

Councillor bugged by pesticide plan



Faye Smith is presented with this year's Above and Beyond award by Qualicum Beach Mayor Teunis Westbroek at a ceremony Friday. The award is presented to those in the community who go the extra mile to help make Qualicum Beach a better place to live. Heather Svensen photo

By [Neil Horner - Parksville Qualicum Beach News](#)

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Although Qualicum Beach council this week voted to move ahead with a proposed ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides, not all of them were cheering.

In a presentation to council, Canadian Cancer Society representative Nancy Falconer urged council to go ahead with a bylaw, noting many of the toxic products used have far less toxic alternatives.

"The Cancer Society is very concerned about cosmetic pesticides," she said. "They have no benefit, other than to improve appearances and there is a growing body of evidence linking these to child and adult leukemia, kidney and prostate cancer."

She noted children are particularly at risk because of their undeveloped immune systems and penchant for rolling on the grass.

Falconer's push was supported by Coun. Barry Avis, who said a mixture of rubbing alcohol and water, or hot sauce works well and is not toxic.

However, the anti-pesticide crusade didn't sit well with Coun. Jack Wilson.

"I like to go as natural as possible, but on the other hand, I have an infestation of horsetails and I've found a selective herbicide that works. If I just let it go, it looks like I don't care."

Wilson said a ban on cosmetic pesticides would be a disservice and an insult to Qualicum Beach residents, many of whom are expert gardeners.

“This is a philosophy, not based on science,” he said. “What this bylaw says is Qualicum Beach citizens don’t know how to act in their own best interests. This bylaw says they are too stupid to use pesticides in an environmentally friendly manner. I oppose such a paternalistic approach.”

Avis counted that not all pesticides would be banned, only the most toxic ones, noting many of them have already been taken off the shelves of retailers across the province.

“There is a string of chemicals that can be used,” he said.

Avis was backed up by Coun. Kent Becker, who noted it was once common to use DDT for most pest problems.

Council agreed, voting to pass second reading of the bylaw.

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