

Environmental Advisory Committee - Minutes

Present:

Chair – Councillor Hayne
B. Campbell
C. Dragomir
G. Sahota
A. Schulze
B. Stewart
J. Purewal
J. Stewart
G. James

Regrets:

R. Grewal
S. Van Keulen (AAC Representative)
G. Sangha

Guests:

Deb Jack, Surrey Environmental Partners
Andrew Schulz, Surrey White Rock
Pesticide Free Coalition
Melodie Tomiyama, White Rock
Pesticide Free Coalition
Christine Beck, Canadian Cancer
Society, BC & Yukon Division

Staff Present:

C. Baron, Drainage & Environment Mgr.
L. Luaifoa, Legislative Services
O. Croy, Parks Manager
Greg Ward, Urban Forestry & Environment Mgr.

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by B. Campbell

Seconded by A. Schultz

That the minutes of the Environmental

Committee meeting held on April 4, 2012 be adopted as amended.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. Surrey Pesticide By-law – Andrew Schulz, Melodie Tomiyama, Christine Beck

Melodie Tomiyama addressed the Committee with concerns about a loophole in the Surrey Pesticide By-law. In October, 2011 a letter of complaint was submitted to the City of Surrey's By-law Enforcement and Licensing department about the use of cosmetic pesticides by Weedman, a licensed applicator. In August, 2011, approximately half a dozen homes were sprayed by Weedman along the block of 15 Avenue in Surrey. Weedman applied the chemical pesticide formulation "Trillium" to over 95% of these lawns. The letter stated that chemical toxins end up in the water, air and soil and questioned what the City of Surrey has done about this situation.

The following additional comments were provided:

- After the letter was received by the City, a Surrey by-law officer responded and noted that other complaints were received. The officer stated that in Section 4 of the Pesticide By-law, the definition of "infestation" is vague.

- When the Surrey Pesticide By-law was passed, one Surrey Councillor voiced concern over Section 4 and asked Council to revisit the item in May 2011. It is unknown whether or not this has happened.
- Section 4 of the Pesticide By-law has a loophole.

Christine Beck, Canadian Cancer Society, provided background information on the different forms of cancer and stated that 50 percent of cancers are preventable. Also noted was how pesticides drift getting into the air, water, wildlife and humans. Children are the most vulnerable as they roll in the grass and put things in their mouth.

The delegation requested that Section 4 and Section 3G of the City of Surrey Pesticide By-law removed.

The delegation also stated that the definition of infestation is vague and very open to interpretation and that it is essential that the by-law be amended to remove Section 4 in its entirety. Also, words like "exotic" and "foreign" are not defined in the by-law.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- The Committee questioned if Weedman was questioned about the alleged use of pesticides. The delegation replied that residents had called and complained to Weedman directly, and Weedman stated that the Surrey By-law permits them to spray. Signage saying, "Nature's Touch", an organic product were placed on the lawns that were sprayed.
- The delegation noted that there is a list of invasive/noxious weeds in legislation. Those listed are allowed to be sprayed in spite of what the City does.
- The delegation noted that the Community Charter states what the City may or may not do with respect to pesticides. They are not allowed to legislate against noxious weeds or invasive species.
- "Invasive" can also apply to pests that come in quickly and establish very quickly. New invasive species cause the damage before the Province adds them on the lists. The delay in treatment could potentially devastate vegetative communities.
- The key to Sections 3 and 4 of the Pesticide By-law is definition of words such as "infestation". The solution is not removal of the entire sections, but better defining key words.
- An example of "infestation" can be defined with dandelions, for example, the amount of dandelions per square foot for a lawn area.
- The Committee discussed the application of pesticides to soccer fields and playing fields and how these areas are the most vulnerable areas as kids roll around on the grass and fields. It was noted that complaints have been made about a track in South Surrey that had been sprayed. Staff noted that no pesticides were used in any parks in 2011 and less than a litre had been sprayed on all the fields in Surrey in total in 2010.

- Staff noted that in the development of a by-law, it looked at regulations in other jurisdictions. Places like Edmonton had set threshold levels for different kinds of weeds per square metre. Another option is requiring a permit for any proposed treatment for infestation. An application would be made to the City, a review be done by staff and then a permit be granted on the material used and then lastly, a site review to see if it met the threshold. Kamloops has a similar process in place, although it is expensive.
- The ability of by-laws to control third party companies was questioned. Staff replied that many By-law officers had not taken training to understand pesticides; therefore, did not have the base knowledge to determine the types of products used. The previous Enforcement Manager was prepared to send staff to the appropriate type of training. By-law Officers, likely in the absence of knowledge of the industry may have chosen to back off as they were unable to enforce. The Committee commented that if third party applicators are misinterpreting the by-law and by-laws do not understand the issue enough to enforce, then those are two separate issues that need to be dealt with separately.
- The Committee commented that there will always be this challenge with by-laws. A by-law is created, and then it is about how it is interpreted and how it is enforced. The by-law is a living document that is always being worked on. It is complicated to craft a bylaw that can be enforced.

The delegation was thanked for their presentation.

The following comments were made:

- The Committee commented that with respect to Section 4, a lot of the discussion revolved around what is an "infestation". The delegation is clearly saying not to spray on sports fields and the Parks Department has been conscience striking a balance with what people want and what is healthy. It comes down to what the definition of what infestation is. Section 4 has a loophole and the definition of infestation is still open to interpretation.
- It was suggested that the EAC invite the By-law Manager to attend an EAC meeting and explain where the problem is in the by-law as there may be some issues the Committee does not know about. Staff noted that the By-laws section is in the process of hiring a new By-Law Manager; therefore, the new person will likely not have an understanding of the past issue.

Next Steps:

The Committee stated that all options should be left open until the EAC has a chance to have a full discussion regarding the Pesticide By-law and loophole with the Section 3G and 4. The Pesticide By-law will be tabled until the next meeting. The Committee also suggested reviewing the Community Charter.

The Committee was recommended to review the City of Port Moody and City of White Rock's Pesticide By-laws as it was noted that both cities had very few complaints about the by-laws.

2. Deb Jack, Surrey Environmental Partners

Deb Jack provided the Committee the presentation that was given to the Finance Committee in January of 2012. This is the 7th year that the Surrey Environmental Partners (SEP) has presented to the Finance Committee. SEP is a non profit organization for both Surrey groups and individuals concerns about the living environment. SEP represents approximately 1,200 people and the primary focus is Surrey; with the main activities being environmental education and advocacy.

The following comments were made:

- The Committee questioned where the costing figures quoted in the report came from. Deb Jack replied that the figures were provided by City staff.
- The Committee questioned what is required from the EAC to help support and achieve the objections outlined in the presentation. Deb Jack replied that it was a treat this year to present to the Finance Committee and have questions asked. In addition, the fact that the matter was referred to the EAC for its consideration was important. It was questioned if the objectives have been prioritized and Deb Jack replied that the objectives are all priorities and that SEP is not asking for anything unrealistic or unachievable.
- The group discussed invasive plants in Surrey. Deb Jack noted that people purchase hanging baskets that include periwinkle and lamium plants and are often not aware of how invasive these plants are, disposing of the plants incorrectly. Both plants continue to be sold in nurseries and people need to be educated on how to properly recycle these plants. SEP has distributed brochures to homes advising residents not to throw these plants away in natural areas.
- The Committee discussed the interest in the proposal for three large new parks that are similar in size to Green Timbers and Sunnyside Acres. Campbell Heights has been cited as a potential area but, it is not desirable in terms of shapes and all of its aspects. The acquisition cost for lands in the ALR is approximately a million dollars per acre. There needs to be greater acquisition of natural areas. At this time SEP recommends that the City appraise all of the lands it owns and determine what should be set aside for natural areas. SEP was pleased when Surrey Council in 2010, confirmed that parklands acquisition standard would be 4.2 hectares per 1,000 population. SEP believes it should be 5 hectares with the increase being natural areas.
- For years, SEP has requested the creation of an Environmental Planner. It is not clear how the Environmental Review Committee operates and what kind of authorities it has. This position would be seen to be compatible with that of the Manager of Sustainability, with decision-making capacity.
- The Committee discussed a No Net Loss Policy. Deb Jack noted that SEP would like a replacement policy of a higher standard for City owned trees destroyed by the City of at least 5 for 1, to be doubled when the tree is a Surrey Old Growth Tree. It is a concern if you have big tree and you re-plant a little one. That difference is great and a variance happens. It will take approximately 60 years before the planted tree gets to the size of the tree that was lost. Further

research showed that mature old trees take in lots of carbon and have large environmental benefits.

- The most contentious item is the issue of the condition of lands that come into the parks inventory. A lot of lands that come into inventory are degraded and it takes Parks a lot of time and money to bring those lands up to standard. Restoration works on the land(s) should be completed prior to being admitted into the City's inventory. The City should not accept degraded areas. Deb Jack stated that there should be more parks in Surrey and they should be aggressively pursued.
- The Committee stated that it would like to encourage people like Deb Jack and SEP to come forward with the ideas such as the ones provided in the presentation. The EAC has reviewed the proposal and like the ideas.
- The concept of the proposal was agreed with. Each policy can be debated; however, the EAC should make a general statement that, without the ability to analyze each initiative, that the Committee supports the proposal.
- The Committee generally supported the initiatives and direction of the proposal - in principle. There are 2-3 key initiatives; however, the Committee felt that the initiatives require prioritizing whether it is by Council, Staff or the EAC. It was suggested that these initiatives be investigated further and taken under advisement during the EAC workplan throughout the year. As the Committee works through the workplan, specific recommendations could be forwarded to Council.
- It was suggested to send the report back to staff and question what staff are doing on each and every initiative then bring the information back to the EAC for review.
- The EAC can state that it generally likes the idea that SEP is providing; however, there is not enough information to make any recommendations. If Council wants the EAC to investigate the initiatives further, those parts of the SEP proposal should be directed to staff.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

It was

Moved by B. Campbell

Seconded by A. Schulze

That on April 18, the Environmental

Advisory Committee received a presentation from the Surrey Environmental Partners; the same presentation that was provided to Council on January 16, and, without the opportunity to evaluate costs, alternatives and staff, the Environmental Advisory Committee liked the overall direction Surrey Environmental Partners is going, and would like Council to seriously consider the initiatives in the future as the Environmental Advisory Committee fully supports the intent of the presentation.

Carried

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

1. Intergovernmental Committee Request

The Committee has the following outstanding papers to review:

- a. Sea Dyke Guidelines
 - Nothing to report
- b. Multi-materials BC: New Packaging & Printed Paper Legislation
 - Not completed yet

D. NEW BUSINESS**E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL****F. CORRESPONDENCE****G. INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. **Agricultural Food and Safety Advisory Committee (AFSAC) Update**
 - No report
2. **Development Advisory Committee (DAC) Update**
 - There is a proposal to make smaller lots (RF9) a bit larger and wider so there is more green space, permeable soil and parking.

H. OTHER BUSINESS**1. 2012 BC Summer Games**

Surrey is hosting the 2012 BC Summer Games in July. There will be approximately 3000 Junior Elite athletes along with coaches, parents and family members in attendance at this huge event. There are 22 sport venues in Surrey, including 2 outside venues - Delta and Abbotsford. The Junior Athletes are going to be housed within the local high schools.

The Fusion Festival also takes place during the same weekend. The Administration directorate is in need of an Environmental Chair of the games. This person will be responsible for environmental issues including recycling etc. The Board is committed to making the games a green and sustainable event. Jamie Stewart has a summary of the responsibilities for any members of the EAC interested in applying for the position.

2. Earth Day Celebration

The "Party for the Planet" celebration for Earth Day will be held on April 27-28 at Central City Plaza.

3. Meeting at the Nature Centre

The Environmental Advisory Committee will meet at the Surrey Nature Centre on June 27, 2012 at 6:30 pm. The meeting will begin with a tour of the Nature Centre.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday, May 23, at 6:30 p.m. in the Executive Boardroom.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by B. Stewart

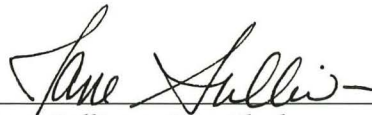
Seconded by G. Sahota

That the Environmental Advisory Committee

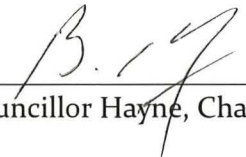
meeting adjourn.

Carried

The Environmental Committee adjourned at 9:25 p.m.



Jane Sullivan, City Clerk



Councillor Hayne, Chair