

4. Establishing More Stringent Guidelines for Cell Towers in Vancouver

MOVER: Councillor Adriane Carr

SECONDER:

WHEREAS

1. Telecommunications infrastructure is expanding within Vancouver's residential neighbourhoods and a Telus cell tower permitted to be erected near 49th Avenue and Oak Street has met with significant public resistance and concern over potential health impacts;
2. Although the "Telecommunications Infrastructure in the City of Vancouver" guidelines passed by Council on February 13, 2013, require that maximum radiofrequency (RF) emissions comply with Health Canada's Safety Code 6, the City of Toronto adopted a Prudent Avoidance Policy for new telecommunications towers based on Toronto Public Health's assessment of available health, environmental and technical data, its conclusion that there are uncertainties in the science regarding the potential health risks associated with long-term exposures to RF, and its recommendation that maximum RF exposure levels for the general public be 100 times below Health Canada's guidelines;
3. RF exposure standards 100 times below Health Canada's Safety Code 6 standards have been established in Paris, Italy, Switzerland, Russia, and China;
4. In 2005, Vancouver's Board of School Trustees amended their "Incompatible Land Uses Near Schools" policy to include "any installation of cellular antenna within 305 metres (1,000 feet) of a school, noting "the standard of diligence that the Board must assume in protecting students", that "there should be global caution exercised on the effects of electromagnetism until it is conclusively proven to be harmless" and that "in the past, little consideration was given to the potential and cumulative ill effects of other products such as coal dust, asbestos or tobacco products, and the passage of time has shown that lack of consideration has been a mistake";
5. Although, when a proposed cell tower is under 15 metres, Industry Canada waives the requirements that a cellphone provider that wants to build a cell tower must inform the local municipality and the neighbours and set up a forum for them to ask questions and make comment on the proposal, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has advocated that cellphone providers consult on all cell tower proposals, regardless of size.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Vancouver adopt a Prudent Avoidance Policy for new telecommunications towers that:

1. Recommends that exposure to radiofrequency emissions for the general public be kept to 100 times below Health Canada's Safety Code 6 guidelines;

2. Is consistent with the Vancouver School Board's "Incompatible Land Uses Near Schools" policy to avoid installation of cellular antenna within 305 metres (1,000 feet) of a school, and that this also include 305 metres (1,000 feet) of a registered childcare facility;
3. Recommends that the city and neighbours be consulted by cellphone providers regarding a proposal to build a cell tower of any height, not just towers over 15 metres.

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