



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

NOTICE OF MOTION

From: Councillor Ken Armour

Introduced: Council Meeting – December 20, 2021

Subject: Pursuing Emission-Free and Reduced-Noise Landscaping Equipment in the Township of Esquimalt

WHEREAS: The use of landscaping equipment powered by gasoline engines, including leaf blowers, lawn mowers, edgers/trimmers and chain saws, contributes significantly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and noise pollution (this is particularly two-stroke engines, which are higher polluting than four-stroke engines);

WHEREAS: In terms of liter for liter of gasoline used, the small gasoline engines found in lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and other landscaping equipment pollute at a higher rate than vehicles;

WHEREAS: Equipment powered by two-stroke engines produce levels of noise varying from 75 to 110 decibels. Sounds above 85 decibels are deemed harmful by the Government of BC. Furthermore, two-stroke engines often produce noise in the low-frequency range which travel further than noise at higher frequency;

AND WHEREAS: Recent advances in battery technology has resulted in the development of competitive battery-powered landscaping equipment equivalent to most gas-powered landscaping equipment. Battery-powered equipment produces much less noise and vibration and has no direct emissions of GHGs or health-harming air contaminants;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That Council direct staff to develop a report on the possibility of phasing out the use of gasoline-powered landscaping equipment by the Township; and explore the possibility of phasing out the personal and commercial use of gasoline-powered landscape maintenance equipment in the Township. It is anticipated that the latter approach will require obtaining a legal opinion on the Township's scope and consulting with residents, businesses, and stakeholders.

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

This approach is consistent with the goal in Township's 2019-2023 Strategic Priorities to "Develop and implement strategies that reduce impact on the environment consistent with our Climate Action Charter goals".

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There would be costs associated with the initial legal review, subsequent consultations with residents, businesses and other stakeholders, and the possible drafting and review of a bylaw.

In addition, there would be costs associated with bylaw enforcement. It should also be noted that enforcement may be a challenge given that the personal use of landscaping equipment generally occurs on the weekends when bylaw enforcement officers are not available.

BACKGROUND:

Many political jurisdictions have banned or are considering banning or phasing out gasoline-powered landscaping equipment, including Oak Bay, Saanich, Toronto, Oakland, Berkley, Los Angeles and the State of California.

In Vancouver, consideration is being given to phase out gasoline-powered landscaping equipment by 2025, while also calling for a timeframe that is workable for residents and landscape maintenance service providers and that is sensitive to any increased costs they would face.