

Adopted: July 17, 2017
Amended: March 26, 2018
Amended: February 4, 2019
Amended: May 21, 2020

Town of Concord
Pollinator Health Advisory Committee
Committee Charge

A. Background

Beekeepers and environmentalists are concerned about a possible link between neonicotinoids and the loss of honeybee populations and the decline in other pollinators. Many large-scale farmers praise the chemical as both effective and less toxic than many of the alternatives.

The science is still evolving on the toxicity and risks associate with the use of neonicotinoids. Several insecticides containing neonicotinoids have been found to be potentially toxic to honey bees and bumblebees, and other pollinators causing Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).

Some studies suggest that CCD mortality may be caused by bees' reduced resistance to mites or parasites that may also be related to exposure to pesticides.

The responsible use of neonicotinoid compounds is supported by many in the agricultural community in Concord as an appropriate way to deal with some insects and pests. There are differences of opinion, however, about the value of these compounds in comparison to their potential risk to the environment.

B. Purpose

The purpose of Pollinator Health Advisory Committee is to understand the regulatory framework for pesticide registration and use, to examine the issues and concerns surrounding the use of neonicotinoids and other pesticides, and to advise the Select Board on plan for a communications strategy for educating citizens, lawn care companies and farmers about the environmental risks of these compounds and advising on alternative best practices. The committee will review and / or revise town policies regarding the use of neonicotinoids on town owned land and review and / or propose town policies, if any, for the protection of pollinator habitats.

C. Membership

The Committee shall be comprised of seven members appointed by the Select Board and it is expected the Committee's work will be completed by May 2021. The members shall represent a diversity of perspectives relating to matters of public interest. The membership shall be as follows:

- One representative from the Agricultural Committee;
- One representative from the Natural Resources Commission or their designee;
- One citizen with knowledge of pollinators, entomology or similar field
- One citizen representing the beekeeping community
- Three citizens at-large

D. Duties and Responsibilities

1. To become familiar with the issues concerning the use of neonicotinoids and the current science involving pollinators;
2. To fully understand local, state and federal regulatory roles regarding the use of neonicotinoids;
3. To solicit public input on the subject through a variety of methods, including holding at least one public hearing early in the fact-finding process;
4. To determine whether any other communities have adopted policies concerning neonicotinoids and whether those policies might be beneficial for Concord;
5. To prepare a draft report by September 2019, including recommendations for policies or actions the Town may take.
6. To submit a final report to the Select Board for possible future implementation.
7. To perform such other duties as the Select Board may request, including such tasks as the committee may propose to the Board as modifications to this committee charge.

E. Other Considerations

The Study Committee is responsible for conducting its activities in a manner that is in compliance with all relevant State and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law and Conflict of Interest Law. The Committee shall consult with the Town Manager concerning the allocation of town staff or financial resources toward this effort.

F. Attachments

- A. Certified Vote taken on Article 48 of 2016 Annual Town Meeting.