

MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
TUESDAY, 2008-MAY-06, TRAINING ROOM, CITY HALL ANNEX

Present:	Joy Cameron, Chair	Ron Brown
	Shelley Serebrin	Charles Thirkill
Guests:	Elizabeth Demattia	Nadine Schwager
Staff:	Rob Lawrance	Jim Plasteras
	Cindy Hall (Recording Secretary)	
Regrets:	Steve Earle	Margaret Henigman
	Angelique Nash-Thurmeier	Chris Zamora
	Kevin Brydges	
Absent:	Geoff Garbutt	Geraldine Manson
	Scott Northrup	

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. without a quorum.

2. Adoption of Minutes of Jan.08, Feb.05, Mar.06 & Apr.01:

Deferred to next meeting.

3. Approval of Agenda and Late Items:

The Agenda was approved with the addition of updates on the RDN rep. position on ACE, and the recently held Earth Day celebrations.

N. Schwager advised that Geoff Garbutt will be taking the suggestion to the RDN's Corporate Committee that Chris Midgley be the RDN's rep. on ACE, with Nadine as the alternate.

C. Thirkill reported that the Earth Day celebrations went very well, with many displays and approximately 400 people in attendance. The 250 trees that did not get planted at the event have since been planted by volunteers. Charles will submit a report on the event's budget at the next ACE meeting. In response to an enquiry from J. Cameron, R. Lawrance will contact Cary McIver at the RDN about whether a composter program, similar to the one conducted in the Cowichan Valley, could work in conjunction with future Earth Day celebrations.

4. Budget:

R. Lawrance advised that reductions to the Committee's budget since the last meeting were for ferry expenses for Zigi Gadomski, WETBC, who attended the woodstove exchange program meeting held on April 23, and the contribution that ACE made to the Earth Day celebrations.

5. Delegation:

None.

6. Correspondence, Handouts, Notices:

- a) Email dated 2008-Apr-10 from Sean Gifford to Mayor Korpan inviting the City of Nanaimo to join LUSH Cosmetics' campaign to ban the use of plastic bags in grocery stores and other retailers, and to promote the use of reusable canvas bags.

After discussion regarding compostable bags breaking down quicker in the landfill than biodegradable bags, and whether stores other than grocery stores are starting to use bags other than plastic, it was decided that R. Lawrance and J. Cameron would research the matter further; i.e. what processes were followed in other municipalities that banned the use of plastic bags by retailers.

7. Ongoing Business:

- a) Ban/Restricting Cosmetic Pesticides - The Committee had a lengthy discussion on this topic. Some of their comments were:
- With the Home Depot phasing out pesticides and herbicides nationally, now would be a good time for the City of Nanaimo to “piggy-back” onto the industry’s action and education program.
 - Need to get the other companies that are still selling pesticides to stop.
 - The City’s Parks Dept. focuses on plant care and cultural, physical, mechanical and biological approaches. They look at what the allowable threshold is in weeds and grass before going to any method of control. If the threshold goes beyond a certain point, the IMP program does provide a chemical option.
 - The issues around the use of cosmetic pesticides are really with private users.
 - Landscaping companies have certified pesticide applicators that are licensed by the province. Pesticides are being used less now than ever before by landscaping companies. R. Brown noted that his landscaping company has not used an insecticide in over 10 years, and rarely uses fungicide, but would still like the option to use them if necessary. He stated that he would support a restriction on pesticides, but not a ban.
 - Suburban ponds have been found to contain a higher percentage of pesticides than ponds in agricultural areas. Even though more pesticides are used in agricultural areas, there is not as much run-off in ponds and streams because agricultural users know how much to use and have buffer areas. As well as polluting the waterways, the non-educated user can exasperate the problem by killing everything, even the helpful organisms by misuse of the product.
 - Consider doing an information session with invitees. It could be a focused discussion on what options the City could or could not implement if considering preparation of a bylaw, and debate what is necessary, a bylaw or public education, or both.
 - The Cancer Society reports that 80% people polled in Nanaimo are in favour of a bylaw. If you can get a bylaw that keeps the tools in the hands of approved applicators, it will address those who do need to use pesticides; i.e. ban cosmetic use of pesticides by uncertified users.
 - Consider having a transition period; i.e. education that the bylaw has an effective date. The benefit is substantially reduced if you do not follow up the education with a bylaw.
 - Need to consider who would enforce such a bylaw. North Vancouver has a health authority environmental protection officer regulate their bylaw. If VIHA was involved with enforcement, the City’s Bylaw Division would support a bylaw.

R. Lawrance will set up an information session and send out a draft invitation list to ACE members for their review.

- b) Woodstove Exchange Program - The Committee considered notes from a meeting held 2008-May-06 on whether the City should proceed with the Program. R. Lawrance noted that woodstove smoke complaints are now being tracked and will be mapped in order to do targeted education. Rob will prepare a survey on how Nanaimo residents feel about the air quality in the city, and will start the process to participate in the Woodstove Exchange Program. Also, a Burn it Smart session will be held in the Fall.

8. New Business:

- a) 2008/2009 Workplan - R. Lawrance reported that letters have been sent to the government agencies that currently have representatives on ACE asking them to confirm that they are still interested in having a rep. on the committee. The terms of reference will then be amended if necessary.

Regarding the Urban Forest Plan, Rob noted that the survey is complete and being tabulated, and that open houses are being planned for June.

The final draft revised Official Community Plan is being revisited one last time by the Plan Nanaimo Advisory Committee, who will then send it on to Council for preparation as a bylaw. After the bylaw's first and second reading, a public hearing will be held, and then the bylaw will be sent back to Council for adoption. It is anticipated that the public hearing will occur sometime in June.

9. Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 2008-Jun-03.

10. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.