

Martha's Vineyard Island-Wide Lawn Fertilizer Initiative

Working Group Meeting – October 8, 2013

Working Group Members Present: Michael Loberg (co-chair), Bill Veno (co-chair), Joan Malkin, Matt Poole, Chris Murphy, Linda Sibley, Steve Anagnos, Jeff Carlson, John Breckenridge

Others: Sheri Caseau, Mark London, Ed O'Melia, Mathew Crowther, Mark Hess, Ken Magnuson, Megan Ottens-Sargent

The minutes of the October 8, 2013 meeting were approved.

Sports Turf

Mark Hess of Edgartown Golf Course submitted an informal letter Edgartown Golf Club and offered to help especially with respect to golf courses and other sports turf. Each golf course has different fertilizer needs. Golf courses are important to the character, enjoyment, and economy of the Island.

Michael said that the interaction with golf course managers has been useful to this process. The draft regulations have a space reserved for sports turf and was going to propose setting up a sub-committee to make proposals on this.

Review of Process

It was agreed to hold an information meeting on Tuesday, October 22, at 7 p.m. sponsored by Boards of Health and the MVC. Venue to be determined. We should contact boards of health, conservation commissions, boards of selectmen, Water Alliance. We should also contact landscapers, retailers, town administrators, DPW people. It should be on MVTV.

It would be useful to hold an all-Island Conservation Commission meeting so that they can discuss a common approach regarding fertilization near water bodies.

We could send out the draft regulations but should make sure that they are properly explained. It would be useful to prepare a brief summary of the rationale behind the proposals.

Regulations

The working group resumed consideration of the draft regulations, starting at section 5.

- Sections 5.1.2, 5.1.4, and 5.1.9 will be combined.
- In section 5.1.6, instead of requiring soil tests, which could be costly to homeowners, the possibility was raised of having general guidance by area or soil type. It is very rare that there is a phosphorus deficiency, so maybe it is desirable to have a high barrier to applying phosphorus. Phosphorus is increasingly being taken of pre-formulated fertilizers so this could be less of a problem in the future. No action was determined.
- In section 5.1.13, prohibiting the use of compost or compost tea on turf, could apply only to that being imported to the Island. Most organic fertilizer has lower nitrogen, though it

39 has higher phosphorus. It is preferable to have people use organic fertilizer rather than
40 bags of chemical fertilizer bought off-Island. Compost and compost tea can be exempted
41 from the nitrogen limits since there is relatively little nitrogen and this would encourage
42 people to use compost. Jeff said there is no way to apply enough compost throughout the
43 year to get close to the 3 pound limit, nor is there danger of exceeding the single
44 application nitrogen limit. It was agreed to remove this.

45 - In section 5.2.2., it is debatable whether the conservation commissions have jurisdiction
46 over the application of fertilizer in the buffer zone, so these regulations can defer to each
47 conservation commission. Can the DCPC give them this authority? It would be useful to
48 discuss this at the meeting of the All-Island Conservation Commissions.

49 - For section 5.2.3, Jeff will convene a meeting of the sports turf people to identify
50 standards addressing their special needs. This will include town sports fields, possibly
51 someone from the high school.

52 - It was agreed to remove section 5.2.4. excepting the establishment or renovation of turf
53 from the General Performance Standards.

54

55 There was a discussion about using the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension to do certification
56 and education. There would be a fee for this. This should be pursued as an option.

57 For education, there should be a brochure and display at point of sale of all products, as well
58 as education for sales people.

59

60 The meeting concluded at 11:15 a.m.

61

62 The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 15, at 9:30 a.m.

63

64

65 List of Documents Distributed at the Meeting

66 • The Content and Application of Fertilizer for Use of Martha's Vineyard, Town of Edgartown; DRAFT dated
67 Oct 7, 2013

68 • Letter dated 10/8/2013 from Mark Hess and Ken Magnuson of Edgartown Golf Club

69

70