

June 3, 2013

City clarifies how volunteers can help beautify community

An email exchange between the City of Campbell River and the community's Clean Living volunteers has prompted the City to clarify how volunteers can help beautify the community.

"We sincerely appreciate the community-minded efforts from the Clean Living group, and we applaud their dedication to reducing litter along our roadways to keep Campbell River clean and beautiful," says Ross Milnthorp, the City's general manager of parks, recreation and culture.

"Due to safety concerns, and because our collective agreement with CUPE employees stipulates that we must have mutual agreement on the nature of work to be done by volunteers, we have advised this group that we do not yet have a system in place for volunteers in parks."

A volunteering program would ensure people are properly trained to reduce their chance of injury – and it would spell out what can be done by volunteers, and what needs to be done by a paid employee or contractor to meet the terms of City contractual agreements. It would also make sure that volunteer tasks are covered by City insurance.

"The City is obliged to respect the law, including regulations around safe work and our contracts with employees, and only volunteers organized by the City of Campbell River are covered by the City's insurance," Milnthorp explains. *"While we greatly appreciate the efforts of Clean Living, safety and contract considerations must be factored into our support for their volunteerism. And, unfortunately, at this point, we are not in a position to accommodate volunteers in parks on an ad hoc basis."*

The City asked the Clean Living group to refrain from working in City parks because volunteers who organize themselves to do beautification work do so at their own risk and are responsible for equipment damage and personal injury. The City does not have crews working to clean up litter along roadways and supports the Adopt-a-Block efforts by providing trash pickers, gloves and bags.

There are many other ways the City supports volunteer clean-up efforts, and other ways people can help keep the community looking great. For example, joining already-organized beautification activities such as those run by Greenways Land Trust or the Communities in Bloom committee allows people to volunteer to help beautify trails and roadways as well as green spaces.

"And signing up with an already-organized event is also the safest way for people to help take care of our community," Milnthorp concludes.

People interested in participating in a community clean-up event can get more information by calling the City Parks Department at 250-286-7275.

###

Contact: Ross Milnthorp, General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

250-286-5797