

City of Portland
Pesticide and Fertilizer Task Force
June 14, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
City Manager’s Conference Room
Minutes

Task Force Members Present: Councilor Mavodones, Joe Staples, Avery Kamila, Rachel Bouvier, Deven Morrill, Jesse O’Brien, Seana Cullinan, Tim Currier, Cathy Ramsdell, Wendy Harmon, Bob Searle, Fred Dillon

Task Force Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Troy Moon

The task force met in the City Manager’s Conference Room instead of the State of Maine Room due to a conflict with the primary election.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Councilor Mavodones called the meeting to order. Task Force members introduced themselves and discussed their background as it relates to the work of the Task Force. Committee members include:

- Councilor Mavodones, Chair
- Seana Cullinan
- Bob Searle
- Rachel Bouvier
- Jesse O’Brien
- Wendy Harmon
- Joe Staples
- Cathy Ramsdell
- Tim Currier
- Avery Yale Kamila
- Devon Morrill
- Fred Dillon

2. Discuss Objectives and Timeline

Councilor Mavodones reviewed the goals and objectives of the Task Force as assigned by the City Council, which appear in Council Order 263-15/16

The Task Force discussed possible meeting dates and agreed on the following:

July 5 from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

July 26 from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

August 2 from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

September 6 from 7:15 – 9:15

Members noted that there was a lot of ground to cover in four meetings. Councilor Mavodones indicated that the goal is to complete work during the current Council session. Mr. Moon added that the report would need to go to the Energy and Sustainability Committee, preferably for the meeting on September 21. Councilor Mavodones recommended going ahead with the four scheduled meetings and re-examining the issue after a couple of meetings. He also stated that there would be a need to build in an opportunity for public comment.

The Task Force discussed how to address fertilizer. All agree that fertilizer is a very significant issue but discussing fertilizer and pesticide will be complicated. Councilor Mavodones recommends keeping them together for now but expressed willingness to separate them later if the Task Force members feel it is necessary.

3. Review and Discuss South Portland Ordinance

Fred Dillon described the process for creating the draft South Portland ordinance and described its elements. The South Portland City Council requested their City Manager to have staff develop an ordinance restricting the use of chemical pesticides. A committee made up of Julie Rosenbach, Sarah Neuts, and Fred Dillon reviewed other ordinances and met with a variety of stakeholders. They presented the draft earlier this year but are continuing to work on it.

Avery Yale Kamila shared a list of amendments to the South Portland ordinance that are recommended by the Portland Protectors citizen group. She stated that many people would like to ban use of all pesticides, organic and chemical, but sees allowing organic pesticides as a compromise.

Cathy Ramsdell distributed documents describing her thoughts about how to frame the issues before the Task Force. She argued that we need to take a broad look at the issues in order to come up with recommendation that can greatly reduce pesticide use. She believes this will require task force members to work together and compromise to reach a solution.

Deven Morrill agreed that we need to step back and look at the big picture. He recommends reframing the discussion to be about least risk approaches instead of organic versus chemical.

Fred Dillon noted that we need to define the target audience. Many think the largest issue is overuse and misuse by homeowners.

Jesse O'Brien indicated the landscape industry wants as part of the solution to protect the environment. He said plants and trees in urban environments face difficult conditions from soil compaction and overuse which makes them liable to disease and pests. Sometimes it requires treatments to overcome this.

4. Discuss Agenda for Next Meeting

The Task Force agreed that it would be valuable to distribute examples of pesticide policies from other jurisdictions for members to review. Mr. Moon indicated he would post these on the Task Force webpage.

After discussion, Councilor Mavodones indicated that the agenda at the next meeting would include discussion of the City policy on use of pesticides. This would take up approximately the first hour. During the second hour the Task Force will dig into the language of South Portland's ordinance and the other ordinances.