

PESTICIDE SAFETY ON ISLESBORO (PSI)

Meeting – Friday, June 4, 2021– 4:00 pm, by telephone

NOTES

Committee members present: Nancy Alexander, Lauren Bruce, Linda Gillies (chair)

Other participants: Margery Hamlen, Charles Jenner

Absent: Anna Congdon, Helen Elkins, Marilyn Smith, Jennifer West

As the meeting did not have a quorum, rather than formal minutes, this record of the meeting is in the form of “notes” that include observations made by Helen Elkins in an email sent to Linda before the meeting.

Linda Gillies called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm.

Linda welcomed Jeri Hamlen and Charles Jenner. Jeri was most helpful when PSI was putting together the website and landscape care booklet a year ago. Charles, who has a summer house on Islesboro, said he had a “degree of concern” about PSI’s stand on synthetic pesticides, for he could not conceive of doing his landscaping work without using Round-up. Linda referred him to PSI’s website, which documents the damage that Round-up can cause to both human and environmental health.

Minutes for meeting of October 2, 2020 – The committee approved the draft minutes (notes).

Feedback following the launch of the PSI website and booklet. Linda said she thought that in general PSI’s work has raised awareness about the pesticide issue and that she knew of several people who had “changed their ways.” She said that she had asked Catherine Demchur-Merry for a record of “hits” to the website and would get back to the committee with them.*

Next steps. The committee discussed several possibilities.

- A map showing the properties that were pesticide-free. Linda said that Citizens for a Green Camden (CGC), which began a campaign to curb pesticide use in 2008, displayed such a map in the Camden Town Office for many years. Before the meeting Linda spoke with Marsha Smith, a CGC leader, who advised against such a map on the grounds that keeping it accurate and up-to-date was difficult and labor-intensive; on occasion the Camden map caused bad feeling. Linda read part of an email from Helen Elkins saying that she would have “serious worries about publicly stating who is using pesticides...,” which she thought could cause “partisan divide.” The committee decided against the map.
- Providing property-owners with signs certifying that their properties were pesticide-free. Committee members agreed that though this could be effective, signs can also be targets for theft or vandalism by people who do not agree with their content. Lauren Bruce

pointed out that such was the case with Covid-related signs put up by the Crisis Committee. The committee decided against signs displayed on individual properties.

- Coming up with ten or so “spots,” “sound bites,” “one-liners,” or “pop ups.” Each would focus on an important aspect of pesticide safety on the island. They would appear in a variety of venues throughout the summer. Committee members were enthusiastic about this idea.

Subjects could include:

- Reducing lawn size in favor of fields of native plants.
- Health threats that synthetic pesticides cause to dogs.
- A memo to the island’s many newcomers about PSI’s work.
- Personal success stories about using alternatives to synthetic pesticides.
- Clarification of driveway care techniques.
- The newly established Tarratine Audubon Cooperative Program for Golf Courses.

Venues could include:

- Bulletin boards around town.
- The Town calendar that goes out at the beginning of each month.
- Box holder mailings.
- The Town’s Constant Contact.
- Islesboro Island News.
- A stall in the ladies room at the ICC.

It was agreed that committee members would send further ideas to Linda. We will discuss the list and the implementation of this project at our next meeting on Thursday, June 17.**

Water testing. Linda said that she had not made inquiries about what water testing labs could do for us and what it will cost. She will try to report back on this at our next meeting.

“Maine Calling.” Nancy said that on a recent program about gardening and pesticides, a State official had recommended the use of Round-up. Linda said she would try to find out which program it was and if there is a recording.

Next meeting. Thursday, June 17, 2021, 4:30.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

To Do

- All committee members – Send “spot” ideas to Linda.
- Linda – Investigate water testing labs.
- Linda – Investigate mention of Round-up use on “Maine Calling.”

*Since the meeting Catherine has reported that since the beginning of this year there had been a total of 975 “hits” to the PSI website.

January 0

February 0

March 223

April 277

May 255

June 220

**Since the meeting Linda has spoken with Anne Bertulli, who designed the PSI landscape care booklet. She is glad to come up with a template for the “spots” using the PSI logo, to design each of the “spots,” and when appropriate to print them for distribution. Jeri Hamlen feels that they should use the same yellow as the covers of the booklet.

C: Janet Anderson, Chloe Joule, John King

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