

PESTICIDE SAFETY ON ISLESBORO (PSI)

Meeting – Friday, January 17, 2020– 3:00 pm, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Nancy Alexander, Lauren Bruce, Anna Congdon, Helen Elkins (by phone), Linda Gillies (chair), Marilyn Smith (by phone)

Absent: Jennifer West

By invitation: Chloe Joule, Ogden Pendleton

Linda Gillies called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

The minutes for the PSI meeting of December 2, 2019 were approved as written.

Islesboro Islands Trust. Linda reported she had noted in an email communication that IIT had scheduled two talks relating to aspects of PSI's work, Water Quality (March 5) and Soil Health & Testing (April 9). In the thought that PSI and IIT might be able to collaborate on such events, she met on January 6 with Steve Miller and Chloe Joule. They agreed that when it came to pesticide-related subjects, the activities of the two organizations should complement each other and that Chloe would be welcome to attend PSI meetings.

Blue Hill Healthy Ecosystem (BHHE). Lauren Bruce and Linda reported that they, along with Jennifer West and Arch Gillies, had attended a Second Tuesday Educational Evening at the Blue Hill Library on January 14. This was one of three informational events organized by BHHE in preparation for a vote on a Healthy Ecosystem Ordinance for Blue Hill on April 3, 2020. Dr. Marly Sachsman of Maine Natural Medicine in Ellsworth spoke about the medical effects of pesticides. Linda and Lauren said that the BHHE organizers encouraged PSI to use any part of their excellent website and printed materials as appropriate.

Updates

Water quality – Penobscot Bay

- Nancy said that she would continue to try to find updated information about the Mussel Watch.
- Linda circulated a list of organizations concerned with water quality in the bay. She has been in touch with staff at some of them and so far has learned of no program that is testing for pesticides.
- Linda reported that she had met on January 13th with Olivia Kelly, a senior at Islesboro Central School with an interest and expertise in water quality, and biology teacher John Van Dis. It's possible that they may be able to help with water testing on the island and in the bay.

Water quality - general

- It was agreed that PSI should determine with a professional what we need to know about the water quality issue – whether tests should/can be done both on the island and in the bay, which chemicals should be tested for and by whom, what a timeframe might be, and the cost of the work involved. Linda will be in touch with Lissa Robinson, the hydrogeologist at GEI Consultants in Portland who worked on well testing on Islesboro in 2003 and submitted a proposal for further testing in 2012 (it was not funded). Lauren circulated a copy of Lissa Robinson’s report of October 23, 2003 to the Ground Water Protection Committee.

Landscaping care – best practices.

- Anna Congdon said that she had begun to put together information for island landscapers about which products should not be used and alternatives to them. She will be emailing the information to the committee.

Tarratine Golf Course.

- In response to Anna’s question about pesticides on the Tarratine golf course, Linda said that with the advice of the Riverside Golf Course in Portland, the club was in the process of reducing pesticide use.

Public meetings

- Linda said that PSI is on the agenda for the Town’s Winter Information Meeting, scheduled for Thursday, February 27 at 5:30 pm. We will discuss what to include in PSI’s report at our next meeting.
- Summer Workshop. There was consensus that a morning-long workshop on a Saturday in July would be the best venue for getting PSI’s information out to members of both the summer and year-round communities. On the list of possible speakers are Eliot Coleman and Barbara Damrosch of Four Seasons Farm in nearby Harborside; Judy A. Camuso, Commissioner, Department of Island Fisheries & Wildlife, who talked about the harmful effects of pesticides at a recent presentation on Islesboro; and Eric Venturini of the Xerces Society, the University of Maine, and Grow Wild Bees, a consulting company. As of now, the ICC is available; the Historical Society is also a possibility.

Other reports.

- Nancy circulated copies of the Colorado Environmental Education Program’s “Banned and Severely Restricted Pesticides.”

PSI budget. Linda circulated a draft budget totaling \$5,135. It includes funds for the PSI website, printing and copying, and the Summer Workshop (not for water testing). At Lauren’s suggestion, Linda will speak with Catherine Demchur-Merry about a possible role in the website

re-design. Linda will submit the budget to Janet Anderson; the Select Board will meet to put together its budget recommendations in March.

Other business.

- Linda confirmed with committee members that for now, PSI's goal is to create a "positive movement" (Jenn Hayden's term) on Islesboro, rather than a ban. It was agreed that islanders need time to absorb as much information as possible about the dangers of pesticides and alternatives to using them.
- Linda asked whether PSI might want to consider changing its name to one that has broader implications, such as Blue Hill Healthy Ecosystem. There was consensus that we should stick with Pesticide Safety on Islesboro.
- Anna said priority should be given to the ways island gardeners and landscapers manage their soil. A discussion about the importance of good compost followed. Marilyn said that islanders throw away leaves, which produce the best fertilizer. Perhaps there could be a new island industry that made and sold compost? Chloe reminded everyone about the talk Soil Health & Testing on April 9th.

Next meeting. It was agreed that PSI would establish a regular schedule. We will meet on the third Friday of each month at 3 pm in the Town Office. The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, February 21.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

To Do

Nancy Alexander

- Continue to investigate the Mussel Watch.

Anna Congdon

- Continue putting together information for landscapers about products that should not be used and alternatives to them. When ready, email to committee.

Linda Gillies

- Contact Lissa Robinson of GEI Consultants.
- Submit PSI budget to Janet.
- Talk with Catherine Demchur-Merry about the website.

Approved 2/21/20