



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
Public Workshop  
January 24, 2024, 6pm  
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall  
350 East Main Road  
Middletown, RI 02842

**Board members present:**

Paul Croce, Chair  
Bill Nash, Vice Chair  
Michael Fenton, Secretary  
Art Weber  
B.J. Owen  
Leon Amarant

**Also present:**

Ron Wolanski, Town Planner  
Marissa Desautel, Conflict Solicitor  
Anita Guo, Principal Planner

Mr. Croce called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

1. Presentation and public comment on a draft policy to promote the responsible use of fertilizers and pesticides to limit adverse impacts on the town's ground and surface water resources.
  - a. Mr. Wolanski provided an overview presentation on the proposed fertilizer and pesticide policy. The policy has been reviewed by various Town committees and has incorporated their suggestions. Mr. Wolanski noted golf courses have been removed from the list of exemptions following suggestions from the Town committees.
  - b. Mr. Croce shared a suggestion from the Tree Warden to combine the definitions of commercial applicators and licensed commercial applicators. Ms. Desautel stated there are different definitions based on RIDEM standards.
  - c. Mr. Nash asked about whether this regulates any commercial development projects. Mr. Wolanski shared this policy would not regulate but rather educate and encourage the public on appropriate fertilizer and pesticide use. Mr. Nash pointed out that the Planning Board could refer and educate applicants to this policy.
  - d. Ms. Owen suggested educating residents, school children, and landscapers on the policy.
  - e. Mr. Weber also expressed support for education.
  - f. Mr. Amarant expressed his support and asked about the public outreach process. Mr. Wolanski shared the public outreach materials which can be shared with the Board and other committees for comments.

- g. Mr. Croce opened the floor for public input.
  - h. Tim Barrow, Middletown pointed out that the pesticide policy is specifically to address water quality concerns. He noted pesticide impacts on honeybees and suggested policy to also consider impacts on pollinators. Mr. Wolanski shared the policy does not specifically discuss pollinators but could add in section to include pollinators.
  - i. Melissa Welch, Middletown, asked for more information on the public outreach strategy and suggested collaboration with other community groups to educate homeowners, landscapers, applicators, and suppliers.
  - j. Mr. Amarant suggested regular data collection on water quality to measure the impact of this policy. Mr. Wolanski cited several agencies that do testing for water quality and will investigate what the Town can do.
  - k. Chuck DiTucci, Middletown, spoke about the importance of the environment and expressed his support for the policy and education. He spoke about how golf courses and their use of pesticides contribute to damaged water quality.
  - l. David Brown, Middletown, spoke about educating and involving the Navy Restoration Advisory Board.
  - m. Karen Barbera, Middletown expressed support of enforcement, rather than a policy. She shared golf courses and nurseries should use less pesticides and herbicides and suggested educating commercial users. Mr. Croce shared the Planning Board considered enforcement but cited challenges.
  - n. Ms. Welch spoke about involving Save the Bay with water quality data collection.
  - o. Mr. Weber spoke about the Watershed Protection District and stormwater management responsibilities.
  - p. No other members of the public wished to speak.
  - q. Proposed revisions include additional definitions to clarify the differences between commercial applicators, language that incorporate protecting pollinators, and provision for a monitoring program.
2. Recommendation to the Town Council on a proposed policy to promote the responsible use of fertilizers and pesticides to limit adverse impacts on the town's ground and surface water resources
- a. Mr. Wolanski shared he will incorporate revisions into final draft for Planning Board review before recommending to the Town Council.

**Motion** by Mr. Nash, seconded by Mr. Weber to adjourn. **Vote:** 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Fenton, Secretary