

PESTICIDE SAFETY ON ISLESBORO (PSI)

Meeting – Thursday, October 17, 2019 – 2:30 pm, Islesboro Community Center

MINUTES

Present: Nancy Alexander, Lauren Bruce, Linda Gillies (chair), Marilyn Smith (by phone, which disconnected before the meeting ended), Jennifer West

Absent: Helen Elkins, Derreth Roberts

Linda Gillies called the meeting to order at 2:35.

The minutes for the PSI meeting of September 30, 2019 were approved as amended.

Status of PSI. Linda reported that at their meeting of October 2, 2019, the Select Board (SB) approved Nancy Alexander, Helen Elkins, and Jennifer West as new members of PSI and Lauren Bruce as liaison from the SB. The SB also voted to make PSI a standing committee of the Town, rather than continue as a subcommittee of the Tick-borne Disease Prevention Committee. The committee agreed that eventually the PSI website should be independent of ticksonislesboro.com.

Reports from committee members:

Other towns that have pesticide ordinances

- Lauren Bruce will review the ordinances for Brunswick, Ogunquit, Portland, and South Portland to see if there are any updates.

Products containing synthetic pesticides

- Nancy Alexander spoke with Robyn Congdon and Sue Hatch who warned against weed & feed products and stressed working on healthy soil and using essential oils and other natural products as alternatives to synthetic pesticides. Nancy will be contacting MOFGA for information about synthetic pesticides.

Pesticide spraying on Islesboro

- Lauren said that she would ask the Town Office if they know who hired Modern Pest to spray at the ferry landing in late September 2019, for what reason, and what product was used.
- Jennifer said that many trucks equipped with synthetic pesticides came to the island to spray for ticks and brown tail moths.
- Nancy reported that a staff member at Mosquito Squad, a mainland company that comes to the island to spray for ticks at approximately 20 properties, said that in their experience most Islesboro customers were interested in "natural" solutions rather than chemical.

Water quality – Penobscot Bay

- Lauren said that Penobscot Bay Stewards, a program of the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, monitors for effluent in the bay; this organization is not testing for pesticides. Marilyn said that they are concentrating on outflow systems from fish farms.
- Lauren will contact Joe Payne at Casco Bay Keepers.
- Linda said that in February 2018, Kevin Gardner, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of New Hampshire and Judy Gardner’s son, had sent information about pesticides found in Penobscot Bay. She will try to find his email.

Water quality – Islesboro wells

- Lauren contacted Phil Seymour, Select Board liaison to the Groundwater Protection Committee (GPC), and committee members Jon Kerr and Steve Miller. Steve said that not much testing has been done recently to evaluate Islesboro wells. He recollected that in the 1990s approximately 21 wells were checked for recharge only. In 2002/03 two Islesboro wells were tested for pesticides and didn’t turn up much. He suggested contacting the hydrologist who worked with the GPC, Lee Fentress. It will be important to test wells in two areas on Islesboro for pesticides, the golf course and one other.

Tarratine golf course

- Linda reported that through Troy Moon, Coordinator of the Portland Sustainability Office she spoke on the telephone with Gene Pierotti, superintendent of the Riverside Golf Course, Portland’s 27-hole, 200 acre course. Since 2016 Riverside has reduced its pesticide use by 60%, an undertaking that has taken real commitment, particularly on Gene’s part. At the outset Gene brought in Forrest Bell of FB Environmental to act as a “third party” advisor and to document progress. Linda questioned what Tarratine’s goal is for pesticide reduction and whether the club has an outside advisor such as Forrest Bell. She said that she would contact Tarratine President Ned Truslow and Golf Committee Chair John Bowlin to ask permission to speak about these questions with Donnie Shand, Tarratine Manager.

Possible public meetings

- Linda said that Arch suggested PSI should make a presentation about its current work and plans going forward at the Town’s Winter Information Meeting, which is held at the end of January/beginning of February.
- Nancy suggested that PSI should organize two workshops to discuss the dangers of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, one in early April targeted for year-round landowners and professionals and one in July for the summer community. Jennifer added that the workshop should include discussion of pesticides to control brown tail moths.

People who could be helpful

- John Van Dis, science teacher at Islesboro Central School – teaches about the dangers of synthetic pesticides.
- Sara Babbidge – interested in the subject.
- Jess Robinson, caretaker for Bonnet Farm, which uses no pesticides.

References

- Linda circulated a copy of Diane Lewis's *The Great Healthy Yard Project*, a book done in partnership with The Garden Club of America and recommended by Helen Elkins. Linda said that its excellent information will be useful for PSI in preparing new materials.

Contact information

- Linda said she had begun a list of contacts made by PSI during this information-gathering period. She asked that committee members send her the names and contact information of people/organizations that have been helpful, so that eventually PSI will have a comprehensive record.

Next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 7 at 2:30 in the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

To Do

Nancy Alexander

- Contact MOFGA about information relating to chemicals to be avoided and the products in which they are found.

Lauren Bruce and Jennifer West

- Review the ordinances for Brunswick, Ogunquit, Portland, and South Portland to see if there are any updates.
- Contact Lee Fentress, the hydrologist who worked with the Groundwater Protection Committee.
- Continue reviewing GWP files at Town Office.
- Contact Joe Payne at Casco Bay Keepers
- Ask the Town Office if they know who ordered the spraying on September 30, 2019.
- Work with Nancy and Helen on the harmful chemicals list.

Helen Elkins.

- Work with Nancy and Lauren/Jennifer on the harmful chemicals list.
- Contact management of the Bidermann Golf Club near Wilmington.

Linda Gillies

- Contact Ned Truslow and John Bowlin for permission to speak with Donnie Shand about the status of and plans for pesticide reduction on the Tarratine golf course.

Everyone

- Send Linda the names and contact information for people and organizations that have provided helpful information.

Approved 11/7/19