



PESTICIDE RESTRICTION PRESENTATION TO TOWN COUNCIL

May 15, 2017

Work Plan Task

A High Priority task in the 2016-2017 Town Council Work Plan for the Conservation Commission as part of Comprehensive Plan item CP 51 is to bring forward an ordinance to restrict pesticide applications.

Guiding Principles for Study

1. The Falmouth Conservation Commission (FCC) strives to protect the natural resources of Falmouth and improve the Town's ecological integrity and wildlife diversity. The FCC increases public awareness of the intrinsic value of these natural resources and works to identify and reduce potential damage to these natural areas.
2. According to the Code of Ordinances, the Conservation Commission shall conduct research and give advice as to the protection of the natural resources located within the Town, including fresh and coastal waters.
3. The Commission may recommend to the Town Council or any municipal body or board or body (private, politic or public) actions or a program to better protect, conserve, minimize impacts to, or increase the understanding of, natural resources.
4. CP 51 involves educating property owners regarding non-point pollution sources, septic systems, and watersheds.

Methodology Used

1. Collected data on presence and effects of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers in fresh and salt waters from local scientists, including Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Department of Marine Resources, Friends of Casco Bay, Maine Board of Pesticide Control, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition.
2. Researched information from the 24 Maine municipalities that already have ordinances relating to pesticides. Looked particularly closely at those in South Portland, Harpswell, and Ogunquit and at the one proposed for Portland.
3. Held three Fact-Finding Sessions at the Town Hall: one for Falmouth business people, one for Town departments, and one for Town residents (including farmers, people who fish, people who lobster, beekeepers, garden club members, home owners association members, parents and coaches of boys and girls who use grass playing fields, and others).
4. Developed a draft of the most important points to include.



5. Will draft an ordinance for Falmouth, hold informational meetings to educate residents about the ordinance and hear their feedback, and recommend an ordinance to the Council's Ordinance Committee and then the full Council for its final approval.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Among other things, the Conservation Commission learned
 - a. How important it is to be collaborative rather than combative with the different stakeholders;
 - b. How much the Town's Public Works Department, School Department, and Parks and Community Programs already know and how hard they are working to adhere to proper application techniques and timing; and
 - c. A great deal of science! In particular,
 - There have been 11 pesticides found in the Presumpscot River and Casco Bay and 12 pesticides in the waters off Falmouth Foreside.
 - Algal growth is now present at Town Landing and Mussel Cove.
 - There is a great deal of nitrogen in the Presumpscot River in Falmouth.
2. The Conservation Commission has also learned that there are many different components that need to be addressed. It is grappling with the following questions:
 - a. Should it restrict the use of pesticides or the sale of pesticides or both?
 - b. Should it restrict commercial users, town properties, homeowners, some of these, or all?
 - c. Should it restrict only synthetic pesticides or both synthetic and organic ones?
 - d. Can it recommend that the use of fertilizers also be limited (perhaps by number of times used and/or time of year used)?
 - e. Should it include specific considerations depending on the proximity to water (both fresh and salt)?
 - f. How much regulation is Falmouth willing to face?
 - g. Should there be standards for exemption?
3. In addition, the Conservation Commission recommends a comprehensive education program for homeowners, since all pesticides are dangerous if they are used inappropriately.
4. The Conservation Commission will continue to learn more about each of these questions and come up with more specific suggestions as soon as it can.