

## **Hanscom Area Towns Committee Meeting Minutes June 18, 2020**

**Attendees:** Emily Mitchell, Bedford Select Board; Linda Escobedo, Concord Select Board; Suzie Barry, Lexington Select Board, Jonathan Dwyer, Lincoln Board of Selectmen; Bopha Malone, Bedford Select Board; Brian Farless, Superintendent Eastern Middlesex Mosquito Control Project; Doug Bidlack, Entomologist, EMMCP

Mr. Dwyer called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and read a statement regarding Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Mr. Dwyer then reviewed the agenda and invited Mr. Farless to speak to the committee.

Mr Farless introduced himself as Superintendent for about 4 years, and introduced Doug who has been an entomologist for about 20 years. He then provided an orientation of Eastern Middlesex Mosquito Control Project (EMMCP) based in Waltham, MA.

EMMCP was established 1945 as a regional state agency to provide mosquito control services to 26 communities north and west of Boston. Lincoln, Bedford, Concord, and Lexington are part of the project. EEMCP was established by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 252, which recognizes ten mosquito projects operating under the State Reclamation And Mosquito Control Board. This board has three members, a representative from the Dept of Agriculture, Dept of Environmental Protection, and Dept of Conservation & Recreation.

East Middlesex Mosquito Control Commission is the project's governing board, with one representative of each member city or town, usually a health director, but sometimes public works or board of health member.

Executive Committee for EMMCP has five commissioners with a role to set policy and budgets and handle routine business for the commission. The project provides an integrated pest management program, funded by voluntary appropriations from member communities, based on the services desired.

Services include:

- Adult mosquito surveillance
- Larval mosquito control in wetlands or water holding containers, e.g. catch basins
- Adult mosquito control — trapping, with samples tested for West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).
- Ditch maintenance to reduce standing water, maintain the waterways so it can flow as intended
- Public education

These services are consistent with the 1998 Generic Environmental Impact Report on mosquito control in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Arbovirus Response Plan and the policies of the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board.

Services requested by each town:

Town	Ditch Maintenance	Adult Mosquito Surveillance	Larval Control - Catch Basins	Larval Control - Wetlands	Adult Mosquito Control
Bedford	X	X	X	X	X
Concord	X	X	X	X	
Lexington	X	X	X	X	
Lincoln	X	X			

There are more than fifty different types of mosquitos in Massachusetts. After they are trapped, they are frozen, sorted and certain species sent for testing by the Department of Public Health for WNV and EEE. Specific traps target the Asian Tiger mosquito, which is not currently a problem in this area, but has increased numbers in southern MA.

The project will treat about 87,000 catch basins for the towns this year, dropping a small envelope of insecticide and marking the basin with a dot of spray paint to track treatment.

Wetland control begins in March, looking for larva. A helicopter will be contracted to drop insecticide to treat 1,835 acres of wetlands this year. This is a one-time drop, with follow up surveillance and treatment done by hand using a biological larvicide BTI by seasonal staff that walk into the wetland.

Homeowners should drain all water retaining basins on their property to reduce mosquito breeding habitat. The project will treat containers that are too big for the homeowner to drain, by appointment.

Adult mosquito control is done when high populations are observed in a certain area. Only nine towns in the district subscribe to this service. Spraying is done by an worker driving a pickup truck, or by worker carrying a motorized backpack that sprays.

Education takes the form of resources for information on mosquitoes and mosquito control, personal protection and mosquito prevention, press releases prior to certain control programs like helicopter larval control.

Last year was a significant year for EEE. Humans are at greatest risk for EEE from late July to late Sept. So far this year, projections of mosquitoes that carry EEE is lower than average. EEE prevalence tends to run in 3-year cycles.

Ms. Mitchell asked about the risk of EEE closing down sports and field access when the sun goes down, like last year. Mr. Bidlack indicated that mosquito monitoring indicates that the numbers are down so the forecast is positive, but not guaranteed.

Mr. Dwyer asked where test results are visible to the public, and Mr. Farless indicated that the Dept of Public Health tracks each town's risk levels on its website, with weekly updates.

Ms. Barry asked what an average resident can do to help the program, and Mr Farless advised homeowners to empty all the outdoor receptacles after a rain. The volume of standing water in homeowners' containers and tarps vastly exceeds the volume in catch basins.

Ms. Malone asked if a town's risk of mosquitos increases if adjacent towns do not participate in EMMCP. Mr. Farless replied that mosquitos fly around, and most stay relatively close. Marsh mosquitos can fly miles.

**MassPort and Hanscom Air Force Base Updates** — Ms. Mitchell asked if others received a notice from Hanscom Air Force Base, titled Draft Environment Assessment for Proposed Installation Development, which indicates that there is no environmental impact of planned development work. She offered to send it to Mr. Dwyer, who had not received it. The other towns received the notice.

### **Municipal Highlights**

Concord focused on Annual Town Meeting in September. Concord received an award from the American Public Works Association for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail transportation project. Next phase on the BFRT will bridge over Route 2 and connect Concord's finished section with Acton. Town is preparing to open summer camps and White Pond.

Lexington held a first-in-the-state virtual town meeting, using Zoom platform with additional capabilities for queueing questions and remote voting, and dashboards to make the queues and votes visible to participants and the moderator. Special legislation was needed to legitimize the meeting. She recognized the other Select Board members, IT professionals, and town council for their significant effort.

Bedford's Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Sat July 11 on the football field. The meeting would consider a streamlined agenda with recently revised budgets. The board is working on Q&A and other guidance for residents to understand the budget and underlying drivers before the meeting, since the usual presentations will not be done during the meeting.

Lincoln had its Annual Town Meeting last Saturday, June 13, on a parking lot in the school campus, with a much reduced warrant. A key article addressed some school building project items that were recently removed from scope after final project estimates exceeded the budget. The town approved the article, which used other funding sources. To reduce time spent at town meeting, all the information was presented in virtual meetings ahead of time, and available online. The meeting was about 2 hours long.

### **Committee Reorganization**

The committee voted to reorganize the committee, with Ms. Barry moving that Ms Mitchell be appointed chair for the next year. Ms Escobedo seconded. The vote was unanimous: Barry: Aye, Escobedo: Aye, Dwyer: Aye, Mitchell: Aye

Possible future guests and agenda topics: housing, Covid, MBTA Advisory Board, new Hanscom AF Base commander, state representatives for Bedford and Lincoln, or a new general topic similar to the past topics of sustainability or public safety.

Future meetings: Sept, Nov, Jan, Feb, Apr, June; Thursday nights.

Ms Mitchell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms Barry. The vote was unanimous: Dwyer: Aye, Escobedo: Aye, Barry: Aye, Mitchell: Aye

Meeting adjourned at 8:52.

Minutes submitted by Jonathan Dwyer