

Coquitlam passes call for pesticide ban on to feds

John Kurucz

Coquitlam NOW

Wednesday, July 08, 2009

What started as a municipal issue is now entering the federal arena, much to the dismay of some council and gallery members at Monday's Coquitlam city council meeting.

A notice of motion instigated by Coun. Lou Sekora passed unanimously Monday. It calls on "the federal and provincial governments to ban all pesticides and other chemicals deemed to be unsafe by federal government scientists."

However, an amended clause at the end of the motion that reads "or pose any risk to human or environmental health" has Mayor Richard Stewart questioning the scope and validity of the motion.

"It's a little bit ridiculous," he said. "The amendment is why I think local councils ought to not weigh into this kind of stuff. Do we now ban Pepsi or beer?"

Monday's discussion was precipitated by two delegations speaking in favour of instigating the ban municipally.

"I can tell you that since I have stopped using chemicals, my business has increased three-fold and the quality of work that I do has increased as well," said Todd Major, a journeyman horticulturalist and owner of Tamsapes Design. "The type of work that I'm doing is better now that I'm not using poison."

Sekora defended the call on senior governments for one major reason -- enforcement.

He argued that the city does not have the capacity to continually monitor pesticide complaints, and that poor enforcement could open the city up to lawsuits. Sekora maintains that a federal ban would remove the pesticides in question from store shelves entirely.

"How are you going to enforce this? Who are you going to send out, and how long would it take you to go there? Let's be realistic. It's impossible," he said Monday.

Coun. Selina Robinson tried to instigate a motion to have a community forum on the issue of banning pesticides in April, though that motion was defeated. At the time, and again on Monday, she cited numerous studies that have linked cosmetic pesticide use to various cancers, asthma and hormonal defects.

She also took issue with the claim that enforcement would be next to impossible.

"It's difficult to enforce speed limits, especially in school zones. It's difficult to enforce noise bylaws, building codes, parking regulations, smoking bylaws ... public policy is not always easy -- I get that. But a difficulty to enforce should never be a reason not to develop public policy."

© Coquitlam Now 2009

[CLOSE WINDOW](#)