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City environment coordinator says pesticides bylaw 'strong'



by Aaron Orlando - Revelstoke Times Review
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City of Revelstoke environmental sustainability coordinator Penny Page-Brittin describes the new Revelstoke residential cosmetic pesticide ban bylaw as a "strong" bylaw.

She explained some of the details of [the new cosmetic pesticide bylaw](#) in a brief interview following the April 12 city council meeting.

Pesticide bylaws in other municipalities are spread across a spectrum from 'strong' to 'weak.'

For example, some allow for what's called 'integrated pest management.' This means pesticides are banned, but private companies with pesticide licenses can still come and apply them. This is not allowed in Revelstoke's bylaw, which received first and second reading on April 12.

Page-Brittin said the city consulted local gardening and landscaping companies before the bylaw was drafted. Most of them already didn't use pesticides, and the two that did only did so when requested by customers. Page-Brittin said they all seemed on board with the change.

Page-Brittin says the ban goes as far as the municipality can, in many senses. For example, municipalities don't have the authority to do things like tell retailers they can't sell approved pesticides.

She said pesticides banned in the bylaw include the ones that are the main health concern, including several specific substances that form the bulk of commercial use for applications like lawn use.

Page-Brittin said many of the pesticides exempted fall under the same category; they can't be banned due to other regulations that override municipal authority, amongst other reasons. For example, the ban is limited to cosmetic use on residential properties; the municipality doesn't have the authority, for example, to tell CP Rail they can't use pesticides on their property in town.

Page-Brittin also emphasized that the education component that is planned to follow approval of the bylaw is a vital part of making the pesticide ban work. She noted there were many alternatives to deal with pest issues.

At the council table, there was no debate, only some comments from councillors. "This has been a long time coming," said Coun. Antoinette Halberstadt. She explained the long stakeholder engagement and consulting process that led to the bylaw.

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Halberstadt said a lot of the delay was due to working out exemptions for the golf course, which experiences issues with snow mould. She said they were happy with the rules, which she said means the golf course would have to apply anti-mould fungicides sparingly, using a licensed technician. The golf course will be subject to monitoring.

"A lot of thought goes into the process," said Page-Brittin about the golf course exemption in response to city questions. "They're not being used when not needed."

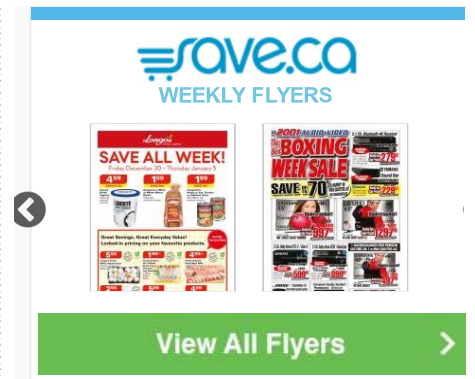
Coun. Phil Welock noted the bylaw was still being looked at by city lawyers, saying they could have comment on it. He felt the ban would be accepted like most city bylaws. "Most people will comply and there will be the odd scofflaw," predicted Welock.

Council also discussed the issue of bylaw officers entering private property to enforce the ban. After no certain answers on the issue were apparent, CAO Tim Palmer said he'd look into it and report back to council.

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