

## PESTICIDE SAFETY ON ISLESBORO (PSI)

Meeting – Monday, December 2, 2019 – 2:30 pm, by telephone (because of snow alert)

### MINUTES

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

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

The minutes for the PSI meeting of November 7, 2019 were approved as written.

Committee members. Linda reported that she had spoken with Catherine Demchur-Merry about joining the committee with a view to advising on the website and other technology issues. Because of many commitments, Catherine declined but said that she would be glad to help out with specific projects. Linda mentioned that the committee may have funds to pay for these services.

Linda reported that Derreth Roberts has resigned from the committee, given all that she must do in connection with the recent death of her husband, Jim. The committee expressed much appreciation for her steadfast participation since PSI's founding in early 2018.

The committee elected Anna Congdon as a member of the committee, subject to the approval of the Select Board at their meeting on December 11, 2019.

### Updates

#### *Water quality – Penobscot Bay*

- Before the meeting Nancy Alexander circulated a graph showing pesticide readings done for Pickering Island and Sears Island by NOAA's Mussel Watch in 2011. They showed that more pesticides were found near Sears Island, which is near an industrialized area. Some pesticides are no longer registered for agricultural use but can still be harmful due to their long persistence time. Nancy said that comparable information for Long Island Sound were not available.

There was question as to which chemicals PSI should investigate. Marilyn offered to look into dicamba through the Center for Food Safety and the Pesticide Access Network. Helen Elkins said is an airborne substance stronger than glyphosate and used by farmers.

Helen said that in agriculture, nitrates from fertilizers that leach into bays are a major problem. While farmers are regulated, private fertilizer users are not.

- Linda said that she would persist in trying to reach Michael Doan, Research Associate at Friends of Casco Bay, for he may have information about current water testing efforts in Penobscot Bay.

### *Water quality – Islesboro wells*

- Before the meeting Lauren Bruce emailed about a Ground Water Resources Protection Committee Monitoring Report dated August 2003 on file at the Town Office. The information was provided by Lissa Robinson of GEI Consultants, Inc. in Portland. While the report indicates that no pesticides were found in wells tested, it stressed the importance of educating the public about their dangers: “Despite the lack of detection, it is imperative that the Islesboro Ground Water Protection Committee continue to educate residents about the importance of seeking alternative to pesticides (i.e.’ integrated pest management, acceptance of weeds). According to the Maine Board of Pesticides Control, the volume of pesticides used by homeowners far exceeds commercial use in the state of Maine and homeowners are the least regulated of all pesticide users.” Lauren will obtain a scanned copy of the report for PSI records.
- There was also discussion of a June 20, 2012 proposal to the Town from Lissa Robinson, hydrogeologist at GEI, to conduct a water quality and water level database update. It was unclear whether the Town funded this proposal and the work was done. Lauren will check with Janet.
- There was consensus that PSI should be in touch with Lissa Robinson about several issues, including the possibility of testing wells now and proper lawn care. Lauren will follow up.

### *Tarratine golf course*

- Linda reported on John Bowlin’s encouraging email of 11/20/19, previously circulated. He reported on pesticide reduction measures that were taken in 2019 and further reduction plans going forward. Tarratine is modeling its program on Riverside Golf Course in Portland.

### *Landscaping care – best practices*

- Anne Congdon said that island landscapers needed help in learning about which products should not be used and alternatives to them. She offered to start putting together this information.

### *Possible public meetings*

- Town Winter Information Meeting. It was agreed that what could be included in PSI’s report would depend on how much information we had been able to obtain, particularly about water quality in both the bay and in wells. We should have “our ducks in a row.” We should consult with Jenn Hayden about our approach at the meeting.

- Summer Workshop. There was discussion about that the format should be. We could use an existing venue such as the Sunday Forum or an evening talk at the Historical Society. Or we could put together something like a morning-long “workshop” with several speakers. Linda mentioned possible speakers, including Eliot Coleman and Barbara Damrosch of Four Seasons Farm in nearly Harborside; Judy A. Camuso, Commissioner, Department of Island Fisheries & Wildlife, who talked about the harmful effects of pesticides at a recent presentation on Islesoboro; and Eric Venturini of the Xerces Society, the University of Maine, and Grow Wild Bees, a consulting company.
- Lauren said that putting an event like this was difficult to do by committee and suggested that Lauren, Nancy, Helen, and Linda form a PSI sub-committee to come up with a proposal.

*PSI budget.*

- Linda said that expenses in connection with 2020/21 PSI activities could total as much as \$10,000. These include work on the website, printing costs, Summer Workshop costs, and perhaps well testing. There was consensus that she should talk with Janet Anderson about the possibility of submitting a budget request to the Town.

Next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 2:30 in the Town Office.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

To Do

Nancy Alexander

- Work with the Summer Workshop Committee.

Lauren Bruce and Jennifer West

- Obtain a copy of GEI’s 2003 report to the Town for PSI’s records.
- Find out from Janet whether the Town funded GEI’s June 20, 2012 proposal and implemented it.
- Contact Lissa Robinson at GEI to schedule a meeting with PSI members.

Anna Congdon

- Start putting together information for landscapers about products that should not be used and alternatives to them.

Helen Elkins

- Contact management of the Bidermann Golf Club near Wilmington.
- Work with the Summer Workshop Committee.

Linda Gillies

- Contact Michael Doan, Research Associate at Friends of Casco Bay.
- Discuss the possibility of a Town budget line for PSI with Janet.
- Work with the Summer Workshop Committee.

Marilyn Smith

- Look into dicamba and perhaps other chemicals through the Center for Food Safety and the Pesticide Access Network.
- Work with the Summer Workshop Committee.

Approved 1/17/20