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Alberni Valley News

City gets tough on use of pesticides

The city is one step closer to an amended pesticide use bylaw.

City councillors passed the first three readings of the proposed bylaw on Tuesday. It will go to a fourth reading on April 27.

Director of Parks and Recreation Scott Kenny's report on the bylaw notes several things.

The pesticide bylaw would apply to public and private lands within city limits.

Pesticides such as Killex and Roundup will be restricted, especially as it pertains to yard maintenance involving trees, shrubs and flowers. Residents must apply for a permit from Parks and Recreation first to use them.

Compliance with the bylaw will be voluntary until Dec. 31. But it carries force and effect afterward. Violators could be fined anywhere from \$1,000–\$10,000 under the offence act for breaking the bylaw. But first-time offenders will be fined \$250 and \$500 for first and subsequent offences, Kenny said.

City departments aren't exempt from the bylaw, and have to provide a detailed rationale when they apply for a permit to use pesticides on public lands.

Pesticide use would be restricted from being used within five metres of a bus stop, playground or park without a permit.

Warning signs must be posted around land where a pesticide has been applied.

The issue arose last year after a presentation to city council by the Canadian Cancer Society about non-essential pesticide use.

While large projects are encompassed by the bylaw, it wouldn't include either golf course, both of which lay outside city limits.

Homeowners require a permit before using restricted pesticides, but so too do contractors employed by them who intend to use the same.

Coun Jack McLeman asked how restrictive the bylaw will be. Residents can still buy and use Borax and ant traps, Kenny said. Residents need to think before they indiscriminately use pesticides, he added.

"People see a dandelion, put down DDT and kids, dogs and everyone else are running on it while it's still on the surface," he said.

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