

Subject: Re: FW: Ottawa - Council committee OKs pesticide ban

Date: Sat, 22 Oct 2005 12:21:07 -0700

From: Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

To: Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

CC: Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Senior Management Committee <managecomm@dnv.org>, James Ridge <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, fonvca@fonvca.org, mbragg@shaw.ca

Dear Councillor Crist,

I do not disagree with most of what you say. However, if we can't make human life sustainable on this planet we cannot do it anywhere else. We would be no better than locusts and would not deserve another chance. I think we are on the same side - we just differ on how to meet the sustainability goals.

Corrie Kost

Ernie Crist wrote:

THOUGHT FOR TODAY - ERNIE CRIST

All things are interconnected. Everything goes somewhere. There is no such thing as a free lunch. Nature bats last.

On the other hand, the cynic could say, each and everyone of us, little by little, each and every day, can play a part and contribute to wrecking and poisoning this planet and make it unliveable. It will certainly encourage the search for other habitable planets.

Ernie Crist

PASSED ON TO YOU COURTESY - ERNIE CRIST

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Christie [<mailto:mikechristie@rogers.com>]

Sent: Saturday, October 22, 2005 5:23 AM

To: Recipient List Suppressed

Subject: Ottawa - Council committee OKs pesticide ban

October 22, 2005

Spray days numbered
Health committee backs lawn chemical ban By NELLY ELAYOUBI, Ottawa Sun

OTTAWA'S pesticide ban has grown one step closer to becoming a reality.

Three years and \$1 million later, the city's health committee voted six to two in support of a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides on urban lawns.

"It's here. The baby's born," said Coun. Alex Cullen, a staunch supporter of the ban.

It's a debate that drew heavy lobbying from both sides.

The health, social services and recreation committee heard from some 127 delegations at Thursday's marathon meeting, all voicing passionate pleas for the committee's support.

"We do it for the children. We do it for the vulnerable people," said Coun. Peggy Feltmate.

Coun. Diane Deans, who voted against the ban, said residents just aren't

ready for such a bylaw.

Although she typically sides with the medical community, she said there was a lack of sufficient community consensus on the proposed ban.

Even after a three-year information campaign, one-quarter of Ottawans still don't know what a pesticide is, she said.

"Was there a message to city council that people feel that the moderate risk associated with this might be something they're prepared to take? Or is the message that the medical community has not produced a body of evidence sufficient to change attitudes?" she asked.

Either way, she wants to see better education for residents before enforcement measures are put in place.

"Let's get this right. I'm not sure the time has come, I'm not sure we're in a position yet to know what the best strategy to get that reduction is," Deans said.

The proposed ban goes to council on Wednesday and is expected to pass.

Cullen has been aggressively lobbying fellow councillors for their support.

The mayor has expressed his support, and Cullen noted the health community, including CHEO and the Ottawa Hospital, make for a stronger case.

"We know we have a working majority. The question is how big that majority is going to be," Cullen said.

If approved by city council, the bylaw could be phased in beginning Jan. 1. However, bylaw officers wouldn't start charging people who violate the ban until July 1, 2007.

The bylaw will include a focused information campaign targeting people who violate the measure, said Coun. Diane Holmes, chairwoman of the committee.

The proposed bylaw would exempt golf courses, farms and rural areas, including villages, such as Manotick.

"The rural exemption that's part of this bylaw, I'm sorry to see it there because I think it should cover the whole city," Cullen said.

nelly.elayoubi@ott.sunpub.com

<http://www.ottawasun.com/News/OttawaAndRegion/2005/10/22/pf-1273392.html>

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Sat 22 Oct 2005

The Ottawa Citizen

Council committee OKs pesticide ban: Issue goes to council next week

by Neco Cockburn

The city has moved a step closer to implementing a ban on cosmetic pesticides.

After a short debate yesterday, the health committee voted 6-2 in favour of a bylaw effective next January, although charges would not be laid until the middle of 2007.

The contentious bylaw, which only applies to urban areas of the city, now goes before city council on Wednesday.

"I'm very pleased that we've listened to the medical professionals," said Councillor Alex Cullen, a longtime advocate of the ban. "It's a good first step towards protecting public health, particularly children," said Mr. Cullen. He added that the bylaw should be acceptable to all of city council, although he anticipated a close vote.

The bylaw contains exceptions for agriculture, golf courses and other essential non-cosmetic uses. It also allows for the treatment of infestations.

An advisory committee will develop guidelines for the conditions under which an infestation can be treated.

The committee's recommendation comes after a three-year, \$1-million education campaign failed to reduce the level of cosmetic pesticide use in the city.

The bylaw has been a hot issue. Councillors heard 117 five-minute presentations from people on both sides of the issue Thursday, during a meeting that started shortly before 10 a.m. and wrapped up close to midnight.

Speakers in favour of a ban often pointed to medical evidence; while those opposed said cited a lack of definitive medical proof.

But yesterday, Mr. Cullen, along with Councillors Diane Holmes, Clive Doucet, Peggy Feltmate, Georges Bedard and Janet Stavinga, voted in favour of the ban. Councillors Rick Chiarelli and Diane Deans were opposed, while Councillor Glenn Brooks was absent. Ms. Deans said although she favoured reducing pesticide use, she didn't believe the city had provided enough public education on the issue.

Ms. Deans later said public opinion could be swayed "with a really effective public education campaign," which the city had not carried out. "You need community acceptance to make a bylaw work, and I don't think we have it yet."

Others, however, said the bylaw should be implemented when weighed against potential health risks.

"If we have an opportunity, as a municipality, to support policies that can avoid the distribution of hazardous materials into our community, then I think we need to move forward," Ms. Stavinga told the committee. Councillor Feltmate added: "We do it for the children; we do it for the people that are vulnerable in our community."

Under the bylaw proposal, the first year would consist of an educational process to try to convince people not to use cosmetic pesticides. Then warnings would be issued during the first half of 2007, with charges laid after July 1, 2007.

Mr. Cullen said he was disappointed that rural areas do not fall under the ban.

"They're subject to the same health risks posed by pesticides as the rest of us," he said. "I think it will only be a matter of time before

the bylaw catches up to them."

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Sat 22 Oct 2005

The Ottawa Citizen

Council should show leadership and ban pesticides

by Alex Munter

For a city council often criticized for chasing its own tail, the coming vote on a city pesticide bylaw will be a chance to settle an issue, show leadership and move on to other priorities.

More than 12 million Canadians already live in jurisdictions that restrict non-essential pesticide use. Failure to adopt a clear, sensible bylaw now will simply doom us to endless debate that will inevitably conclude with the same result anyway.

That a city committee charged with protecting public health would adopt a measure that protects public health is hardly surprising. If the committee had ignored the recommendation of its own medical officer of health, the committee would have abrogated its duty. So the real test comes when the full council meets to make the final decision.

Ignoring the recommendation of its own medical officer of health would mean the committee was abrogating its duty. So the real test comes when the full council meets to make the final decision.

Many councillors seem drawn to a costly Plan B, apparently designed to conceal pesticide use by burying it under a mountain of red tape.

Under the fall-back plan, cosmetic pesticide use would be allowed all year long, except in July and August.

You'd have to put up 22-by-28-centimetre signs. You could spray up to 20 per cent of your property. But not if it's more than 25C that day. Or if it's a smog day. Or if it's raining. Or if you live near a playground or park. City staff says it's all so complex, it'll need a bigger enforcement budget.

It's hard to understand the real intent of this Plan B. Is it to make enforcement so difficult that, de facto, there is no regulation? Or is it designed to drive homeowners so crazy with burdensome rules that they give up on pesticides? Either way, it seems unprincipled and sneaky. Residents deserve better.

Health advocates -- including some of Ottawa's most respected doctors -- have pointed out that the issue isn't only about public health, it's also about whether the city keeps its promises.

In 2002, city health officials proposed an education program, rather than a bylaw, to reduce non-essential pesticide use. Councillors were skeptical about whether such a program would work, so we added a requirement for measuring its success. Pesticide reduction targets were set. Pesticide industry representatives pledged to help achieve those targets.

Council promised to introduce a bylaw by the end of 2005 if the targets were not met. Well, there are just a couple of months left in 2005, the targets have not been reached, and scientific evidence on the health

dangers of pesticide is piling up. It's time to keep the promise.

A report released earlier this month by the King's Fund, a British charitable foundation that focuses on health, found that public education alone is rarely successful when it comes to controversial public health issues.

Of course, part of the political problem with most public health measures is that their payoff is distant.

It took decades before water fluoridation, seatbelt rules or drinking-and-driving laws showed their worth. All of these measures were hotly contested in their time. It's hard for politicians, who by the nature of their jobs are prone to short-term thinking, to make decisions that serve a far-away, long-term interest.

Councillors have been here before. After years of debate about the impact of second-hand smoke, council voted unanimously to adopt a smoke-free public places bylaw in 2001.

Then, as now, public health opponents argued that the measure would cause economic devastation. They predicted politicians who backed the bylaw would be punished at the polls. They said the bylaw was unworkable. They were spectacularly wrong on all counts.

Today, the smoke-free bylaw ranks as a major accomplishment. Residents can't imagine bringing second-hand smoke back into public places. Other jurisdictions -- Winnipeg, New York, Ireland and Italy among them -- have followed suit.

It is difficult to understand why city officials who adopted that bylaw are struggling with a regulation that is so much less dramatic in its impact.

While there was a three-month phase-in for the smoking bylaw, there is a three-year phase-in of the pesticide regulation. While the smoking bylaw could justifiably be characterized as a ban, this bylaw hardly deserves that label -- city staff recommends it not apply in rural areas, on golf courses or in case of infestations.

The smoking bylaw was an unusual regulation because it required proactive enforcement. The Restaurant Association asked for strict enforcement so that its members, who backed the bylaw, didn't lose customers to a handful of establishments that didn't respect the law.

By contrast, the pesticide bylaw will be a typical municipal regulation, enforced on a complaints-only basis. Administering it doesn't add a cent of additional expense to the city's budget.

Almost everyone agrees that herbicides and insecticides should be used sparingly and only when necessary. Even pesticide companies agree, or at least publicly say they agree, that we should reduce the non-essential use of these chemicals.

Given this consensus, it's hard to imagine why councillors would chose to indefinitely prolong the debate. Let's use people's time and energy to solve problems, like property tax assessment or transportation, where solutions aren't quite as evident.

Alex Munter is a visiting professor at the University of Ottawa, former Ottawa councillor and former chair of the city health committee. E-mail: amunter@uottawa.ca.

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Sat 22 Oct 2005

The Ottawa Citizen

We need 'better safe than sorry' view of pesticides

Re: Weak case for pesticide ban, Oct. 20.

The quality of the logic in this editorial is laughable. The "better safe than sorry" approach is everywhere. We are spending billions of dollars on national defence, on anti-terrorist activity and on flu protection, all on that principle. There is no incontrovertible scientific evidence that any one of the threats will cause any particular one of us any harm. Possibly? yes; probably? yes; proof? none!

The editorial observes that "swimming pools, vehicles, and staircases all represent a certain risk." We do not ban them but we do put constraints on them -- the mandatory fence around a swimming pool; the compulsory airbags in a car; and the railings required by the building code on a stairway. All are imposed to minimize and mitigate the risk associated with our use of each of these if used injudiciously, on the principle that safe is better than sorry.

If the editorial writer can offer some way of ensuring that there is never an injudicious use of pesticides; that there is some way of ensuring that residues do not get into ground water; that there is a means of preventing airborne droplets from crossing over to the lawn where a susceptible asthmatic child is playing, then perhaps the editor has a case.

But we will expect that sound peer-reviewed scientific proof will be provided that the measures proposed are all risk and failure free.

R. M. Bennett,
Ottawa

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Sat 22 Oct 2005

The Ottawa Citizen

Totally unnecessary

How can anyone say banning pesticides is not justified? These are totally unnecessary chemicals in our environment that we can all live without.

As a member of a horticultural society and avid gardener, I do know you can easily survive without pesticides and have a beautiful yard and garden. This mentality that everything goes to wrack and ruin if you do not use pesticides is ridiculous.

I am so tired of hearing that someone might trip over a dandelion on a playing field. This has never happened and besides, most properly maintained sports fields would be cut regularly. Our local soccer fields are pesticide-free because they are on school properties and no one has been hurt. A prime example of this was a pesticide-free playing field for ultimate Frisbee in Manotick. And the Ottawa Lynx field is not sprayed. What about Parliament Hill or the Governor General's grounds?

As a homeowner with almost an acre of lawn, I have won the weed battle with proper mowing (not scalped), aerating and seeding, and that is about it. I use compost to top dress and have never fertilized or watered and I have a lovely thick lawn. Oh yes, it has clover, but that belongs there as well as other beneficial plants.

It is our neighbourhoods where children play that concerns us. It is time to get rid of this insanity once and for all.

C. L. Saucier,
Russell

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Saturday, October 22, 2005

CFRA.com

Issue to go to full council on Wednesday

Health Committee Gives OK to Pesticide Ban Darren McEwen and Cindy Clyne

The city's Health, Recreation and Social Services Committee has sprayed out attempt to scrap a proposed ban on pesticides.

Now the issue will head to full council on Wednesday.

Councillor Rick Chiarelli tells CFRA News that the bylaw won't reduce pesticide use and will hurt lawn care companies.

"This bylaw will drive those companies out of that business and if you have determined owners who aren't going to pay attention to the bylaw, they'll be out there putting (pesticides) on and we know they could be putting up to 10 times the concentration that a professional applicator would use," Chiarelli said after Friday's meeting.

Chiarelli and Coun. Dianne Deans were the only two members of the committee to vote against the pesticide ban.

Coun. Alex Cullen has given up the fight to include rural communities in the ban. Golf courses would be exempt as well, but would have to report to the city on its pesticide usage.

If the proposal is approved Wednesday, officials will begin enforcing the ban in 2007.

<http://www.cfra.com/headlines/index.asp?cat=1&nid=33183>

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The Laws of Ecology: "All things are interconnected. Everything goes somewhere. There's no such thing as a free lunch. Nature bats last."

by Ernest Callenbach

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