
CITY OF KELOWNA FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 27, 2004
File No.: 3900-20

To: Ron Born, City Manager

From: Fire Chief

Re: **AMENDMENT TO FIRE PREVENTION REGULATION BY-LAW**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve an amendment to the Fire Prevention Regulation By-Law 6110-88, that would allow the Fire Chief or an Inspector to issue a special permit that would allow trench burning, for the purpose of fuel modification or land clearing; and that for the purpose of this amendment that materials may be burned on properties other than the property of origin.

BACKGROUND:

City of Kelowna Fire Prevention Regulation By-Law 6110-88 currently states under Part 6.1.6 that "special permits will not be issued for the open burning of wood, trees, stumps, shrubbery and woody debris that results from land cleared or partially cleared of vegetation to help prepare the land for a different no farming use". This means the Kelowna Fire Department can not authorize any type of burning on land that is being developed. Developers have to either chip the material or haul it to a disposal site. The by-law also states that "all materials to be burned, originate from the property on which the special burning permit is issued".

Partially as a result of last year's forest fires, plus experienced gained over the past four years, the Kelowna Fire Department and the Regional Fire Chiefs have some concerns.

Our first concern is the amount of ground fuel in the urban interface areas. We need to find a way to reduce this fuel load. Other concerns include chip and slash piles left in forested areas. Over the last year we have experienced fires in chip piles, slash piles, plus problems with bark mulch and chips used for landscaping. In addition, we have been told that the landfills do not particularly want this material either. In September 2002 a pile of this material caught fire at the Kelowna landfill, causing a multitude of problems.

We believe that one of the solutions to this problem may be "trench or pit burning" under very strict rules and conditions, as specified by a "Kelowna Fire Department Inspector". Trench burning causes very little smoke and is less costly than chipping or removing the material to another site. If developers and land owners were given this option, even if it meant moving the material to a safe or central location, they would be encouraged to reduce the fuel load.

I must stress that if approved, these special permits would only be issued when Kelowna Fire Department staff believe it to be in the best interests of the community and only when safe to do so.

G. ZIMMERMANN, FIRE CHIEF

GZ/ELD