



MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2009-APR-08 AT 4:15 PM
BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET

Present: Jim Kipp, Chair
Charles Thirkill
Angelique Nash-Thurmeier
Meg Savory
Wally Wells
Joan Wagner
Gillian Butler (alternate for Anne Kerr)

Staff: Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner
Rebecca Tubbs (Recording Secretary)

Regrets: Margaret Henigman
Jeff Thomas
Elizabeth Demattia

Guests: Shelley Serebrin
Adriane Schroeder, BC Cancer Society
Chris Midgley, Sustainability Coordinator, RDN

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Councillor Jim Kipp, at 4:22 p.m. at the City Hall Board Room.

2. Approval of Agenda and Late Items:

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

- a) Delegation by Adriane Schroeder, BC Cancer Society, DVD & PowerPoint
- b) Food strategy (A. Nash-Thurmeier) - discuss inviting John Horn to meeting to discuss a food strategy and perhaps adding it to the workplan.

3. Adoption of Minutes (2009-Mar-10):

MOVED by C. Thirkill, SECONDED by W. Wells, that the Minutes of the 2009-Mar-10 meeting be adopted as presented. CARRIED.

4. Budget: (\$3,247.04):

R. Lawrance noted that some of the budget has already been used for food and the cost of last year's Christmas party.

5. Delegation:

- a) Delegation by Adriane Schroeder, BC Cancer Society, DVD & PowerPoint:

A. Schroeder, (Community Action Coordinator for the Vancouver Island Region), began by introducing herself and the BC Cancer Society. The BC Cancer Society is advocating for education programs and restriction bylaws for controlling cosmetic pesticides. Her presentation will include a short DVD regarding the adverse health effects of pesticides entitled "*Lawn & Garden Pesticides – Reducing Harm*" that was produced by the Canadian Associations of Physicians for the Environment, as well as a PowerPoint presentation entitled "*Cosmetic Pesticides – Reducing our Risk*". Her whole presentation will focus very much on the need for a bylaw.

Previous to the meeting, A. Schroeder distributed two sample bylaws via e-mail from the City of Port Alberni and the Township of Esquimalt to the Committee members via e-mail. She noted that the Esquimalt bylaw is a stronger example to strive to, and would love to see other

municipalities pass this bylaw. A. Schroeder added that it is accurate to compare Nanaimo's bylaws with these bylaws as the towns are approximately the same size. She also provided copies of ACE's September 2008 Council report RE: Cosmetic pesticides

"Lawn & Garden Pesticides – Reducing Harm" video:

The DVD did not be presented due to technical problems – The video link will be distributed via e-mail to members for review. [<http://www.flora.org/healthyottawa/doctor-section.htm>]

"Cosmetic Pesticides - Reducing Our Risk" PowerPoint presentation:

Main points included:

- Pesticides - What are they?: Pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides
- What is cosmetic use?: Non-essential use, used for beautification purpose, no benefit to human health
- Pesticides and Cancer: links have been made, children more at risk
- Canadian Cancer Society funded a poll through IpsosRied which reported strong public support for the phasing out of cosmetic pesticide use on residential and municipal lands.

ACE's Recommendations to Council

1. Education Program
 - BC Cancer Society suggests that education is not sufficient on its own and must be in conjunction with a bylaw.
2. Plant Health BC
 - BC Cancer Society suggests that Plant Health BC advocates against the passage of cosmetic pesticide bylaws and protects commercial applicator's ability to continue use.
3. Draft a bylaw to restrict the use of pesticides
 - BC Cancer Society noted that Councillors Unger and McNabb voted against this recommendation, saying that it should apply to municipal lands to be effective and show leadership.
4. Review of public education and bylaw in three years.
 - BC Cancer Society suggests that this is the time to conduct the second survey on pesticide use to document reductions realized through regulation and education.

M. Savory asked why ACE has recommended to pair up with Plant Health BC. R. Lawrance responded by saying that it is a tool to allow accredited users to use pesticides when required, and to look at alternative options before choosing a cosmetic pesticide. City parks are in support of the accreditation approach. This is only a starting point and can always be adjusted or changed in the future.

A. Schroeder raised the point that we would be accrediting professional applicators that are already required to have accreditation through the province.

In regards to pairing up with Plant Health BC to implement an accreditation program, J. Wagner asked why we would invest in Plant Health BC than put money into a local society who is moving towards organic methods. She mentioned in particular the Society for Organic Urban Land Care, which is an island-based society. They also offer a certificate in Urban Land Management. It would be nice to work with local societies. J. Wagner will pass the link on to R. Lawrance.

M. Savory wants to know why Parks is against the restriction of pesticides and supporting the accreditation program. She added that it is important to know what is holding people back from making these changes. A. Schroeder advised that she is meeting with R. Lawrance and Richard Harding, Director of Parks & Recreation on Wednesday, in advance of presenting to the Parks Commission on Wednesday, April 22nd.

A. Schroeder's presentation concluded with a recommendation for a date to be set for staff to submit a draft cosmetic pesticide bylaw for Council to review and that ACE secure funding in this current fiscal year for a public education program on alternatives to pesticides.

R. Lawrance reminded the Committee that this is a multi-year plan and that the first year is

geared towards an education program, with a bylaw coming into force in the second year, and the third year dedicated to a review process.

W. Wells noted that the bylaw focuses prohibiting users but does not focus on prohibiting sales and retailers. A. Schroeder replied by saying that the control of sales is under the provincial jurisdiction. She noted that other communities have created relationships with retailers to have bylaw information posted directly on the shelves with the pesticides.

b) Cosmetic Pesticide Program Review (C. Midgley, RDN Sustainability Coordinator & R. Lawrance):

C. Midgley started by noting that a municipality creating a bylaw does not necessarily make it legal, but many municipal bylaws are left unchallenged. Any pesticide bylaw that is created will apply only to residential properties. Under spheres of concurrent authority, you cannot restrict use on private lands.

R. Lawrance informed ACE that funding was not received for the education program component of the Cosmetic Pesticide Program. The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has passed a similar motion to implement a region-wide approach on addressing cosmetic pesticide use.

Since the RDN has passed the resolution to create a strategy, the process has begun. They are trying to create a regional program because many smaller municipalities on Vancouver Island do not have staff or money to carry out these programs. It is highly desired to have such a regionally consistent approach.

The Capital Regional District (CRD) wrote a sample bylaw; municipalities will be able to customize their bylaw as needed. The RDN oversee electoral areas that fall outside of the municipality. Instead of applying a bylaw to an electoral area, it must be applied one-by-one to each municipality.

There is a major difference between restricting and banning the use of cosmetic pesticides. Bylaws can include an exemption policy for special-use circumstances (i.e. removal of invasive plant species).

- J. Wagner noted that if pesticides are used on invasive plants, it would also affect our native species.
- Do we use chemicals or let our native biodiversity get choked away? (these questions are being discussed between staff) With the right application, chemicals can be used in a very targeted fashion.

M. Savory noted that the term “cosmetic” may be better worded as “non-essential”.

C. Midgley noted that they have unfortunately missed the opportunity to implement a program this year, due to lack of timing and funds. He added that this year they are looking to develop an education program to intensify and spread the message.

C. Midgley said that when they thought they would receive the funding (\$25,000), they were trying to recruit Lantzville, Parksville, etc, to participate in the strategy.

At this point, the RDN is not anticipating adopting a bylaw for their residential areas.

A bylaw of this nature would require support from the Chief Medical Examiner of VIHA, which has not been forthcoming in the past. It needs to be better communicated that there is a desire from residents for this type of bylaw.

M. Savory asked if there are other Regional Districts in BC that have been successful. C. Midgley responded that Capital Regional District (CRD) has so far been successful.

W. Wells asked whether or not the RDN can enforce provisions in electoral areas. J. Kipp responded saying that certain areas can and cannot; it takes the will of the local elected official.

Some ideas for the education component include the following:

- “Did you know...” messages (accompanying water bills, or other similar notices, emphasizing alternatives, effects of exposure, etc.)
- Creating a pledge program (to rewards those who are doing the right thing instead of prosecuting those who don't)
- Providing information online in a user-friendly way. (FAQs and Answers, Do's and Don'ts, easy alternatives, helpful links, etc)
- C. Thirkill suggested accrediting high school students with “Community Service” credits to help clear out invasive plant species. There are hundreds of interested students that could help.
- G. Butler noted that the main goal is to change the mindset of people regarding pesticides.

J. Wagner pointed out that if 80% of Nanaimo's residents are against the use of cosmetic pesticides as stated in A. Schroeder's PowerPoint, there is no need to try to convince people not to use them as they already agree. They need to know what the alternatives are.

R. Lawrance advised ACE members to send him any information regarding this issue that would be appropriate for website or newspaper resources. He will consolidate the information and submit the draft to the next meeting for approval before having it published.

What is the next step for ACE?

R. Lawrance replied that the next step is to proceed with researching into what a bylaw may look like as well as decide what the education component can include. There is a lot more work to be done. ACE may also want to think about building partnerships with organizations like NALT who can be of help with the education component of the program.

R. Lawrance will invite Jim Plasteras, Manager, Parks Operations, to overview the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) process, and the Plant Health BC accreditation program. This will help us to understand why the accreditation program is important to the Parks Department.

J. Wagner would like to invite someone from the Society for Organic Urban Land Care to do a presentation regarding types of workshops that are available and what other information she has to offer.

M. Savory inquired whether or not we should set a date to have the bylaw put into action by. R. Lawrance said we are already behind schedule as we did not receive funding. The timeline will need to be adjusted. He reminded the Committee that the education component needs to come first.

C. Midgley will compose a model bylaw sometime during the summer.

R. Lawrance and J. Kipp thanked C. Midgley and A. Schroeder for speaking with the Committee.

C. Midgley and A. Schroeder left at 5:50 p.m.

6. Correspondence, Handouts, Notices:

- a) Team Watersmart – Earth Week Workshops & Events

7. Ongoing Business:

- a) Election of Chair for 2009:
It has been clarified to staff that the rotating chair idea that is contrary to the ACE terms of reference. Legislative Services is currently coordinating a review process for all the committees. This review should be done within the next few months. J. Kipp has agreed to continue to chair the meetings until the terms of reference has been adjusted and a new Chair is appointed.

- b) Assign a permanent PNAC representative (J. Wagner currently interim rep):
R. Lawrance noted that S. Serebrin is still interested in this assignment but remains not on the Committee. The City has sent a letter to the School District requesting a nominee for the education sector, but has not yet received one back.

J. Wagner said that she attended the PNAC meeting, and would like to serve as the representative. R. Lawrance informed her that she only needs to report back to ACE if there is an issue of environmental interest being discussed.

J. Wagner will continue to serve as the PNAC representative.

8. New Business:

- a) City Habitat Atlas – thoughts regarding updates:
This resource was developed back in 2005. It provides information regarding water quality studies, ESA information, environmental features, jargon definitions, and other basic environmental information to the public. The program combines all of these elements into an interactive mapping program based entirely on environmental information and features.

R. Lawrance noted that this website could really use an update and needs to start being maintained on a regular basis. He would like the Committee to provide input regarding information that could be added to the atlas and ways to keep the atlas in the public eye.

- b) Urban Agriculture (A. Nash-Thurmeier):
In the previous minutes it was noted that food security would be addressed through the Social Development Strategy. A. Nash-Thurmeier would like to speak with J. Horn, Social Planner to find out what is planned regarding food security.

J. Kipp will bring the issue up at the SPAC meeting tomorrow night to ask them whether or not they will address the issue.

9. Next Meeting:

R. Lawrance reminded the Committee that a special meeting date needs to be set up for at least three committee members to review the Green Nanaimo Awards applications. The meeting must take place between Tuesday, April 13th and Tuesday, May 5th to make the May 20th Council deadline.

M. Savory, C. Thirkill, and W. Wells volunteered to participate in the application review process. R. Lawrance will contact them to arrange a date.

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held 2009-May-13 at 4:15 p.m. in the City Hall Board Room.

10. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chair

Date