's missions is to draw attention to, normally inadvertent, examples of light trespass, ineffective up-lighting, and excessive illumination. The growing impact of light pollution, as described in a peer-reviewed article in *Science* (Kyba et al., 2023, **Science**, Vol. 379, pp265-268), has been the subject of extensive national media attention in the last week.

The apparent exploitation of light trespass, as seems to be exemplified by the situation in the Battery, seems to be unprecedented in our experience and is clearly beyond what can be addressed by education and persuasion. This is a matter of intense concern to our members and we have noted, with interest and appreciation, the City's Question and Answer document regarding this situation. While we acknowledge efforts that the City has made in regard to this situation, as outlined in the document, we are disappointed and surprised by the extent to which the City appears to be constrained in its capacity to address an action with acknowledged impacts on the health and well-being of some of its residents. We urge the City to continue working with other levels of government to find a solution to a situation that is unfair to a small number of residents and which is bringing negative national attention to the City.

The RASC maintains a database of municipal regulations, from across Canada, that deal effectively and progressively with excessive lighting, light trespass, and upward-directed lighting. It seems clear that the

situation in the Battery would not have escalated to the alarming extent that it has if St. John's had similar regulations in place. Based on recent news coverage, it appears that there may be legislation coming that will enhance the capacity of St. John's to implement more effective regulation in many regards. We urge the City to place a high priority on the development of effective regulations regarding inappropriate lighting (excessive lighting, light trespass, upward-directed lighting). Our Light Pollution Abatement Committee is familiar with appropriate regulations from many municipalities across Canada and would be happy to collaborate or provide advice on the drafting of similar regulations for St. John's.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Morrow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Morrow