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Vernon Morning Star

Pesticide bylaw moving ahead

By [Richard Rolke - Vernon Morning Star](#)

Published: May 26, 2009 7:00 PM

Time is running out for anyone who wants to tackle their dandelion crop with chemicals.

Vernon council instructed city staff Monday to proceed with a bylaw that would ban cosmetic pesticides on public land in 2010 and on private property in 2012.

“This is the way the world wants to go,” said Coun. Patrick Nicol.

Possible impacts from chemical use fuelled Coun. Buffy Baumbrough’s support for a bylaw.

“We heard concerns about the health and environmental potential and the susceptibility of children to pesticides,” she said.

“We may not understand the impacts until years later.”

Chemicals would still be used to control noxious weeds or for agricultural activities.

Opposition to a bylaw came from Councillors Mary-Jo O’Keefe and Shawn Lee.

“This whole thing sounds good but we’re saying we don’t have confidence in Health Canada (regulations) and we don’t believe local citizens can follow directions,” said Lee.

O’Keefe questioned the costs of alternative weed control for local jurisdictions, including schools.

“We do need to move towards zero pesticide

use but we need to ask administration how to move towards that,” she said.

A longtime advocate of prohibiting chemical use welcomes the city’s actions.

“It’s a step in the right direction but we need to act quicker on public land,” said resident Kerry Bokenfohr, adding that pesticides are still sprayed in local parks.

“Kids are the most vulnerable.”

Garden-related businesses are bracing for lost revenue because of the bylaw.

“We are located outside of the city but it’s going to hurt us because everyone comes here to shop,” said Scotty Moffat, Art Knapp Plantland owner.

“They rammed this thing through without any real consultation from people in the industry. They haven’t done their homework.”

Moffat questions the definition of cosmetic pesticides and says there are cases where chemical applications are necessary.

“What will the world do when it’s bug and weed infested?”

Moffat also says he is concerned about the environment and public safety, but those pushing for a ban need to be more familiar with the chemicals being sold.

“The percentage of things in products is so minute.”

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