

## SOUTH PORTLAND PEST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES 2/3/20 (5-6:30 PM) – COMMUNITY CENTER

### ATTENDEES

Residents / Taxpayers	MBPC-Licensed Professionals	Agronomist
Andrew Capelluti Cathy Chapman Linden Thigpen	Justin Nichols Todd Robbins	Jesse O'Brien
City Staff	Guests	
Fred Dillon (notes)	Rick Peruzzi	

1. Introductions / welcome new member (Linden Thigpen)
 

Consider meeting in March and skipping June?
2. Review, revise and/or approve 12/2/19 meeting notes (ATTACHMENT)
  - Meeting notes OK
  - Question about the questionnaires and how long to keep going
  - Contractor version will be in the next issue of the MELNA newsletter
  - Can it be placed on Facebook – check with Julie?
3. Rick Perruzzi on consideration of Parks waiver request for Wainwright (ATTACHMENT) - discussion
  - Wainwright stopped using synthetics 3 years ago
  - Crab grass has exploded over the last couple seasons
  - Have had a little benefit from alternative product
  - Printed pictures in waiver application don't really capture the extent of the issue
  - Difficult even with aggressive overseeding since crabgrass continues to thrive
  - Soils are good and root systems are well established
  - Not intending to completely eradicate crab grass as it's virtually impossible
  - Would like to keep it in check and haven't found anything except [Dimension](#) that works to keep crab grass manageable
  - Some fields were 50-60% in crab grass adversely affects playability and increases potential for athlete injury – shear strength of turf decreases with increase in extent of weed coverage
  - We need to do something to decrease extent of crabgrass coverage
  - What are the organic approaches use to address breakthrough?
    - All control products are plant-based proteins – post-emergent (there are no pre-emergents?)
      - Corn gluten is too expensive – never considered because of expense
      - Also includes lots of N
      - Ref to Eldredge – corn gluten is not effective
      - Successful use of horticultural vinegar as a broad leaf weed killer is very difficult
      - Crab grass is an annual that outcompetes grasses

- Other approaches?
  - Re-sodding would be a huge expense
  - Overseeding and aeration as much as possible: every field aerated twice a year and overseed with speed seeder
  - Germination rate with seeding in early to mid-July – pretty good
- Is crab grass outcompeting because of compaction?
  - Fields are also rotated on regular basis
  - Fields use 7 days a week from mid-August until Nov
- Can playing fields have higher grass? An inch and a quarter for field hockey?
  - Lower heights increase likelihood of weeds
  - Could it be 3"? Not for playability
- Access to water is key as well and many/most fields are irrigated
  - Wainwright can be very hot with very little shade (esp in peak summer) – humidity gets blown away; though generally fields are cold & windy
- Shade trees and wind breaks could be helpful
- What are options for seed blends that aren't outcompeted by crab grass?
  - Wainwright probably has one of the most aggressive overseeding programs in the area
  - Blue grass has a tight growing window
- Ordinance doesn't address economic impacts / hardship
  - Is it possible to have all organic athletic fields?
    - General consensus seems to be no, unless allowances made for periodic sodding to replace damaged areas – very expensive (~\$250-300K per field)
    - Bagging clippings also an alternative though very labor intensive
  - Consider asking Council to allocate funds for re-sodding and allowing grass to grow longer than 3"
  - Ref to what Chip did in Marblehead MA – apparently successful?
    - Chip uses sod all the time – it's his go-to fallback
- Toxicity of Dimension at quarter pound per acre: toxic to fish and aquatic animals
  - Question about whether overseeding would be limited
  - It would be applied when the ground temp hit 55 deg F
  - Dimension may be a better product because it only has to be applied once a year
  - Sort of considering it a "rescue" treatment
- All fields are different: baseball, football, soccer, etc.; every field has different high impact areas
  - Can grass lengths be longer (i.e., 3")? Not for the sake of playability.
- Grub control last year for Acelepryn
- Grubs and crabgrass are always the primary issues with short grass playing fields so how often will this need to happen?
- Is Dimenson the safest product to use from a toxicity perspective?
  - It's a very low toxicity product and make sure to follow BMPs
  - There's no technical assistance we can provide that he hasn't tried already
  - The issue is financial
- What changes have there been in soil biology?
  - Hasn't seen any significant changes.
  - Wainwright is a great environment to grow grass
  - Soil quality is very good – it's black gold
- Short grass needed for ball roll consistency

- May need to change expectations about what constitutes a playing fields. Maybe it doesn't need to be as good?
4. Review of committee member terms and swearing-in by Clerk (ATTACHMENT)
  5. Chair nomination / election (includes appointment to Waiver Committee)
    - Discussion: would like to have Chair serve as liason with other communities – really important to work together
    - Jesse appointed as Chair
  6. Preparation and contents of annual report to Council (due in March) – summary of activities for previous year
    - Will discuss at March meeting
  7. Process for obtaining annual reports from licensed applicators ([similar to Portland?](#))
    - How to contact contractors – it's all commercial applicators (structural, ticks and mosquitos, everything)
    - MBPC has list provided to Portland
    - Will discuss at March meeting
  8. Fertilizer Ordinance Update (Jesse/Andrew/Linden/Fred)
    - Ran out of time. Will discuss at March meeting
  9. Upcoming events / other items of potential interest
    - 3/26/20: Maine Flower Show pesticide ordinance panel discussion @ 12:30
    - 4/7/20: CCSWCD Trout Brook YardScaping Workshop including discussion on pesticide & fertilizer ordinances
    - 5/7/20: Piper Shores Yerxa Park / pesticide ordinance presentation
    - Others?
  10. Other agenda items / discussion topics?
    - **Have March meeting**
      - Discuss applicator reporting
      - PSA around Trout Brook / CCSWCD
  11. Adjourn

**NEXT MEETING: 3/2/20 FROM 5-6:30 PM**