



City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

Select Committee on Pesticide Reduction of the Northampton City Council

Date: October 30, 2019 Time: 3:30:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Location: City Council Chambers, Puchalski Municipal Building, 212 Main St., Northampton, MA

Members Present: Adele Franks, Cynthia Suopis, Kathleen Simmons, Councilor Alisa F. Klein

Members Absent: Councilor James Nash

M E E T I N G M I N U T E S

1. Announcement by the Chair that meeting is being recorded at 3:30pm.

2. Public comment

The Chair recognized no one appeared for public comment.

3. Approval of last meeting minutes

Motion to approve the minutes by Councilor Klein and seconded by Kate Simmons.

The minutes were approved.

4. Feedback on legal, governmental, and parliamentary issues, if any

- a. Alisa Klein reported on responses from City Attorney Alan Seewald regarding the City's ability to include the School Districts in any regulation promulgated by City Council. This opinion relates to the select committee's question on oversight of school grounds for the purposes of regulating pesticides. Attorney Seewald cited Mass Law Chap 43 as the regulation that prohibits the City from regulating school grounds. It was determined by the City Attorney that each principal of each school manages the school grounds. Other statutes seem to establish the School Committee as the policy-making body for schools.
- b. Cynthia will be meeting with the Chair of the Board of Health and Director of the Health department to determine the Board's role in these discussions and to clarify if the Board of Health has jurisdiction over school property.
- c. Discussion about the appropriate location for an Oversight/Advisory committee on Pesticides resulted in exploring the options between establishing a mayoral committee or a City Council committee.

Discussion of draft sections for report (including draft recommendations).

Discussion of submitted sections resulted in format, grammar and content suggestions by the members. The section on policy, introductory and Oversight Committee sections of the report were discussed. It was decided a revision of the policy grid submitted at an early meeting listing highlights of existing Massachusetts City and Town regulations on the subject should be included with edits. It was determined that the authors will edit their drafts and send them to the Chair who will compile a full draft of the final report and then send that to committee members for review. Councilor Klein will draft legislation.



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An outline of draft recommendations discussed are as follows:

- a. The focus of the recommendations would be on protecting children.
- b. Recommend all Northampton Public Schools work toward a goal of discontinuing the use of pesticides while familiarizing themselves of the harmful effects of pesticide use.
- c. Recommend Smith Vocational High School also work toward discontinuing pesticide use on school grounds, and perhaps on the state owned farmland property under its purview as well. The latter depends on whether such a restriction is allowable on state owned land.
- d. Explore a recommendation that would urge farmers who lease city farmland in residential neighborhoods discontinue use of pesticides and provide a transition plan to conversion to organic fields. Include the concern that continued use of pesticides on leased city farmland in residential neighborhoods would expose the city to liability.
- e. Strategies for funding the elimination/reduction of pesticide use should be part of the recommendations.
- f. Include a time frame for implementation.
- g. Explore a recommendation about eliminating pesticide use on city parking lots for common weeds.
- h. Include a recommendation of an Oversight Committee that would advise, monitor and track inventory, licensure, application, waivers and exemptions to policy.
- i. Recommend the conduct of a city-wide education and outreach program on the harmful effects of pesticides.

5. New Business

A quick review of all school districts within Hampshire County illustrated how the City of Northampton was one of 6 districts using pesticides on school grounds. Over 10 districts are not using any pesticides.

6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Cynthia Suopis and seconded by Alisa Klein. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

Contact:

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