



Council Amends Hours and Protects Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Parks Bylaw Regulating Overhead Shelter

Date: Thursday, March 05, 2009

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Today, in recognition of longer daylight hours and increased activity in the parks, City Council amended the hours and locations where temporary overhead shelters can be used.

Effective Saturday, March 7, 2009, the amendment allows temporary shelters in City parks between the hours of 8pm – 7am in areas that are not playgrounds, walkways, programmed areas, Bastion Square and, now, environmentally sensitive. The previous hours were 7pm-7am.

Environmentally sensitive areas were identified in a number of parks by Park staff. Under the amendment, all of Moss Street Park, Summit Park and Cecelia Cove Park are protected. The Garry Oak stands in Topaz Park and Robert Porter Park are protected, and several areas of Beacon Hill Park are protected.

An education program will be developed to include signage and maps.

In October 2008, the BC Supreme Court ruled that certain provisions within the City of Victoria's Parks Bylaw prohibiting the homeless to erect temporary shelter, such as tents, tarps and boxes, was in violation of Section 7, of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. To align bylaws with the Supreme Court judgment, and ensure parks remain safe and accessible for all users, City Council has amended the Parks bylaw to regulate the use the tents.

The City of Victoria supports a housing first approach and is actively working with community partners to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing in our Region.

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