



City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In the City Council, March 7, 2019

Upon the Recommendation of: Councilor Alisa F. Klein
 Councilor James B. Nash

R-19.012

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A SELECT COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE¹ REDUCTION

WHEREAS, Section 2.6.3 of the Northampton City Council Rules provides that the City Council may “establish select committees for the purpose of considering a particular policy or issue;” and

WHEREAS, in Goal EEC-4 of the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan dated January 2008, Objective #9 calls for Northampton to “Reduce use of toxic substances being released in the environment, including pesticides, herbicides, high Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) paints, and other listed toxic materials;” and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has declared that “the commonplace, widespread use of pesticides is both a major environmental problem and a public health issue;”² and

WHEREAS, pesticides are poisons that are known to cause harm to more than just the pests that they are supposed to target. Human exposure to pesticides has been linked to a range of serious illnesses and diseases in humans including, but not limited to, asthma, childhood and adult cancers, degenerative brain diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, neurological disorders, birth defects, depression, anxiety, and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD);³ and

WHEREAS, pregnant women, the elderly, people with compromised immune systems, pets, and children are particularly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of exposure to pesticides; and

¹ For purposes of this resolution, as guided by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Research Foundation, the term “pesticide” includes insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, and other toxins designed to manage or regulate plant growth. Pests are defined as *undesirable* plants, insects, fungi, bacteria, rodents, birds, and other animals.

² U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, “Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment, June 1992.

³ Impact of pesticides on health. Pesticide Action Network UK. <http://www.pan-uk.org/health-effects-of-pesticides/>

WHEREAS, babies and children are often exposed to these toxins more than adults because they crawl on the grass and play in parks and on fields and school grounds where turf management practices include the use of pesticides⁴; and

WHEREAS, the use of pesticides is associated with the precipitous decline of pollinators and birds; in fact: a) most types of bees are in steep decline in the United States and in 2018, Massachusetts beekeepers lost 65 percent of their honey bee hives, a rate 25 percent higher than the national average⁵, and b) the American Bird Conservancy has listed 113 pesticides that have caused direct bird mortality⁶; and

WHEREAS, toxic runoff from pesticides pollutes streams, lakes, and drinking water sources; and

WHEREAS, the use of hazardous pesticides is not always necessary to create and maintain landscapes given the availability of viable alternatives; and

WHEREAS, towns, cities, states, and regions all over the world are banning the use of some pesticides and requiring both organic management and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) of municipal green space and agricultural areas.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Northampton hereby establishes a “Select Committee on Pesticide Reduction” as follows:

1. The Council President shall appoint up to ten (10) members to the Committee by April 18, 2019, including:
 - a. Two (2) members of the City Council; and
 - b. Up to eight (8) city residents who possess expertise in the professional fields of agriculture, recreation, forestry, turf management, organic and/or IPM land care, conservation, public health, or other related fields, or who are representatives from the public schools.
2. The Committee shall study and evaluate:
 - a. The city’s current management of turf, conservation areas, and other municipal green space, particularly around schools and other locations where children play;

⁴ Children and Pesticides. National Pesticide Information Center. <http://npic.orst.edu/health/child.html>

⁵ Massachusetts Pollinator Advocates Vow to Advance Protections After Legislature Fails to Restrict Neonicotinoids (9 August 2018). Beyond Pesticides. <https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/category/statelocal/massachusetts/>

⁶ Mineau, P. & Whiteside, M. (2013). Pesticide Acute Toxicity Is a Better Correlate of U.S. Grassland Bird Declines than Agricultural Intensification. PLoS ONE 8(2): e57457. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0057457>

