

City wasn't consulted on Panda Game's move to Sunday, councillor says



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Published Jan. 21, 2023 6:24 p.m. EST

After years of rowdy street parties in Sandy Hill after the Panda Game, things are going to look different this year.

The game between the University of Ottawa Gee-Gees and Carleton Ravens will be held on Sunday, Oct. 1, instead of the traditional Saturday date.

It's because of a schedule conflict at the venue, which is TD Place at Lansdowne Park.

The Ontario University Athletics released the schedule this week, showing that the game between the University of Ottawa and Carleton University will take place on a Sunday.

For two years in a row, controversial street parties have taken over a stretch of the Sandy Hill neighbourhood in Ottawa.

In 2021, a car was flipped over and danced on by students.

"Either day, we are all still going to have some fun out here, but obviously what happened a couple of years ago, we don't condone that and it was no one's intentions," student Kyle Barrow said.

Stephanie Plante, Rideau-Vanier councillor, is disappointed that the city wasn't consulted on how to move forward with the problematic tradition.

"I had not been consulted, no one informed my office, no one had informed the community association," Plante said, who represents the ward that includes Sandy Hill. "For two years the Panda Game has gotten out of control and we need to have some sort of way in which we control what's happening after the Panda Game."

Seven people were arrested last October, dozens of tickets were handed out, and between \$300,000 and \$500,000 was spent on policing.

Plante says she wants to meet with officials from both universities to discuss the plans for this year's Panda Game.

Both the University of Ottawa and Carleton University were unavailable to comment on the date change. In statements to CTV News Ottawa on Thursday, both schools said the game was moved to Sunday due to stadium availability.

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Hundreds of people take over a Sandy Hill street to celebrate following the Panda Game in Ottawa. (Aaron Reid/CTV News Ottawa)