

A LIGHT-TRESPASS SUCCESS STORY

This is the inspiring story of a homeowner who used patience, persistence and pictures as part of a strategy to rid his home of light trespass. The story's goal is to inspire other victims of a neighbor's glare, so they too might attain positive results. Here's Jim's story:



PARKING LOT LED GLARE SOURCES



UNFORTUNATE GLARE RECIPIENT

One evening we came home to find three brand new LED lights mounted on 30' high poles in the adjacent school parking lot bathing the exterior and interior of our home with bright light, making it look as though it were on the 50 yard line of a football stadium. I contacted the school district superintendent and was told they would place the lights on a timer for 10:30 PM shut off. With most of our bedrooms on that side of our house, 10:30 shutoff was unacceptable to me. I proposed they shield the lights or install more appropriate fixtures, but the request was ignored.

Armed with a signed petition from all home owners on the parking lot's perimeter and a power point presentation entitled "What is Good Lighting?" which I had obtained from the Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council's website as well as other helpful information I obtained there, I attended a school board meeting and had five minutes to present my case. After more than a month I received a letter from the superintendent's office thanking me for sharing my concerns but stating no further action would be taken. My immediate reaction was one of disbelief.

PERSISTENCE WAS A KEY FACTOR - The school apparently thought this letter was going to be the end of their lighting issue, however, we were not even close to being done. I took the letter to the City mayor and voiced my displeasure with the school district's response. After visiting my home to view the extent of the problem, the City requested that the school comply with an ordinance that required school lighting to be fully shielded to prevent light trespass. The school responded that they were in compliance. And with that we were back to square one.

PROFESSIONAL PICTURES TOLD THE STORY - We received permission to present our dilemma at a City council meeting. I hired a professional photographer to take pictures of the brightly lit outside and inside of our house. We used a power point presentation to display all of the photographs of the outside and inside of our home at night, including a picture of the image of the bright LED light splashed across the back walls of my 2 ½ year old son's bedroom. The next day our presentation was the lead headline in the local newspaper, including some of the pictures. At long last, public opinion was swaying the fight in our favor. That night the unthinkable happened, the lights in the parking lot never came on. Thereafter the lights were modified to direct the lighting downward and away from our home.

CONCLUSION - From start to finish our lighting disagreement with the school district had lasted 17 months. It would have been very easy on several occasions to throw in the towel and admit defeat, however, this was not a battle we intended to lose. The three most valuable lessons learned from our ordeal that might help others in a similar situation are first and foremost, do not give up the fight. Secondly, continue to go to the next level of authority if you are not getting the results you think you deserve. At some point you will hopefully find someone who will listen to your plight and go to bat for you. Finally, use quality photos to dramatize the negative impact. Those pictures taken of the glary LED lighting effects on and inside our house at night truly were worth a thousand words and were what swayed public opinion in our favor and thus prompted the school district to take appropriate corrective action.

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POSTSCRIPT - Not everyone will have the patience, endurance and drive to hang in there as Jim did, but hopefully his story might inspire other victims of light trespass not to give up the fight. The Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council worked with Jim, providing him with technical resources and suggested strategies. You are invited to visit our website: www.polcouncil.org and see how we might be able to help you with your light trespass problem. If you have had an experience with overcoming a light-trespass challenge and would like to share your story so others might benefit, please send it to us at polcouncil@gmail.com so we can post it.