

Conservation Committee Minutes  
May 18, 2015

In attendance: Jan Burkhart, ~~Cheri Calvert~~, Judy Dauchy, Jane Harris, ~~Scott Huff~~, Marleah Llewellyn, Greg Ware

A) The committee approved the 4/20/15 minutes

B) Jane Harris reported on her research into the pesticides being used by our landscape contractor. It appears they make broad and consistent use of products categorized as neonicotinoids. Neonicotinoids are a relatively new class of insecticides that share a common mode of action that affect the central nervous system of insects, resulting in paralysis and death. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation believes a link exists between neonicotinoids and honeybee die-offs. Beekeepers and environmentalists have expressed growing concern about the impact of neonicotinoids, concern based on the fact that neonicotinoids are absorbed into plant tissue and can be present in pollen and nectar, making them toxic to pollinators. To read more about the Xerces Society's findings and recommendations go to [http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Are-Neonicotinoids-Killing-Bees\\_Xerces-Society1.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Are-Neonicotinoids-Killing-Bees_Xerces-Society1.pdf)

**Some of the major findings of the report include:**

- Several of these insecticides are highly toxic to honey bees and bumblebees.
- Neonicotinoid residues are found in pollen and nectar consumed by pollinators such as bees and butterflies. The residues can reach lethal concentrations in some situations.
- Neonicotinoids can persist in soil for months or years after a single application. Measurable amounts of residues were found in woody plants up to six years after application.
- Untreated plants may absorb chemical residues left over in the soil from the previous year.
- Products approved for homeowners to use in gardens, lawns, and on ornamental trees have manufacturer-recommended application rates up to 120 times higher than rates approved for agricultural crops.
- There is no direct link demonstrated between neonicotinoids and the honeybee syndrome known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). However, recent research suggests that neonicotinoids may make honeybees more susceptible to parasites and pathogens, including the intestinal parasite *Nosema*, which has been implicated as one causative factor in CCD.
- Many neonicotinoid pesticides that are sold to homeowners for use on lawns and gardens do not have any mention of the risks of these products to bees, and the label guidance for products used in agriculture is not always clear or consistent.

Marleah Leweyllan and other members of the Landscape Committee reported that the Landscape Committee is in discussion with our landscape company to find less harmful approaches to controlling plant disease.

Marleah also reported the Landscape Committee has begun to research landscape companies committed to sustainable and ecological methods. They are looking for companies who possess the expertise to educate, make recommendations, and help guide the Committee's decision-making. The Conservation Committee wholeheartedly supports this action.

C) The Conservation Committee, after some months of discussion and talking to various conservation groups, has decided to focus on the three areas outlined below. In all areas the Committee will work in close collaboration with the Landscape Committee, seek additional volunteers from the HOA, and bring in outside expert advice and counsel to help develop a 1-5 year plan. Each plan will include an estimated budget impact (both short term and long term), possible

funding resources, prioritized/sequenced actions, and timelines. Plans will be presented to the Board for review, approval, and allocation of funds as, and if, needed.

**1) Conserve water to reduce both our water bill and landscaping bill.**

Action: Develop a plan that may include, but not be limited to, strategies and recommendations to:

- reduce the amount of lawn currently being watered and maintained,
- install smart devices controlling watering,
- encourage the installation of low flow devices in units,
- disconnect downspouts that run into the bay and redirect to rain gardens,

**2) Habilitate the Riverhouse shoreline to support and diversify bird and pollinator species inhabitation.**

Action: Develop a plan that may include, but not be limited to, strategies and recommendations to:

- plant flora that will filter water run off and help remove pesticides and pollutants that degrade water quality and harm aquatic animals,
- plant flora that will encourage and support bird and pollinators – while not obstructing resident's view of the bay,

**3) Bring regional and native plant life into our landscape that are resilient to disease, will thrive in existing climate and soil conditions, and will attract birds and pollinators while maintaining or improving on the existing level of aesthetic beauty.**

Action: Develop a plan that may include, but not be limited to, strategies and recommendations to:

- develop right plant right place solutions. This includes locating/relocating plants that have similar needs in proximity to each other.
- an integrated pest management plan that reduces our use of traditional pesticides and herbicides,
- improve soil conditions,
- redesign some planting areas.

D) Members of the Committee expressed an interest in site visits to look at naturescape gardens, rain gardens, and other HOA's where conservation projects have been implemented.

Action: Judy Dauchy will research and coordinate.

E) Other notes and follow-ups:

- The Maintenance Committee is putting together some ideas about design, quality and liabilities and will seek guidance from the HOA's lawyer as needed. The Committee is doing no further work on solar energy at this time.
- The Committee had previously began to imagine what broader collaboration with all the HOA fronting the bay may look like, but feels it should focus on home conditions first. Additionally, HINoon has expressed an emerging interest in exploring conservation strategies across the island.
- Other projects/concepts like holding an energy fair, alternative transportation, low voltage lighting, etc. may be taken up at a later time or implemented as opportunity arises.
- The Landscape Committee has decided to not spray some silver maples this year. This will save \$1,200.
- The Landscape Committee is looking at replacing end-of-life trees on our property with native species.

**The next meeting of the Conservation Committee will be on Monday June 15, 2015, at 7:00 pm, in the Pool House. All HOA members are welcome to attend.**