



Monday, November 12, 2007

John Filion
Chair
Board of Health

Re: Bed Bugs

Dear Councillor Filion and members of the Board of Health

Although they are by no means a new problem, bed bugs are grabbing the attention of a growing number of municipalities across North America. In many major cities including Toronto, municipalities are recognizing that the alarming increase in reported infestations is not only cause for concern but also a call to action.

These cockroach-like wingless bugs pose significant difficulties for pest control as they can go up to 18 months without feeding, lay pesticide-resistant eggs and can migrate quickly between residences. Traditionally Public Health officials consider and have categorized bed bugs as a nuisance because they do not carry and spread communicable diseases. However, ailments stemming from a bed bug infestation can range from secondary infections due to scratching to anxiety, embarrassment, and loss of sleep.

Moreover, residents who experience infestations are faced with considerable financial costs associated with fumigations as well as replacing furniture deemed to be unsalvageable.

I would like to request that the Board of Health direct the Medical Officer of Health and Public Health staff to investigate measures to deal with the spread of bed bugs. Specifically, I would ask that staff

- Review and report on the current procedures for bed bug inspection and control, including changing categorization of bed bugs as a public health 'hazard' and the harmonizing pest control under Municipal Licensing which currently deals with pest control relating to mice, cockroaches and termites
- Investigate and report back on a Bed-Bug Furniture Pick-up program
- Investigate and report back on North American best practices, including by-laws relating to sale and disposal of used furniture and mattresses
- Expansion of public education initiatives on measures, particularly to tenants, occupants of multi-residential units and users of shelters

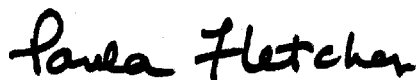
Attachment 1

- Report on the City's regulatory authority to require action from property Owners, Operators of Hotels and Other Multi-unit dwellings including
 - Requirements for control and prevention, including pest control management plans included as part of landlord licensing requirements
 - Requirements for responding to complaints
 - Procedures for reporting to City officials
 - Treatment and control of bedbugs in hotel rooms
 - Guidelines for pest control companies
 - Responsibilities of tenants and homeowners

While our by-laws do currently hold property owners responsible for dealing with infestations, the resilient and migratory nature of these critters make it necessary for us to re-examine our practices, including the roles of TPH and MLS in regard to bed bug infestations.

Just this month, a school in the United States had to be closed due to an infestation. Toronto has an opportunity to act before we get into these type of situations and be a North American leader on this emerging issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Fletcher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paula Fletcher
City Councillor, Ward 30