

REPORT  
Regular Council Meeting  
1991 November 04

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF BURNABY  
COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND ALDERMEN

RE: FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME SIGNAGE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council request the Municipal Solicitor to prepare a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Signage Bylaw using the following suggested wording:

Warning:  
Drinking distilled spirits,  
beer, coolers, wine or  
other alcoholic beverages during pregnancy  
can cause birth defects.

2. THAT the bylaw utilize the Terms of Reference as outlined in Richmond Bylaw #5673.

BACKGROUND:

In response to a request from Council in September 1990, promotional material addressing the issue of drinking alcohol while pregnant was distributed by the Licencing Department to liquor outlets for voluntary posting. Twenty-seven liquor outlets in Burnaby agreed to use the material. They each received a poster with the following words:

"Your baby can't say it,  
but you can.  
You want to do what's best for your baby  
and saying "no" to alcohol and any other drug not prescribed  
by your doctor is a healthy start."

As well, while quantities lasted, they also received a warning sign which read:

"WARNING:  
Drinking alcohol during  
pregnancy greatly  
increases the risk of  
birth defects"

According to the Property Use Co-ordinators, the feedback from the business community was positive. Neither Licencing nor the Health Department followed up on the on-going use of this material.

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION:

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COPY - MUNICIPAL MANAGER

- DIRECTOR ADMINISTRATIVE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

- DIRECTOR FINANCE

- MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR

- ACTING CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

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Both Surrey and Richmond municipalities hired summer students in 1990 to do warning sign projects which included evaluations of usage three months after distribution. Of the signs distributed in Surrey and Richmond, only 37% and 23% respectively were still in place after three months. The drop-off in usage was stated to have been due to damage to the signs which were not replaced, the signs were too large, and owners did not see sign monitoring as a priority. Recommendations from both evaluations included the use of smaller, laminated posters or signs, coasters with an awareness message, and stickers on menus.

In July 1991, Richmond initiated a FAS signage by-law. Coquitlam is proceeding with a by-law. No other municipalities in the Lower Mainland have such by-laws. The North Shore has reviewed the idea but it was decided that such a by-law was a provincial or federal responsibility. The concept, however, could be endorsed on a voluntary basis.

As reported to the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee in a briefing paper from the Health Department of May 17, 1991, Burnaby has a FAS Coalition. It is comprised of representatives from many community agencies, associations and businesses with a role or interest in this issue. The Coalition is organizing a Burnaby-wide awareness campaign which will be proclaimed each September for three years starting 1991. At the request of the Burnaby FAS Coalition, the B. C. Medical Association has issued a statement recommending no alcohol be consumed during pregnancy. As well, the statement supports the Coalition and its efforts. During the 1991 campaign, posters and warning signs were voluntarily posted in all but three percent of licensed facilities and all retail liquor stores. The co-ordination of the Health Department's role is through the Health Promotion Manager.

The following are suggestions for consideration when implementing a bylaw:

a) Process

Existing businesses would be notified in writing by either Licencing or Environmental Health. When new businesses which sell liquor apply for a licence, the Licencing Department would explain the by-law and provide the correct signage. A business would be required to maintain signage. New signs could be given when the vendor reapplies for a licence. Additional signs could be available from the Tax Department. Health Inspectors and Property Use Co-ordinators could monitor compliance and the condition of signs.

b) Signage

The signs should be small (8 1/2 in. by 5 1/2 in.) laminated and available with front or back adhesive. Lettering should be at least one-half inch in height. The wording is very important. A non-threatening positive message has been shown to be the most effective.

"Warning:  
Drinking distilled spirits,  
beer, coolers, wine or other  
alcoholic beverages during pregnancy  
can cause birth defects"

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c) Placement

The Coalition suggests that the signs be posted in both men's and women's washrooms in restaurants, lounges and pubs, and in conspicuous locations in liquor stores.

d) Other Languages

In first generation ESL populations, FAS is not a problem. The Health Department feels there is no need to provide signage in Burnaby in languages other than English.

e) Enforcement and Penalty

Property Use Co-ordinators and Health Inspectors could monitor compliance of this by-law as part of their regular inspections.

The Municipality of Richmond utilizes an increasing scale of fines for vendors who fail to comply with the by-law.

Community Issues and Social Planning Committee support the Burnaby FAS Coalition and its awareness activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Alderman E. Nikolai  
Chair

Alderman J. Young  
Vice Chair

Alderman D. Evans  
Member

Alderman D. Lawson  
Member

Alderman C. Redman  
Member

