



MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2009-MAY-13 AT 4:15 PM
BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET

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

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Councillor J. Kipp, at 4:23 p.m. in the City Hall Board Room.

2. Approval of Agenda and Late Items:

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

Minutes from the April meeting will be adopted at the next meeting as a quorum is not present. This meeting will be for information only.

A. Kerr and the Committee members introduced themselves to each other as it was the first meeting that she was in attendance for. S. Serebrin was introduced to the Committee members as the Education Sector representative.

4. Budget: (3,237.97\$):

5. Delegation:

a) Delegation by Jim Plasteras, Parks Operations Manager:

At the last meeting, ACE requested a representative of the Parks Department to attend the next meeting to provide more detail on the City's approach to Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

J. Plasteras began with an overview of Parks Department's IPM approach to pest management. Under IPM, the Parks Department is approved by the Province to use certain pesticides under certain circumstances. If pesticides are used, it is required that they be applied by a certified applicator and carefully documented.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is as a way to manage pests that looks at using a series of benign control methods before going to a chemical control. The benign controls are biological, cultural, mechanical and physical.

J. Plasteras added that the Parks Department and its contractors (responsible for 50% of landscape work in Nanaimo), are required by law to restrict the pesticides that they use through the IPM process.

J. Plasteras emphasized that the focus of the Parks Department is not to immediately opt for methods using chemicals.

As an example of how an alternative method can be considered, he noted that the first alternative to dealing with invasive blackberry plants in Beaufort Park was not through chemical treatments. Parks brought in pigs to clear out blackberry bush root systems. They are also planning to use goats to clear blackberry bush roots along the Queen Elizabeth Promenade.

J. Plasteras noted that over one year, only 45mL of Killlex and 4-5 bottles of diluted Round-up have been applied by Parks staff. He added that when you consider all of the work that is done in the parks system throughout the year, the amount of pesticides used is very small. He also added that all information is made public knowledge through the IPM process.

J. Plasteras asked ACE if they had any questions:

G. Butler asked if the amount of pesticides as stated above was only accounting for the amount of "cosmetic" pesticides that had been used. J. Plasteras answered yes. G. Butler noted that if Parks uses so little cosmetic pesticides, then it shouldn't be difficult to stop using them altogether.

A way to enforce a bylaw could be to consider using the strategy of West Vancouver's bylaw and forward any complaints to the Coastal Health Authority. ACE would have to find out if VIHA as the capacity to do site visits and soil tests.

In addition to the following IPM protocols, the City of Nanaimo is also a member of Plant Health BC, which is an industry-initiated pest management program. J. Plasteras provided a Plant Health BC newsletter to the Committee for information. The program is industry driven and supported financially by the Ministry of Environment.

J. Plasteras noted that Plant Health BC Certification gives a person and/or the whole department the accreditation of a higher level of knowledge on alternative pest management. Once one receives accreditation, it must be renewed every few years. It keeps organizations current with the most up-to-date pest management strategies.

R. Lawrance asked if all commercial applicators are required to take IPM training by the Province. J. Plasteras responded that all commercial applicators must have his/her Pesticide Applicators Certificate to apply pesticides.

S. Serebrin suggested creative solutions in manpower when deciding to use chemicals or not, such as recruiting students (i.e. removing invasive species, weeding, etc.). J. Kipp noted that it may be difficult to do a type of program that could take away a job from a Union member, even if it is a seasonal job such as summertime weeding.

G. Butler asked J. Plasteras how Nanaimo compares to other municipalities regarding their Integrated Pest Management strategy. J. Plasteras replied that they are completely current with effective alternative methods and preventative maintenance.

He also noted that the City makes compost with garden waste collected by City employees, as well as compost collected from the kitchen waste program. Many things are taking place that the public may not necessarily be aware of.

\$25,000 has been received by Council to implement an education program.

R. Lawrance noted that he is interested in working with the RDN on the education portion of this program. R. Lawrance has contacted Mike Donnelly and Sara Ellis from the RDN's "Team Watersmart" program and they do seem interested in working together and starting some workshops during June and July. R. Lawrance will talk to J. Plasteras to discuss how they can convey their message.

G. Butler mentioned that the previous minutes had mentioned "exploring a partnership with NALT". She mentioned that because they have received money from the City, a partnership could be easily created. R. Lawrance asked G. Butler to set up a meeting with NALT staff to discuss the idea.

G. Butler also brought in an example article from Art Knapp that says "Don't use native plants around your house as native plants do not look attractive" as an example of misinformation and to emphasize the importance of education and participation from retailers. R. Lawrance noted that some retailers like Home Depot have chosen not to sell pesticides.

G. Butler asked how long pesticides last in an area once they have been applied. J. Plasteras explained that there are selective pesticides that attack only the root systems, and unselective pesticides which attack everything that it is applied to. He noted there are not residual pesticides that affect new root systems for years.

J. Plasteras was thanked for his time and input before excusing himself from the meeting (5:15).

6. Correspondence, Handouts, Notices:

7. Ongoing Business:

- a) Cosmetic Pesticide Strategy - Update
See above.

- b) Committee Awards Ceremony: Green Nanaimo Awards
The ceremony will be held at the Oliver Woods Community Centre (6000 Oliver Road) on May 20th, 2009, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. A catered lunch will be provided. All members of the Committee are invited to attend.

- c) Habitat Atlas – Update
As discussed at prior meetings, the Habitat Atlas is due for an update. R. Lawrance explained that the I.T. Department is planning to do a major overhaul to the Atlas by incorporating it into the City's website. It will include a range of information from general to technical, which will be tied to a specific mapping system. The goal is to have an array of environmental information made easily accessible to the public. R. Lawrance is looking for ACE members to help gather material, update content, decide what makes sense, and discuss ways to promote Nanaimo's natural environment.

S. Serebrin suggested that the Atlas would be a good resource for elementary and high school students. W. Wells suggested using development reports as a resource.

G. Butler noted that the Habitat Atlas is not accessible for MACs.

R. Lawrance will bring this subject up at the next meeting and to plan to have at least an hour of the following meeting dedicated to gathering and organizing content.

8. New Business:

- a) J. Kipp mentioned that he had spoken with Ron Brown of Ron's Landscaping regarding his concern that a complete pesticides ban would be implemented. He asked how a commercial applicator would go about applying pesticides to a residential property. J. Kipp explained to him that commercial applicators working on residential lands would be expected to use alternative methods as well.

9. Next Meeting:

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held Wednesday, 2009-June-10 at 4:15 p.m. in the City Hall Board Room.

10. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned 5:32 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chair

Date