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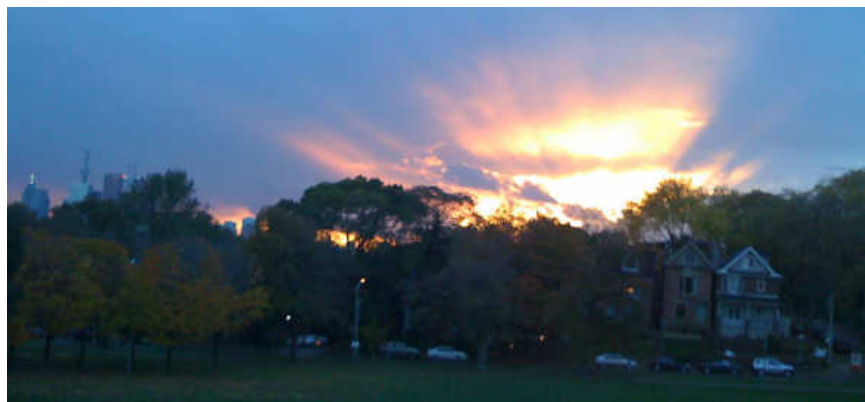
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City rules ruining another park's community success story

Posted by [John Michael McGrath](#) on Wednesday, October 26, 2011

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One more of this and we've got a trend. A while back we noted [the ongoing story of Dufferin Grove park](#), which has had a near-miraculous rebirth thanks to some deep and continuing involvement by the community: a firepit, a wood-burning oven used for pizza nights, a farmers market and more. Great, right? No, because it currently breaks a few city rules. So the neighbourhood is concerned the city will squelch what is great about Dufferin Grove. Now, [according to the Toronto Star](#), a similar story is playing out at Withrow Park in Toronto's east end.

Two months after Withrow Park neighbours gleefully celebrated their brand new fire pit at a community cookout, Toronto parks officials have told them it must go.

Well, sort of.

The pit itself can stay, but the custom-made rock foundation that was donated and carefully installed by a local stonemason will have to be ripped out, stored in a locked shed and put back together again every time they want to have a fire.

There might be a compromise with fire services, with a large cage placed over the firepit when it's not being used, but it will still need to be under lock and key. The veneer of sense this might make (controlling unauthorized fires) cracks under the realization that people can, and do, light unauthorized fires outside of fire pits in this city, too. (Fire, shockingly, is not a novel human invention.)

As with Dufferin Grove (and Kensington Market, and other places in Toronto) I have to ask: if the rules are making our success stories illegal, doesn't that mean the rules are wrong?

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Submitted by Toronto Real Estate Advice on Wed, 2011-10-26 16:38.

Isn't the whole point of open-file, open data, open source, the concept that many minds devoted to solving a problem will come up with a better result than any one person (or bureaucracy)? Instead of the 'dismantle it or put it under lock and key' ultimatum, can't we start to operate with a 'what does it take to make this good thing work for the community?' mentality.

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