
CITY OF KELOWNA FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 26, 2005
File No.: 3900-20
To: RON BORN, CITY MANAGER
From: FIRE CHIEF
Subject: FIRE PREVENTION BYLAW #6110-88

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council give readings consideration to ByLaw #9523.

BACKGROUND:

As Council is aware, the western pine beetle and the mountain pine beetle are causing considerable damage not only in our area, but also in many parts of our province. Many land owners in our city are attempting to slow the advances of these beetles by removing infected trees from their properties, and hoping that a long-term solution can soon be found. The problem that they are encountering is "what to do with the infested material". Hauling it to the landfill, chipping it or air curtain burning don't seem to be viable solutions because of cost. Burning (in accordance with ByLaw 6110-88) is a viable solution but only for people with more than one hectare and only for material less than 8" in diameter. The rest of the material (over 8") must be dried for up to two years, in order to meet the provisions of the bylaw.

As an interim solution, I am recommending the following, with the full support of the Air Quality Committee:

That the Fire Chief be allowed to authorize the burning of material over 8", that has not dried for the required two year period for the purpose of destroying material damaged by the mountain pine beetle or the western pine beetle. I recommend that all such requests be authorized by the City of Kelowna arborist (Ian Wilson) and that the burning be closely supervised by the Kelowna Fire Department. I also recommend that the Kelowna Fire Department be allowed to authorize the moving of said damaged material from the property of origin to another property, where it can be safely burned. All other requirements of the bylaw would remain the same with the exception of venting. The bylaw requires that venting be 54 or higher before burning is permitted. The Air Quality Committee has recommended that for the purpose of this amendment only, that burning only occur on days when the venting index is 80 or higher. I disagree with this recommendation. My reasoning is that using October 15, 2004 to April 15, 2004, out of a possible 183 days only 61 had a venting index of 54 or better. If we were to go to a venting of 80 or better, less than half of those days would have been approved and most of them would have been in March and April, when the majority of open burning occurs. In addition I have been told that the beetles become active in April.

GERRY ZIMMERMANN

CC: R. Mattiussi, Director Planning & Corp Services