

Trapping bylaw moves forward

SECHELT



Christine Wood photo

Sechelt council hears a presentation from Lesley Fox of the Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals before considering a new trap regulatory bylaw at their Oct. 23 committee meeting.

OCTOBER 25, 2013

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Sechelt council will consider first reading of a new trap regulatory bylaw next month, although not without protest from Coun. Doug Hockley who doesn't think it goes far enough.

The new bylaw would prohibit the use and sale of body gripping traps within the District of Sechelt for most, however, the rules would not apply to First Nations and those acting on behalf of the District of Sechelt or provincial government.

"There are absolutely no reasonable grounds for the use of leg hold or any type of body gripping trap within the boundaries of the District of Sechelt," Hockley said at an Oct. 23 committee meeting where the bylaw was discussed. "Wildlife issues regarding removal of a creature from a populated area can be done with humane efforts."

He made a motion to extend the new bylaw's reach to apply to everyone, effectively banning body-gripping traps within Sechelt, and he moved that Sechelt tell the province of their plans, rather than ask for permission.

Although a municipality can enforce bylaws within its boundaries, trapping is ultimately regulated by the province, so any local laws around trapping must be approved by the provincial government to be legally enforceable.

Hockley's amended motion got some support, but in the absence of Coun. Tom Lamb (who was out of town) there was a tie vote, which defeated the motion.

Mayor John Henderson, Hockley and Coun. Mike Shanks were in favour of the tougher bylaw. Councillors Alice Lutes, Chris Moore and Darnelda Siegers were not.

Shanks noted, "it would be interesting to see how we would feel about this with a full council."

Hockley was visibly upset and noted that **other towns like Gibsons had passed trapping bans.**

Siegers reminded Hockley that Gibsons' bylaw isn't legally binding.

"While Gibsons did pass their bylaw it is not endorsed by the Ministry and if it was to be challenged in court they don't feel that it would actually stand up in court because the provincial regulations would supersede what the town has passed," she said.

"So by doing what we're doing here, passing it, requesting approval from the Ministry, if they give us approval we will actually have a binding bylaw."

In addition to the debate from councillors were three delegations. Lesley Fox from the Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals implored council to ban body-gripping traps, as did Cecilia Ohm-Eriksen on behalf of the Concerned Citizens of the Sunshine Coast.

Ohm-Eriksen questioned council's desire to meet with representatives from the trapping industry before making a decision, likening it to "asking the big bad wolf for input on a bylaw against eating little pigs."

Representatives from the BC Trappers Association were called to the mike during council's discussion to offer their input and answer questions.

In the end all of council agreed they had to move forward with some type of trapping bylaw and all but Hockley voted in favour of sending the bylaw prohibiting the sale and use of body gripping traps (excluding traps used by First Nations people and those trapping on behalf of the District of Sechelt or the province) to the next regular council meeting (Nov. 6) for first reading.