

# Environment committee pushing pesticide ban

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A new bylaw banning the use of cosmetic pesticides is in store if the City of Revelstoke's environmental committee has their way.

Speaking at their meeting last Wednesday, Feb. 17, committee member Sarah Newton said the city previously pledged to adopt a cosmetic pesticide ban. "I would like to remind them by recommending a bylaw," she said.

As a model, she used the bylaw implemented by Invermere, B.C.

"It's the most detailed. It's the strongest bylaw," Newton said.

The Invermere bylaw bans the use of pesticides except to manage pests that transmit diseases or impact agriculture or forestry. It also provides exceptions of use on or inside buildings or on land used for agriculture, forestry, transportation, public utilities or pipelines.

"This is cosmetic," said Newton. "It does not mean spraying in your house. It does not mean spraying for mould. It doesn't mean napweed. It's just beautification."

Pesticides, such as DDT, have been linked to numerous health issues, including cancer.

A survey conducted last Fall by the North Columbia Environmental Society indicated that 68 per cent of respondents supported a ban on cosmetic pesticides.

The Invermere bylaw carries a minimum penalty of \$500 and a maximum fine of \$10,000.

Last Summer the City of Revelstoke stopped using pesticides on its property. In a report by Darren Komonoski issued in May, the cost of maintaining the city's sports fields was expected to increase to \$45,000 from \$25,000 if the city continued to use a contractor, or to \$33,750 if the city purchased it's own field maintenance equipment at a cost of about \$80,000. The actual numbers could not be obtained at press time.

Councillor Chris Johnston, who sits on the committee, supported recommending the Invermere bylaw.

“The Invermere bylaw looks short and sweet. It’s easy to read, easy to understand,” he said.

“Give it a time frame for people to comply. Everybody’s going to cry, maybe extend the deadline if it’s not working but get it started anyway.”

Johnston did say there should be a phase in, especially to help the city-owned Revelstoke Golf Club.

“Immediate compliance I just can’t see but given time and planning and budgeting and working with the city and sharing equipment, all that sorts of stuff, I think you can do anything,” he said.