

PESTICIDE SAFETY ON ISLESBORO (PSI)

Meeting – Thursday, November 7, 2019 – 2:30 pm, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Nancy Alexander, Lauren Bruce, Linda Gillies (chair), Jennifer West

Absent: Helen Elkins, Derreth Roberts, Marilyn Smith

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

The minutes for the PSI meeting of October 17, 2019 were approved as amended.

PSI website. Linda reviewed the status of the PSI website, which was set up by Peter Palermo at Elm Street Printing in the spring of 2018. Because PSI was a subcommittee of the Tick-borne Disease Prevention Committee (T-bDPC), the PSI site was a “subdomain” of the T-bDPC site, ticksonislesboro.com (one can Google Pesticide Safety on Islesboro and the PSI site comes up). Now that PSI is a Town committee in its own right, the consensus among committee members has been the PSI should have its own site. To that end, Linda obtained an estimate from Elm Street for the set up and annual costs. The cost to establish the site is \$720, and the annual maintenance charge is \$385, for a first-year total of \$1,105. Janet Anderson has said that funds are available in the 2019/20 budget to cover this cost if we decide to go ahead. It was agreed that we should proceed; in addition, the Town website should have a link to pesticidesafetyislesboro.com.

Possible new committee member. Lauren said that she had spoken with Anna Congdon about the possibility of becoming a member of PSI. Anna, who has recently taken over from Sue Hatch as head of Hatch & Sons, was interested; Linda will follow up with her.

Technology expertise. Linda suggested that PSI should consider engaging someone with expertise to advise us on how best to use current technology, either as a committee member or a consultant. Lauren suggested Catherine Demchur-Merry, who provides technology instruction on the island. Linda will contact her about this.

Updates:

Other towns that have pesticide ordinances

Lauren suggested that all committee members review the ordinance passed by Ogunquit (Google Ogunquit, ME, pesticide ordinance).

Products containing synthetic pesticides

- Nancy said that the MOFGA website did not have information about synthetic pesticides. The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) is listed under the USDA as the body certifying organic projects and sets the standards to be met to qualify; its products list includes over 6,000 products.

- Linda said that the Portland Sustainability Office website has a *List of Products Compatible with Organic Landscape Management*; the site does not include a list of products to be avoided.

Alternatives to pesticide use – best practices

- Linda said that many sources advising on best practices encourage property owners/gardeners to have their soil tested and then to treat their soil according to the results. As a “guinea pig” she submitted soil samples to the Maine Soil Testing Service. Although she received a response she found it hard to understand. She asked if Jennifer, a soils expert, would explain it to her so that PSI can include helpful information in its materials. Nancy suggested that perhaps PSI could provide simple home soil testing kits and/or organize a workshop on soil testing.
- Linda said she had learned about a four-day organic land care accreditation course sponsored by Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) in cooperation with the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens and the City of Portland and held in Portland October 21-24. This might be of interest for PSI another year.

Pesticide spraying on Islesboro

- Linda circulated an article from the July 18, 2019 Camden Herald about an organic pesticide that is injected into trees afflicted with browntail moth, a less costly alternative to cutting the trees down.

Water quality – Penobscot Bay

- Linda reported that PSI had received some new information, which she would circulate to the committee.
 - Water quality in Casco and Penobscot Bays. After a conversation with Marilyn Smith, on PSI’s behalf Steve Miller contacted Mary Tomlinson, Pesticides Registrar/Water Quality Specialist at the State’s Board of Pesticides Control. Steve forwarded her reply of October 30th in which she said that in 2014 the Board began collecting and analyzing sediment samples in Casco Bay and that recently some work had been done in Penobscot Bay. She attached two legislative reports about the work in 2014/15 and a memo summarizing the results of work in 2018 (the memo is incorrectly dated - it should read January 7, 2019, not 2015). Results for 2019 are not yet available.

Linda said that because of their technical nature, she found understanding the reports difficult and asked whether someone could be found to help us to interpret them. Jennifer said that perhaps Joe Payne of Friends of Casco Bay be of help. Linda said that she would email the material to committee members.

- Kevin Gardner's email of February 22, 2018 mentioning the Mussel Watch, conducted for many years by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Linda said that she had been unable to determine whether this program was still active. Nancy said she would investigate. Linda will send Kevin's email to the committee.

Water quality – Islesboro wells

- There was agreement that PSI should try to have two wells tested, the one at the golf course and a private well, if possible. There was question as to how to go about this and how to cover the cost (\$1,000 per well 20 years ago). Lauren will try to contact the hydrologist who has worked with the Ground Water Protection Committee.

Tarratine golf course

- Linda reported that she had spoken with John Bowlin, chair of the Golf Committee, about the status of pesticide/fertilizer reduction and future plans. John agreed to ask Donnie Shand, Club Manager, to prepare a report for the Committee. The report should be ready in a couple of months; John will share it with PSI.

Possible public meetings

- Linda suggested that PSI's first forum should be held next summer for property owners, rather than landscaping professionals. Lauren said that we should try for a "sexy soils expert." She suggested Elliott Coleman and Barbara Damrosch, owners of Four Season Farm in Harborside, a village in the town of Brooksville, and authors of several books. Linda said that on youtube she had seen an excellent forum about pesticides held at the Common Ground Fair. She'll try to find it.

PSI budget. During the course of the meeting there was discussion of several PSI projects that might need funding - the website, soil testing kits and soil expertise, well testing, forum speakers. Linda suggested that we start putting together a modest budget that could be included in the 2020/21 Town budget. The Select Board reviews the budget requests during the first quarter of the year; the budget is voted on at the Town's Annual Meeting in May.

Next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 2 at 2:30 in the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

To Do

Nancy Alexander

- Investigate the NOAA Mussel Watch program mentioned by Kevin Gardner in his email of 2/22/18.

Lauren Bruce and Jennifer West

- Contact the hydrologist who worked with the Groundwater Protection Committee.
- Contact Joe Payne at Casco Bay Keepers.

Helen Elkins.

- Contact management of the Bidermann Golf Club near Wilmington.

Linda Gillies

- Contact Catherine Demchur-Merry about providing technology advice to PSI.
- Contact Anna Congdon about becoming a PSI committee member.
- Consult with Jennifer about soil testing results.
- Prepare a summary of the reports about water quality received to date and email the summary and the reports to the committee.
- Find youtube of the session on pesticides at the 2018 or 2019 Common Ground Fair.

Everyone

Review the pesticide ordinance approved by Ogunquit.

[https://www.maine.gov › dacf › php › pesticides › documents2 › Ogunquit...](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/pesticides/documents2/Ogunquit...)

Draft 11/10/19

Approved 12/2/19