

**Ball Pond Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting (Virtual)
January 5, 2021
Minutes**

In attendance: Julian Laemmerhirt, George Buck, Pete Viola, Mark Spellmann, Elissa Johnson, Jim Mellett, Monica Santos

1. **Julian called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm**
2. **Approval of Minutes from December 1, 2020**

Mark Spellmann made a motion to approve the Minutes from December 1, 2020.
Monica Santos seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0-2 (Pete Viola and Jim Mellett abstained)

3. Nitrate Levels in Ball Pond

Jim said this goes along with his previous appeal where he wants to broadcast a ban on fertilizers around Ball Pond. While he realizes it is a very profitable business for landscapers and hardware stores, he would rather see clover planted (even though it is declared a weed and can be killed by Round Up).

Elissa reviewed the last water tests from October 2020 with Tim Simkins of the town's Health Department. The nitrates were at a very high level. Tim used the word "astronomical". Even though it may have been during a turnover, Tim agreed that 5 mg/l and 8 mg/l is too high. You want a level below .03 mg/l. Elissa, besides education, would like to consider an ordinance. Fertilizers are ammonia that convert into nitrates and they are being used on lawns even through October, when plants are not even using it. She knows there was a soil test done maybe 10 years ago at the twenty homes directly on Ball Pond. She thinks it should be part of the education campaign. She would like to see an ordinance preventing fertilizers for the houses directly on the lake.

Jim suggested another mailing similar to last year. People don't need to put fertilizer on their lawn. The soil is young (like 10,000 years old). The soil does not need it.

Elissa asked Tim for the soil sample tests taken previously. Mark thinks it was 20 years ago. Elissa wants to show people the damage fertilizers can do over time.

Pete thinks passing an ordinance isn't too difficult. He was successful in getting one in the past for preventing gasoline usage on Ball Pond. There was a town meeting, then it was put in place.

Julian said people want a green lawn without bald spots.

Elissa agreed a soft case is a good start. Any education would be supported. Pete thinks reaching 20 homes should be easy. Elissa said anyone close to the lake can affect the nitrate level.

Monica suggested an educational campaign, like an experiment at the high school, or newspaper articles. Mark said the newspaper is good about publishing articles, or it costs \$100 for a ¼ page ad.

Monica suggested rotating through a variety of different educational avenues.

Elissa has nitrate levels from a year ago September. The nitrate level was 08 mg/l. Now it is 8 mg/l. Elissa will provide the level from last July.

George thinks there can be outliers like no weeds in the pond. Weeds eat nutrients. They need nitrates, phosphorous, and so on. Without weeds, nitrates are not being absorbed by anything.

Jim said you can end up with an outbreak of blue-green algae which is toxic. Dogs will go swimming in water with the algae, lick themselves to dry off and die. People can become very ill when they swallow the water. Elissa said she remembers a time when Ball Pond had blue-green algae.

Elissa would love to work on the campaign and encouraged others to join her. She thinks a newsletter and an article in the newspaper would be great. Jim offered to draft a newsletter. Peter agreed to help Jim.

Mark wouldn't object to an ordinance, but Julian was not in favor of an ordinance.

Jim and Pete will work on an article for the newspaper. Jim will get data from Elissa. Pete said there should be comparative data in the article.

Elissa said this makes the case for the more frequent testing from April through October and perhaps from more than one site. (north end and south end).

Elissa has observed heavy fertilizer going into Ball Pond over the last year, more so than in the past. There could also be a lab error with the results.

Julian thinks maybe around the pond could be more targeted for fertilizer awareness and encouraging people to set up soil tests for the spring. Something easy to copy that can be slipped into people's doors and provide information on how to get a soil testing, etc. He suggested getting a google doc together for the committee to prepare for the spring. Elissa will put together another google doc to put together ideas.

4. Ball Pond Brook and adjacent properties:

Elissa was contacted regarding the brook. The channel seems to have deepened between a private land owner and the Land Trust. Inland Wetlands has the authority over the brook. Tim Simpkins said he would not support widening or deepening of the channel, only removing herbaceous growth to keep the stream clean. He will look at it with Tom Quigley.

5. NALMS Membership (North American Lake Management)

This discussion was tabled to allow for time to discuss the CT DEEP Grant.

6. CT DEEP grant for Aquatic Invasives or Algae Blooms

Due by Feb 12th. George said it had to be specific with a thorough planning process. It should also be small enough so that it can be targeted to the Ball Pond environment. He thinks there will be a large response.

Elissa said invasives had to be detected in the water by September of 2020. She thinks cyanobacteria algae blooms may be an option. They are expected to become more prevalent with climate change. She reached out to Doctor Haney to discuss the program. He presented at the WCSU Lake Symposium on cyanobacteria. It isn't a current problem, but conditions are becoming so that they are expected to be in the future. She will pursue a discussion with him to obtain more information. Jim agreed.

Pete mentioned If it is under \$4000, no Affirmative Action plan is needed, no compliance monitoring, no affidavit for certification, no subcontractors as minority business enterprises. He questioned if cyanobacteria would cost under \$4000? Elissa was not sure.

George is sure the Town of New Fairfield received this document and thought it would be interesting to see what Tim Simpkins of the Health Department thinks. It could be put together into one package. It may be more favorably supported.

Everyone was in favor of Elissa getting more information from Dr. Haney.

No definitive idea for the grant was solidified. However, Elissa had created a brainstorming google doc.

George said the application would come in from the Town of New Fairfield, but would be written by BPAC, perhaps, if he agrees, with Tim Simpkin's input. George likes the cyanobacteria idea because it is a big threat. It directly effects the people who use the pond.

7. Motion to Adjourn

Mark Spellmann made a motion to adjourn at 7:40 pm.
Pete seconded.

Vote: 5-0-0 (Motion passed)

Reminder: Zoom Budget meeting on January 12. Julian and Mark will attend. Julian will update everyone.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Arasim

Lisa Arasim
BPAC Recording Secretary