

## CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

### Pesticide Management Advisory Committee - Waiver Sub Committee Hearing Review Waynflete Athletic Field Waiver Request

Minutes March 21, 2019

**Waiver Committee Members Present:** Avery Kamila, Troy Moon

**Staff Present:** Ashley Krulik, Mayor Ethan Strimling

**Additional PMAC Members Present:** Priscilla Skerry, Karen Snyder

**Waynflete Representatives:** Ross Burdick, Rand Ardell

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Troy Moon.

Troy Moon: Goal is to hear waiver request presentation from applicants. Waiver committee will ask clarification questions. A written response will be issued to applicants after the hearing.

Ross Burdick presented waiver request.

- Waynflete is committed to sustainability and the health and safety of their students
- Request to use pesticides on athletic fields only, which are located on Osgood Street off of the peninsula
- Do not use pesticides anywhere on West End campus
- In 2012 had a grub issue that threatened the safety of students who use athletic fields
- Since that time, have used limited pesticides for grub control
- Decided to stop using Roundup on athletic fields
- Ask to receive the same transition period as the City's high use athletic fields
- Would like to work collaboratively with City as they transition away from the use of pesticides

Avery Kamila

- Who is current turf management company? Mr. Burdick: Grounds crew manages maintenance of fields.
- What is the grounds crew's level of expertise? Is anyone NOFA certified? Mr. Burdick: There is a licensed applicator. Do not know if they are NOFA certified but can find out.
- If grounds crew is not trained on organic alternatives, it may be useful to bring in more expertise on alternative land care practices. Mr. Burdick: We would like to work with the City to learn more about how they are utilizing alternative land care practices to transition athletic fields to comply with the ordinance.
- Need to focus on soil health to combat infestations per organic best practices. Use nematodes, etc.
- Right now, are you experiencing any indication of a grub infestation? Mr. Burdick, no. We have not had a grub problem since we started treating in 2012.

- Referencing map - Thomas Field is along shoreline - how far from the edge of the field to water? Mr. Burdick - roughly 50 yards from the waterline.
- Haffenreffer Field is also very close to waterline - need to make sure they don't come within 75 feet of waterline if applying pesticides.
- Plan includes Roundup but you are now phasing that out? Mr. Burdick, yes, we have determined that we will no longer be using Roundup.
- Suggest trying horticultural vinegar as an alternative to Roundup.
- Treatment plan indicates Acelepryn in broadcast treatment. Mr. Burdick - in the past, used broadcast treatment. It is not what we expect to do this year.
- Gave Mr. Burdick NOFA and YardScaping materials to reference.
- Organic land care fits in with the mission of an academic institution.
- May see problems initially as you transition because soil is not healthy yet.
- Cheverus testified before Council during ordinance process and Council decided to not grant them an exemption at that time.
- We can supply a list of NOFA trained individuals.
- Organic Turf Care - Chip Osborne - high level expert.

#### Troy Moon

- Did you see any signs of grubs last fall? Mr. Burdick, have noticed some smaller holes dug but there has been no testing.
- The treatment plan seems very traditional with no steps toward becoming compliant. Can you elaborate on steps to be taken? Mr. Burdick - Becoming more informed on ordinance and alternative land care practices. Alerted Director of Facilities and have begun discussing alternative practices. Plan to do more overseeding and more aeration. Plan to talk to others who have already transitioned to determine feasible plan. Feel that it will take more time to transition and keep the fields safe and playable - similar to the City athletic fields. Asking for the same consideration as City fields. Very committed to becoming fully compliant with the ordinance.
- Are all photos from 2012? Mr. Burdick - no, some show wear and tear of field. Have not seen the same grub infestation since 2012. Products in waiver application were what were used last year, have not signed a contract or treatment plan for the upcoming year yet.
- Do you have a schedule for developing a treatment plan? Mr. Burdick - the Director of Facilities has discussed plan with grounds crew - more overseeding and aeration. Still need another solution for grubs. Doing more research into what may work.
- As I review application and the ordinance - the ordinance makes exemptions for emergency situations. There is no emergency yet given that the fields are still covered in snow and ice and there was no clear sign of grubs in the fall. Could this request possibly be premature? Mr. Burdick - yes, we realize that it doesn't fit within ordinance request, but were hoping to get the same consideration as the City fields. Hard to say if grubs will be an issue again this year.
- Encourage Waynflete to continue research and conversations to learn more about organic land care and how to comply with ordinance.

## Mayor Strimling

- When will ruling be made? Mr. Moon: We will issue a written response, but this request initially does not feel like a good fit for a waiver.
  - Ms. Kamila: Agreed, this may not be a good fit because there is not an emergency on the ground.
  - Mr. Moon: Once Waynflete receives the written response, there is an opportunity to appeal.
- If Waynflete appeals and the City Manager approves the waiver request, would the public be able to overrule the appeal? Mr. Moon, no.
- Would the public need to take Waynflete to court to overturn the ruling? Mr. Moon - I am not a lawyer and do not know what that process would be.
- How do we address the concern around the proximity to the waterline?
  - Ms. Kamila: If we do grant a waiver, we could grant it with conditions, such as being a certain distance from the waterline.

## Public Comment

Priscilla Skerry - Naturopathic doctor, PMAC member - pesticides cause concern around the health of children, genetic issues, and climate change effects on insects. Waynflete could be a model for City fields on how to treat fields without the use of pesticides.

Karen Snyder - PMAC - second lawsuit against Roundup has been awarded to a California man with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma - there is mounting evidence against Roundup. Roundup does not provide a safe field for children because of toxins. Glyphosate has been connected to micro biodiversity and is disrupting humans and environment. Bee levels are dropping across countries because of pesticides going into the environment. Bee lifespan is decreasing. Mounting evidence that biodiversity is dropping and there is a connection to pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides.

- Mr. Burdick - we have withdrawn the use of Roundup from waiver request based on recent information learned through this process.

Phyllis Rheames - encourage Waynflete to interview NOFA certified applicators to assist grounds crew this year.

Mr. Moon adjourned the meeting at 9:39 am.