



MINUTES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2009-JUN-10 AT 4:15 PM
BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET

Present:	Jim Kipp, Chair Shelley Serebrin Joan Wagner Meg Savory	Wally Wells Anne Kerr Charles Thirkill
Staff:	Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner	Rebecca Tubbs (Recording Secretary)
Regrets:	Margaret Henigman Jeff Thomas	Elizabeth Demattia Angelique Nash-Thurmeier
Guests:	Robert Wager	

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Councillor J. Kipp, at 4:16 p.m. in the City Hall Board Room.

2. Approval of Agenda and Late Items:

The agenda was approved with the addition of the following late item:

a) Long Lake Recreational Use Plan:

C. Thirkill is concerned about the safety on Long Lake. He noted that there are 100 hp motorboats being used and a helicopter pad on the lake. The banks are being eroded and the residents have taken ugly preventative measures to stop the erosion (homemade supports, cement walls, etc). He said that many cities restrict horsepower on similar lakes to prevent bank erosion. C. Thirkill mentioned that he has worked on this issue with the Nanaimo Area Land Trust (NALT) as part of their "Project 2000" community stewardship work. The projects have never amounted to anything. He would like to know what could be done about this issue.

J. Kipp explained that this may not be an environmental issue but a Parks & Recreation issue. He suggested that C. Thirkill write a letter to Council regarding overrecreational use and capacity on Long Lake. It may be possible to put a hp limit on the Long Lake; Westwood does not currently allow any motors.

**3. Adoption of Minutes (2009-Apr-08):
(2009-May-13):**

MOVED by W. Wells, SECONDED by S. Serebrin, that the minutes from 2009-Apr-08 and 2009-May-13 be adopted as presented.

4. Budget: (\$3,140.47):

5. Delegation:

a) Robert Wager – His research on a cosmetic pesticide bylaw:

R. Wager introduced himself to the Committee before beginning his PowerPoint presentation entitled "Science & Society". He had presented the information at the last Council meeting and Council had suggested that he show his presentation to ACE. He made it clear that he is speaking on behalf of himself and not Vancouver Island University (VIU). Points in his presentation were as follows:

Science and Society

- Most regulations are based on sound science. R. Wager emphasized the importance of science in society.
- There is a new call for risk-free society.
- He noted that people have used the Precautionary Principle to disregard science.
- The internet is a good resource, yet the information found there can be easily misused.

Fear vs. Real Risks

- The fear of a particular pesticide may not agree with the science associated with it.
- He noted that the Canadian Cancer Society is not a scientific organization, but an advocacy group.
- Many things contribute to cancer: red meat, sugar, BMI, alcohol, smoking.

All Pesticides Not Created Equal

R. Wager noted that there is a tremendous difference between the different types of pesticides; because one pesticide is dangerous they should not all be banned. Just because something is natural, does not make it safe. Just because something is synthetic, does not make it unsafe.

2, 4-D

R. Wager stated that the majority of pesticides used by common citizens are chemicals like Roundup and Weed-N-Feed. Chemicals such as these have been studied for decades and deemed safe when used as directed.

A. Kerr pointed out that the most noxious ingredient in 2,4-D has been removed, explaining the reason that these chemicals were approved.

R. Lawrance asked how “safe when used as directed” is defined. R. Wager noted that information is available on the Health Canada website. Safe-use can include wearing long clothes and gloves, washing hands, wearing eye protection and using proper application equipment.

S. Serebrin noted that although R. Wager is emphasizing that nothing is “risk-free”, these pesticides are claiming to be “safe when used as directed”. She explained that people assume that “safe” means “risk-free”. R. Wager replied that the risk is exceedingly small.

Roundup (Glyphosate)

Glyphosate is a herbicide. It does not cause birth defects, is virtually non-toxic to animals, insects, bees, and fish, and has been studied for over 30 years. Glyphosate replaces Atrazine, which is a much more toxic chemical. Use of Atrazine has dropped dramatically due to the invention of Glyphosate.

Reconsider Bylaw

He said that Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency uses a “precautionary approach” towards pesticides: a science based system (Environmental Impact Quotient (EIQ)). The Canadian Cancer Society uses the “Precautionary Principle”: a political tool.

R. Wager emphasized that when developing a policy, to look at the scientific aspect. He feels that a blanket ban on pesticides is a blunt instrument with unscientific assumptions. He feels that the solution is better public education on safe-use of pesticides and believes that a science-based system should be used to decide public health policies.

A. Kerr reminded R. Wager that the ban that is being discussed is for the restriction of “cosmetic” pesticides only. The Committee is not pushing for a complete pesticides ban. J. Kipp noted that the City is leaning towards an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to cosmetic pesticides.

J. Wagner asked R. Wager that if there were methods that existed that were both as easy and scientifically proven as pesticides, would he be in favor of using them? R. Wager answered “yes”.

M. Savory said that she believes public education is not manageable. Having a list of low- and high-risk pesticides easily available to the public and updating it on a yearly basis would be helpful.

A. Kerr agrees that it is naïve to think that education alone will be a successful strategy.

C. Thirkill again mentioned that it would be a good idea to post basic information regarding alternative pest management on the City website in an easy and user-friendly format. The information could be updated on a seasonal basis to correspond with issues that are currently relevant.

A. Kerr brought a copy of Ontario's bylaw for the Committee's review. The bylaw came into effect April 21, 2009, creating a clear set of rules throughout the province. The information is presented in a very clear format. She handed the bylaw to R. Lawrance. R. Tubbs will send the Ontario bylaw attachments to the Committee members via e-mail.

J. Kipp thanked R. Wager for his time and information presented. R. Wager excused himself. (5:03)

Committee Comments:

M. Savory noted that the Province of B.C. should be lobbied to establish a provincial pesticide regulation, similar to Ontario. Working through the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) may be the best route. The Ontario policy is banning the actual sale of said products which is a good strategy. If the policy was not provincial and only applied to the City of Nanaimo, someone could purchase the said chemicals in Parksville or other surrounding communities.

The Committee needs to find out if it is possible for a policy to be implemented at a provincial level. R. Lawrance noted that another strategy would be to implement a permitting system within the city.

S. Serebrin asked what step ACE is at in the bylaw process. R. Lawrance said that he is currently drafting the bylaw and is hoping to present a draft bylaw to Committee members by the July meeting. The draft bylaw then should be going to Council in September/October.

J. Wagner noted that in the Horticultural Program at VIU, having pesticide training and receiving a pesticide ticket is mandatory. She said that the main thing that people are looking for is information and education regarding organic horticultural practices.

S. Serebrin noticed that the scientific community does embrace the Precautionary Principle.

6. Correspondence, Handouts, Notices:

- a) Green Design Charrette – Invitation (for information only)

7. Ongoing Business:

- a) Pesticide Strategy Update:

R. Lawrance noted that he has met with the RDN, and that they are currently working together on the education portion of the program. The RDN has programs being run through Team WaterSmart. Team WaterSmart deals with a lot of similar material that ACE would like to address, (i.e. gardening, green design, using native plants, etc.), and are interested in working together. R. Lawrance would like discuss the idea of them emphasizing cosmetic pesticide alternatives as a Team WaterSmart issue.

Team WaterSmart is hiring a workshop instructor, Connie Kiromoto, to run a series of workshops. She will likely be hired again to do the fall workshops. Other programs can be designed in the future.

R. Lawrance added that there is a Shaw Cable photo shoot scheduled for Thursday or Friday and will be specifically focused towards alternative pesticide options. There will be two or three segments filmed over the next couple of months.

S. Serebrin noted that key words attract or deter people from becoming interested. The term "WaterSmart" does not make her think of alternative pesticide uses. J. Wagner noted that a term like

“Green Lawns” would catch more people’s attention than a term like “xeriscaping”. R. Lawrance noted that they will consider that in a communication plan, and are planning to do pesticide-only workshops.

It may be a good idea to work with the Parks Department to create some gardens in neighbourhood parks that could be promoted as “pesticide-free”. It would also be a good idea to partner with neighbourhood associations.

R. Lawrance would like to formulate a communication plan for the education portion of this program. He will draft and send out a communication plan to the members and they can respond via e-mail with their questions/comments.

b) Habitat Atlas:

R. Lawrance would like to remind everyone that a major overhaul will be taking place on the City’s Habitat Atlas. He is looking some Committee members to meet within the next month to thoroughly review the website content. M. Savory, C. Thirkill, and S. Serebrin are all interested in meeting. R. Lawrance will e-mail the members with suggested meeting dates.

8. New Business:

a) Green Design Charrette – June 19, 2009.

The City will be establishing a set of Green Design Guidelines. Invitations have been extended to local planners, architects, engineers, etc. for a group planning session. The groups will address a variety of topics from energy efficient cladding to protecting native landscapes and forests. R. Lawrance asked if one member of the Committee was interested in attending. J. Wagner and S. Serebrin would like to attend. R. Lawrance will speak to the organizer regarding final attendance numbers. R. Tubbs will send the information to the attendee via e-mail.

b) Urban Forest Strategy Update:

R. Lawrance explained that the Urban Forest Strategy is an attempt to integrate many park and forest management policies into one user-friendly document. It defines “urban forest” as more than just the trees; it includes all surrounding habitat. The strategy addresses the following:

Education & Outreach

There is currently no education program at this point. A major education strategy has to be created that includes promoting tree care and the value of trees in public and private realms.

Parks & Natural Areas Management

This module addresses invasive species encroachments, ivy removal, maintaining ecosystem integrity, Gary Oak meadows. This process will allow us to know more about what we have and don’t have to better manage these areas in the future.

Boulevard Trees & Landscaping

This module addresses site lines, safety concerns, and aesthetic. We will find out what is and what isn’t being planted in certain areas.

- C. Thirkill noted that water amounts for trees are not included in the plan and suggested that they be included.

Site-specific tree removal and replacement:

This module addresses the importance of communicating with the public some of the reasons for tree removal and replacement as well as improving removal techniques.

Property Values: Views & Privacy

This module addresses issues around view corridors, leaving a tree-screened view, etc.

Wildfire and wild land urban interface

The Fire Department has mapped out common and natural areas of problem and concern regarding forest fires.

Planning and Enforcement

J. Wagner excused herself from the meeting. (5:47)

A. Kerr asked whether or not the trees in Maffeo-Sutton Park would have been taken down if the Urban Forest Strategy had been in place. R. Lawrance replied that they may have been taken down whether or not the policy had been implemented, reminding her that there would have been a replacement policy in place as well.

The Committee members should review the modules and report back any of their suggestions or changes to R. Lawrance as soon as possible.

ACE needs to send a letter to the UBCM to get the Provincial Law and standard on a cosmetic pesticide ban. R. Lawrance and J. Kipp will find out what the UBCM is currently doing. R. Lawrance will draft a letter that can be adopted at the next meeting. J. Kipp will report back on whether Council would be interested in receiving and adopting such a letter.

9. Next Meeting:

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held Wednesday, 2009-July-08 at 4:15 p.m. in the City Hall Board Room.

10. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned 6:06 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chair

Date