
Halifax embraces the dark side for Earth Hour

Jon Tattrie

30 March 2009 12:18

Halifax joined the global Earth Hour celebrations Saturday, holding a big lights-out party on the Parade Square to urge people to cut consumption and better care for the planet.

HRM Mayor Peter Kelly counted the crowd of 300 down and then, with the help of a panda, flicked the switch to darken city hall. A technical glitch meant the power went out, too, leaving the stage in silence as well as darkness for a few minutes.

"For our children and our grandchildren, it's clear we have to do it for the future," Kelly said. "Slowing global warming is imperative. It's something we don't usually think of; this gives us a chance to see what we can all do together. One small event can make a big change."

He added the city is using Earth-friendly geothermal technologies in the new Alderney Landing project and is planning on installing less wasteful lighting in the Parade Square.

The city was dusky rather than dark, as many businesses kept the lights on for customers. Astronomy Nova Scotia took advantage of the darkened skies with a free telescope display. The clear night afforded close-up views of the moon, Saturn and an impressive fly-by from the International Space Station.

"It's our number one obstacle: trying to find a place we can go in the city (dark enough) to set up and show people the night sky the way it should be," said organizer Dave Chapman. "People are losing touch with the night sky. It's sad."

Stacey McCarthy of the World Wildlife Fund was happy with the turnout, but a little disappointed with the limited business participation.

"We hope there's a day we don't have to have Earth Hour every year," she said. "It grew astronomically from last year. I think next year will be a really big event."

Metro Halifax



Ryan Taplin/Metro Halifax

The Halifax skyline seen during Earth Hour on Saturday.