

The Intelligencer

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City drops pesticide debate

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Local News - Belleville homeowners won't have to worry about how to handle weeds this year after council made a surprise decision on one of the city's most contentious issues.

Coun. Garnet Thompson requested a suspension of the rules at Monday's regular meeting to introduce a motion which **moved the responsibility of banning pesticides from the municipal level to the two higher levels of government.** Thompson's motion, which was approved, received little discussion.

Thompson said the city has received "considerable input" from residents, interest groups and businesses on a proposed pesticide ban for cosmetic purposes, **but the decision should not be the responsibility of the municipality.**

"The provincial and federal governments are in a much better position to establish more effective and enforceable legislation respecting the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes **in a fair and responsible and considerate and consistent manner," he said.**

Following the meeting, the Belleville ward councillor said the onus should not fall on municipalities.

"I feel, and the councillors feel, that **this is more of a provincial and federal regulated situation and they have the control to oversee it more than Belleville.**"

Thompson said the two higher governments have scientists and other professionals who can gauge the effects of pesticides and decide whether they are harmful. **Municipalities do not have the same resources and should not be expected to regulate such matters, he said.**

Mayor Neil Ellis said while the city has decided not to enact any type of ban, the debate process was not pointless.

"I guess, if we look at it, what we've had is education," he said. "I think if we start with education we'll have people stop using (pesticides) themselves."

"If you want a successful bylaw, **it should start with the non-professionals and work back to the professionals.**"

The mayor said having the other levels of government take responsibility is the right move.