

Weston Sustainability Committee
Meeting Minutes 04-12-11

Attendees:

Members-Deirdre Doran, David Wilk, Ellen McCormick, Phoebe Cole-Smith, Clem Butt

Absent: Lou Dempsey

Guests- Helen Dekeijzer, Harvey Bellin, April Howlett, Fran Goldstein, Hal Matthews

Meeting was called to order at 7:39 PM.

Minutes

Approval of minutes from 3/29/11 meeting was tabled until our next meeting due to the fact that Secretary Dempsey was absent.

Old Business:

David Wilk and Deirdre Doran reported on a far ranging conversation in a telephone conference call with members of the new Lyme tick study that is being conducted by Yale and designed by the Center for Disease Control and supported by the Westport Weston Health District.

In addition, David, Deirdre and Clem Butt presented the contents of a meeting with Tom Failla of the Conservation Commission regarding the tick study as well as the issue of pesticide use in general. The content of that conversation included many variables involved in protection of wetlands, wells, and waterways while dealing with the very serious problem of the existence of Lyme ticks.

A comprehensive discussion followed which resulted in several attempts to provide the best service to the town in the short term in providing leadership on the matters before the committee pertaining to the Yale/CDC Lyme tick study, which involves using individual properties as part of an experiment to prove or disprove the efficacy of using Bifenthrin less frequently to control ticks than is currently the practice by tick control companies.

Deirdre presented a motion authored by Harvey Bellin to "Require experimenters to provide prior written notification to all landowners adjacent to properties participating in the experiment, and to require the experimenters to publish in advance a list of all Weston properties participating in the experiment and also to publish the names in local media." The motion was seconded by Ellen McCormick. In the ensuing discussion, the sense of the meeting was that we, as a committee wanted to avoid using coercive measures and that we, especially, wanted to be sensitive to the privacy of others. We did, however, agree that any home owner has the right to request information from his/her neighbor regarding the use of pesticides and herbicides.

The motion was voted on and was unanimously opposed.

In the continuing discussion, the members described their several concerns regarding this study especially as Weston is a town with many wetlands, wells, and waterways. The concerns raised by about the Yale/CDC study caused the Committee to realize that there is larger issue regarding the total amount of pesticides being applied to homeowner properties in Weston (and elsewhere,) and its potential negative effects on bees, aquatic life, and humans, especially children. In light the Committee's overwhelming concern for protecting the environment and human safety, not only in our town, but in neighboring towns, it was suggested that the Committee should take further action. David Wilk moved to "Request an official copy of the Yale/CDC tick control study and allow the committee time to review it until such time as we are able to endorse it. We will recommend to members of the Weston community not to participate in the study until this review is complete. The Committee, in general, does not support the use of Bifenthrin or other Pyrethrins as a tick control substance." The motion was seconded by Clem Butt. The motion passed unanimously.

Speakers Series: Phoebe Cole Smith is hosting an event on May 3, 2011 at the Weston Grange. This will include a local food and farming panel featuring Dina Brewster of The Hickories Farm in Ridgefield, Annie Farrell of Millstone Farm in Wilton and John Holbrook of Holbrook Farm in Bethel on a panel moderated by Annaliese Paik of the Fairfield Green Food Guide.

David Wilk is investigating options for other speakers in the coming months.

Recycling: Deirdre announced that a sub-committee meeting will take place at 7 PM, April 13, 2011 at her house.

Web site: Ellen McCormick asked the committee to clarify what areas of interest should be included on the Web site. She and David Wilk will meet work out the details. The Committee agreed that we want to write a regular news letter as well as a blog to provide important information to the community on matters that affect them.

David Wilk moved to adjourn. Approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre Doran
Secretary, pro-tem