



2021 Division Road North  
Kingsville, Ontario N9Y 2Y9  
(519) 733-2305  
www.kingsville.ca  
kingsvilleworks@kingsville.ca

**Date:** June 9, 2020  
**To:** Mayor and Council  
**Author:** G.A. Plancke / Director of Municipal Services  
**RE:** Fish Fly Abatement Strategy / Policy  
**Report No.:** MS 2020-16

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## **AIM**

To advise and recommend to Council the planned abatement strategy to reduce the accumulation of nuisance seasonal fish flies impacting local residents and property in the form of a Policy.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **404-2019**

**Moved By** Councillor Thomas Neufeld

**Seconded By** Councillor Laura Lucier

That Administration be directed to provide a fish fly abatement policy to provide mitigation measures or techniques that may be utilized in an effort to deal with the seasonal accumulation of the fish flies.

## **DISCUSSION**

Fishfly, Mayfly, Shadfly, Sandfly and Drake are the common synonymous names of a group of aquatic insects in the order of Ephemeroptera, which are a common site and experience for many residents living relatively close to bodies of fresh water in Canada, and around the world.

The adult insects exit fresh water bodies en masse when the ambient water temperature reaches approximately 19 – 20+- degrees Celsius in order to mate and deposit eggs. In Western Lake Erie water temperatures reach the threshold anywhere from Late May to late June depending on seasonal climate variations.

The insects track inland immediately after initial molting exposes wings in order to dry and molt once more. The insects are specifically attracted to any light source however usually limited to a few kilometers from the water source.

Unfortunately for many, the insects present more of an aesthetic, and or phobic issue rather than any real physical threat as they don't bite, or sting. The gross number of insects that lay siege to any surface within close proximity to light sources is the main issue. Due to their limited lifespan (1-2 days), the insects typically die close to the light source creating further nuisance due to decaying odours, and present apparent safety related concerns due to the slippery nature of static and dead insects on sidewalks, and roadways.

There are no known effective strategies to control the seasonal insect deluge, and conversely the higher number of insects is a good indicator of a healthy ecosystem and lake water quality. Many living in affected areas are generally understanding of the seasonal cycle and reluctantly accepting of the chronic seasonal pests knowing that their presence is very limited in duration (typically a few weeks).

In order to develop a mitigation strategy to deal with the seasonal fish fly issue, it is important to note that there are no practical proven cultural, or mechanical measures that will control the insects from making their way inland.

Elimination or reduction in light sources would disperse the attraction to a broader less focused area, but the total number of insects making their way inland would vary slightly as they all eventually need to land somewhere to complete the final molt of their lifecycle. Streetlight dimming control measures have been largely ineffective to date, and turning streetlights off completely places the Town in a definite liable situation.

We have been actively discouraging and preventing residents from turning off streetlights, but do recommend that private sentinel lights, exterior residential lighting, and commercial parking lot lighting / illuminated marque signage be reduced during the fish fly season. This would also be the plan for all Town owned facilities within the zone of insect influence.

Since it is unlikely that we will be able to make constructive headway to eliminate the insects from coming inland, dealing with the cleanup of the dead insects is the only logical solution that can be used to address many of the identified concerns.

Enhanced sidewalk, and roadway cleaning protocols are being developed, and included in an SOP for Public Works, and Parks & Recreation / Facilities staff. The SOP would take effect when the first indications of insects become obvious until such time as the wave(s) subsides. Should we experience a supplemental wave(s) which is common but usually a lesser event, the SOP would then be put into place again as needed.

## **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.

To promote a safe community.

Effectively manage corporate resources and maximize performance in day-to-day operations.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

No significant impact. Cost to implement procedures included in budgeted operational expense accounts.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Municipal Services  
Administration Management Group

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive the report and further endorses The Fish Fly Abatement Policy, and Standard Operating Procedure SOP # MS 2020-01 as satisfactory response to Resolution 404-2019.

*G.A. Plancke*

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G.A. Plancke Civil Eng.Tech (Env)  
Director of Municipal Services