

Council Member Motion

Notice given on: Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Meeting Date Wednesday, August 18, 2021

From Councillor Justice

Subject Regular Pumping Out of Septic Tanks to Support the Health of Water Bodies

Background

Septic systems, especially old and decrepit ones, can introduce excessive nutrients and bacteria into the environment, contributing to the nutrient pollution of our water bodies and making them at times unsafe for recreational activities. Sewer is not an option in some areas of our municipality like Maple Bay where business opportunities have been limited and environmental impacts exacerbated by sub-standard septic systems- and/or site conditions that preclude upgrades to meet current standards.

One strategy for addressing these impacts is through the regular pumping of septic tanks and disposal of the waste into a sewage treatment facility.

However, the costs associated with pumping and disposal in North Cowichan is high, reportedly due to having to transport the effluent to the CRD and pay for its disposal there. These costs may be a significant factor preventing business owners and homeowners from regularly emptying their tanks.

The intent of this motion is for staff to explore options for reducing the environmental impacts of sub-standard / non functioning septic systems to facilitate both reducing the amount of effluent seeping into our waterbodies and beaches, and to enhance the viability of businesses to locate and operate in places like Maple Bay.

Options explored could include looking at ways to lower the cost of septic tank pump outs by disposing of the effluent in our own sewage processing system and/or perhaps, (for certain sensitive areas), proving a service or subsidizing a service through environmental budgets and/or grants

Recommendation

WHEREAS Council has prioritized the importance of environmental policies and practices to support the future health of North Cowichan;

AND WHEREAS the regular pumping out of septic tanks may be an effective method for preventing nutrients and bacteria from entering nearby water systems;

AND WHEREAS the cost of regular pumping out of septic tanks and effluent disposal may be cost prohibitive for some residents;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to prepare an analysis of options to reduce the environmental and other impacts caused by private septic tanks or ineffective septic fields.