

PESTICIDE SAFETY ISLESBORO (PSI)

Meeting – Monday, September 30, 2019 – 2:30 pm, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Lauren Bruce, Linda Gillies (chair), Marilyn Smith (by phone), Jennifer West

Absent: Derreth Roberts

By invitation: Nancy Alexander

Linda Gillies called the meeting to order at 2:50 (delay because paving of the Town Office parking lot blocked access).

The minutes for the PSI meeting of September 16, 2019 were approved as written.

Election of new members. The committee elected Nancy Alexander and Helen Elkins (unable to attend the meeting) as PSI members. Because of other commitments, Jennifer Hayden declined PSI's invitation to join the committee but is interested and will be available for consultation from time to time.

Status of PSI. Linda reported that Janet Anderson agreed with the suggestion made at the September 16th meeting that PSI should be an independent Town committee rather than a subcommittee of the Tick-borne Disease Prevention Committee. Linda will prepare a memo to Janet recommending this new structure and listing the members of the two committees; Janet will submit the recommendation to the Select Board for approval.

Information received since the September 16th meeting.

- The committee discussed Jenn Hayden's email of September 27th (previously circulated), in which she outlines her "thoughts" about how the PSI should proceed. Her main recommendation is that PSI put off trying to go for a ban and work on collecting local data and baselines, including testing wells for chemicals and finding out what kinds of pesticides in what amounts are being used on Islesboro, especially on the golf course. She suggests documenting the reduction in pesticide use and then celebrating that, thereby creating a "positive movement, rather than a ban, which is negative and punitive (focus on what we can do together, rather than on what we can't do)." The committee expressed appreciation for Jenn's valuable advice.
- Marilyn Smith recommended Diane Lewis's *The Great Healthy Yard Project*, a book recommended by Helen Elkins that describes an initiative organized in partnership with the Garden Club of America. Linda said she would order a copy for PSI members to share; Marilyn is planning to give a copy to the Alice Pendleton Library.

Next steps.

- 29 towns with ordinances. Lauren said that in reviewing the list, most ordinances passed by other towns were not applicable to Islesboro. Four will be useful to us – Brunswick, Ogunquit, Portland, and South Portland. The length and scope of Ogunquit's ordinance

could serve as a model.

- Pesticide and fertilizer use on Islesboro. Nancy said that gathering information about what synthetic pesticides and fertilizers are being used should be a PSI priority and suggested that the professional landscapers on the island could be a valuable resource. She will ask Sue Hatch and Robyn Congdon to list the chemicals to be avoided and the products in which they are found. No doubt the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) will have good information. A PSI goal is to provide islanders with lists of products that are safe and unsafe – “use this, don’t use that.” There could also be a list of exemptions - instances when use of a synthetic chemical could be permitted. Lauren said that she would work with Nancy on this project. It was thought that Helen could help with the fertilizer lists.
- Tarratine golf course. Linda showed the group safety data sheets provided by Donnie Shand a year ago. Although there is a page for each chemical, it is difficult to get a sense of the Tarratine’s overall approach to pesticide and fertilizer use. She felt that a visit to the Portland Golf course would be useful, for according to Troy Moon, director of the Portland Sustainability Office who spoke at the Island Coalition meeting on September 12th, the course has recently reduced its pesticide/fertilizer use by 60%. Through Mr. Moon, she will try to set up an appointment; Lauren and Jennifer said they would go as well.

Linda has reported that Helen has offered to contact the manager/s of the Bidermann Golf Club near Wilmington, which has been working on the pesticide issue.

- Penobscot Bay water. There was consensus that, if possible, PSI should be able to provide information about toxic chemicals that have been found in the bay, just as Friends of Casco Bay has done for Casco Bay. At this point, we do not know if this research has been done. Marilyn said that a website recommended by Steve Miller, toxicsaction.org, has helped many New England cities but would not be helpful in this case.

Jennifer mentioned that Penobscot Bay Stewards, a program of the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition (BBWC) in Belfast, might be a good source for information. According to their website, volunteers called monitors take weekly readings in the bay. They are assisted by John Tipping, a BBWC board member and director of Lotic, Inc., a professional lab that tests effluent from sewage treatment plants around New England and other water-related projects such as eel grass mapping and stream quality studies. Jennifer and Lauren will look into this program.

- Islesboro’s groundwater. Linda mentioned that at a meeting about two years ago, the Groundwater Protection Committee (GPC) said that testing for chemicals was done at the golf course and a private well in the late 1990’s. As no chemicals were found and the cost per well was about \$1,000, no further testing has been done. Given that the amount and nature of chemicals applied to properties has increased since that time, there was

consensus that, if possible, several island wells should be tested for chemicals. Perhaps the GPC can help with this - Lauren will contact Phil Seymour, the Select Board liaison to the GPC to see what their current activities are.

Next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, October 17 at 2:30 in the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

To Do

Nancy Alexander

- Ask Sue Hatch and Robyn Congdon to list the chemicals to be avoided and the products in which they are found. Contact MOFGA. Enlist Helen for fertilizer info.

Lauren Bruce

- Work with Nancy on the list of chemicals to be avoided and the products in which they are found.
- Contact Friends of Casco Bay about water quality research. (left over from 9/16 meeting)
- Contact Phil Seymour about the status of the Groundwater Protection Committee.

Lauren Bruce and Jennifer West

- Call Modern Pest to find out who ordered a pesticide application at the ferry landing on September 16th and what chemicals were applied. (left over from 9/16 meeting)
- Go with Linda to meet with the manager of the Portland Golf Course.
- Contact Penobscot Bay Stewards/Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition (BBWC) in Belfast about their bay water monitoring program.

Helen Elkins.

- Work with Nancy and Lauren on the pesticide/fertilizer list.
- Contact management of the Bidermann Golf Club near Wilmington.

Linda Gillies

- Prepare a memo to Janet recommending that PSI and Tick-borne Disease Prevention become separate committees of the Town and list the members of each committee.
- Order a copy of Diane Lewis's *The Great Healthy Yard Project* for PSI members to share.
- Set up and attend a meeting with manager of the Portland Golf Course.

Marilyn Smith

- Give a copy of Diane Lewis's *The Great Healthy Yard Project* to the Library.

Approved 10/17/19