

February 1, 2012

City responds to residents' noise complaints about debarking plant

The City of Campbell River will require an independent noise reduction plan from the owner of a debarking plant on Duncan Bay Rd.

As of Tuesday, Jan. 31, the City had received 41 complaints from area residents regarding the noise associated with operation.

"We recognize that a number of residents are upset, even distressed, by the location of the plant and consider noise from the operation a disruption to life in the neighbourhood," says City clerk Peter Wipper. *"We understand that having the noise reduced is urgent for them."*

All complaints are being forwarded to the City's bylaw enforcement department for response and tracking. *"We're taking their concerns seriously, and will keep people up to date on what we're doing to address the noise issue,"* Wipper adds.

The plant is operating legally, with all permits and a business license in place. City staff investigating the complaints took video / audio recordings from four locations adjacent to the site and determined that, under the City's public nuisance bylaw, the noise level requires the plant owner to hire an independent sound consultant to report on noise abatement options.

The City has officially contacted the property owner by telephone and sent a letter requiring that the City be provided with a report by an independent sound consultant recommending methods to reduce noise from the operation by Feb. 24. If improvements can be made, the report must include an action plan and timeline for City approval as well as a final report showing approved action has been taken.

"The plant owner has indicated he is aware of noise concerns and has told us that he has taken steps to reduce the noise such as building insulation and vinyl panels on the side openings," Wipper says. *"The report from the independent consultant will outline any additional steps that can be taken to reduce the noise and a timeline for action."*

In the meantime, staff are updating people who have contacted the City with complaints with the latest available information. Staff are also providing regular updates for Council.

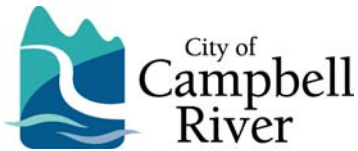
The City has also investigated allegations by some residents that people in the neighbourhood were not made aware of original zoning change in 1998.

Documents in City files include a 1998 petition by local residents objecting to heavy industrial zoning in this area, which indicates people in this neighbourhood at the time were aware of the proposed zoning. The Council of the day adopted the zoning that allows the current activity on this land.

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Contact: Peter Wipper, City Clerk

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Background:

Northern Pressure Treated Wood is located on 22.5 acres formerly in the Agricultural Land Reserve. Operation began Jan. 23, 2012, with the plant working 8:30 to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.

The property was incorporated into municipal boundaries in 1982. At the time it was unzoned. City files include a 1985 residents' petition opposing industrial zoning.

A 1996 staff review showed the property was still unzoned. As part of bylaw 2700-1998 review to bring zoning up to date with the then-current Official Community Plan, the land was to be zoned I-2 (heavy industrial).

In 1998, a public hearing notice was published advising of a proposed zoning change and notices were hand-delivered in this neighbourhood. Public hearings are held to ensure people have an opportunity to voice their opinion about proposed zoning changes.

A petition in City files dated October 1998 shows names of residents in the area who objected to heavy industrial zoning at that time. One recent complaint refers to the 1998 petition/submission to Council.

In 1998, Council of the day approved the I-2 (heavy industrial) zoning, which has carried through to today. A covenant with the Agricultural Land Commission is registered on the land and states that the lands shall be used only for "the construction and operation of a saw mill or other wood related mill, any of the uses permitted by (heaving industrial zone); or farm use."

Readying the property for the debarking operation required a minor development permit application (completed in late 2011), building permit and a business license. Minor development permits ensure that projects adhere to the development permit guidelines, which for industrial uses typically deals with site servicing and form and character of construction. Minor development permits are delegated to staff for processing. The minor development permit, building permit and business license were processed by staff as per standard City business operations.