

Pesticide ban closer to reality?

BY JOHN KURUCZ, COQUITLAM NOW JANUARY 20, 2012 10:25 AM

Coquitlam's ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides may actually see the light of day this year.

Council voted unanimously to have staff draw up yet another modified version of the bylaw Monday, after concerns were raised over the last draft that appeared before council in late October.

Monday's recommendations came by way of the city's sustainability and environmental advisory committee [SEAC], and include a focus on education and outreach, but no provisions for a permitting process.

"We feel that we're at the end of a process that has reconsidered where we were before in terms of potential permitting," said Bill Susak, the city's manager of engineering and public works. "We've had a lot of internal discussions regarding city operations and how to accommodate that, and we are comfortable that we can live with what is being advised to council by the SEAC committee."

The primary sticking point during last year's discussions pertained to the issuance of permits to use pesticides "for the treatment of severe infestations that cannot be treated successfully by other means."

Monday, that clause was scrapped and replaced with a provision allowing for the use of cosmetic pesticides only when human health is deemed to be at risk.

"There is no permitting. There is only one exemption contemplated in this bylaw and that is for health and safety only. Medians, rose gardens, what have you, would not fall under that kind of consideration," Susak said. "Hogweed, for example, we may have to use it for human health and safety reasons. That would be the only criteria in which there would be an exemption under this bylaw."

Outgoing SEAC committee chair Linda Reimer noted that members of the committee wanted a permitting process included in the bylaw as a means to track its effectiveness and gauge how many people were requesting permits annually. She also noted that the province has wrapped up its public consultation on the issue, and the findings will be revealed during the spring sitting of the legislature.

Coun. Lou Sekora supported the bylaw moving forward, but stopped short of backing it in the future if the province does not enact a ban on the sale of cosmetic pesticides.

"I will certainly support the bylaw coming forward but I'll have great problems supporting unless we have the provincial government banning it, because we in Coquitlam cannot enforce it. Neither can we get it taken off the shelves," he said.

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