

Summary and Analysis of Special Events Monitor Documentation Specific to Bylaw # 07-126

Introduction

On March 23, 2009 the City of Peterborough revised its smoking bylaw (Bylaw Number 07-126) to include designated no-smoking areas within specific parks. The City assigned the responsibility of direct bylaw education to two Recreation divisional staff hired for the summer months. Their job title was Special Events Monitor and their responsibilities covered a range of bylaw education including the smoking bylaw as it applied to park areas.

Methodology

Documentation of Bylaw #07-126 monitoring activities performed by City personnel between June 20 and August 16, 2009 were analyzed. Staff documentation included:

- The date and location of park monitoring visits,
- the number of smokers who needed to be approached,
- the number of those who complied with the bylaw following contact with the Special Event Monitors,
- comments made by park users (smokers and non-smokers) to the Special Event Monitors, and
- analyses and suggestions made by the Special Events Monitors.

The results are specific to experiences within the current municipal park settings where Bylaw 07-126 is applicable, i.e. Del Crary and James Stevenson Park (East City Bowl and Riverside sport fields).

Key Findings

Del Crary Park

Most of the data came from experiences in Del Crary Park. Staff made over 17 visits to Del Crary Park on separate dates (3 in June, 10 in July, 5 in August). The number of smokers that were approached ranged from 1-20 each night. This number appeared to vary in proportion with the size of the crowd.

Every smoker who was approached was compliant. Reaching this level of compliance sometimes took a lengthy discussion or a couple of reminders. One incident required intervention by police because intoxication was a contributing factor.

By the 4th visit to Del Crary, staff observed that more people were populating the smoking areas. Staff were also being approached by smokers to find out where smoking was allowed.

Non-smokers would approach staff to direct them to people who were contravening the bylaw. Some non-smokers expressed discomfort with asking smokers to move...yet others were observed informing non-smokers about the bylaw before the S.E. Monitors could reach them.

James Stevenson Park

No smokers were observed contravening the bylaw in James Stevenson Park. Staff commented, "People tend to go outside of the fenced area at Riverside, most likely due to the 'No Smoking' sign placed on the fence. (They only have to go off of the bleachers).

Issues

Staff identified some barriers to effective public awareness of the bylaw and its enforcement.

- Lighting of signs
- Crowding can block visibility of signs – portable signage as well?
- Litter concerns – provision of ashtrays in designated smoking areas? At point of signage?
- Vandalism of three signs occurred at the East City Bowl location

Conclusions

Most problems with enforcement will occur in settings of large crowds and areas without strong perimeter markings. Del Crary was the location with the largest gatherings. Citizen education is dependent on effective signage and is enhanced by the presence of staff who can direct them appropriately. In this setting the issue of crowding and lighting affected visibility of signage.

In a recreation setting, compliance seems to be supported when signage can be placed on a perimeter fence.

Expect lack of awareness about new amendments to the bylaw especially from visitors to Peterborough.

For special events, the role of the permit holder, is important for education and reinforcing the bylaw.