

## **Organic Pest Management Policy for Turf and Landscape on Town-Owned Land**

### **§1. Statement of Purpose:**

In consideration of the hazards involved in the use of chemical pesticides, the Town deems it prudent to employ pest control strategies which minimize risks to human health, the environment and non-target organisms. This goal is consistent with the recommendations of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, which states that *“all pesticides are toxic to some degree....and the commonplace, widespread use of pesticides is both a major environmental problem and a public health issue.”*<sup>1</sup>

To this end, the Town hereby adopts an Organic Pest Management (“OPM”) policy for the exterior maintenance of all Town-owned land which employs a variety of non-toxic alternatives and commonsense practices to eliminate the use of chemical pesticides, either by Town employees or private contractors, and to encourage businesses and residents within the Town to adopt similar pesticide-reduction methods.

### **§2. The Precautionary Principle:**

There is growing scientific evidence of a link between exposure to chemical pesticides and human health problems, including cancer, birth defects and neurological problems. In view of this mounting evidence and the degradation of natural resources and the environment associated with pesticide contamination, scientists, lawyers, policymakers and environmentalists have developed what has become known as the “Precautionary Principle.” It states that *“when an activity raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken even if specific cause-and-effect relationships are not yet fully established.”*<sup>2</sup> This policy embraces this principle.

### **§3. Definitions and Objectives**

Organic Pest Management (“OPM”) is a pest control strategy that focuses on prevention or suppression of pest problems through the elimination of soil conditions preferred by unwanted pests, and the promotion and development of natural biological controls. OPM dictates that chemical controls (e.g. pesticides) be used only in emergency situations (see Section 8).

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<sup>1</sup> U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, “Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment,” June 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Wingspread Conference, S. Johnson Foundation, Racine, WI February 1988.

“Pesticides” shall be defined as those falling under 7U.S.C. 136, or as set forth under §33-0101 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, and shall specifically include herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and any other products containing toxic chemicals intended to kill pests.

Pesticides classified as known, likely or probable human carcinogens or suspected endocrine disrupters, or those pesticides that meet the criteria for Toxicity Category I or Toxicity Category II as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in section 156.62 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (attached hereto as exhibit “A”) shall no longer be applied to any Town property.

#### **§4. The Pest Management Board:**

An Advisory Committee shall be established to oversee and assist in the implementation of the OPM policy, to develop an OPM Program consistent with this policy, and to advise the Town Board of any problems encountered or amendments required to achieve the full and successful implementation of the Town's OPM policy.

#### **§5. Staff Training and the Role of Consultants**

All Town personnel involved in supervising or carrying out exterior pest control activities on Town-owned land shall receive hands-on training in non-toxic methods. Job descriptions and/or contract specifications shall be modified to require the use of OPM procedures and decision-making criteria. To the degree possible, communication and accountability procedures already in place shall be retained, tailoring the record-keeping and reporting forms to be consistent with the new OPM policy. The Town shall be authorized to make such expenditures as may be required to ensure that all Town personnel are properly trained to carry out this policy.

To ensure the successful implementation and maintenance of this policy, a consultant in Organic Pest Management shall be retained by the Town. This consultant shall be an experienced organic pest control professional who will work with field staff management to help train personnel involved with grounds maintenance. The consultant shall assist the Town and the Advisory Committee in developing an implementation schedule for the Organic Pest Management program, and shall advise the Town regarding product requirements and the development of an organic product resource list to be used for soliciting bids.

The Town shall amend its contract provisions for outside contractors to ensure that they abide by the terms of this OPM Policy.

## **§6. Implementation of OPM Policy**

All Town departments which have any jurisdiction over maintenance of Town-owned land shall participate in the OPM Program. The Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, a Town Pest Management Coordinator or other designee shall identify types and quantities of pesticides currently in use, create a phase-out schedule for prohibited pesticides and coordinate with the Pest Management Board and consultants to effect the transition to an OPM Program at all Town properties. From time to time the Coordinator shall report back to the Town Board and the Advisory Committee on the progress of the program.

Basic cultural practices for successful Organic Pest Management on lawns and fields are attached hereto ("Exhibit B"). OPM is a developing technology, and these strategies should be modified as new research suggests improved organic pest management methods.

## **§7 Exceptions**

All exterior pest control activities taking place on Town-owned land shall be subject to this OPM Policy except as follows:

1. Pesticides otherwise lawfully used for the purpose of maintaining a safe drinking water supply at drinking water treatment plants, waste water treatment plants, reservoirs, and related collection, distribution and treatment facilities;
2. Pesticides in contained baits or traps for the purposes of rodent control; and
3. Pesticides classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as exempt materials under 40 CFR 152.25. A list of these materials will be maintained and updated periodically in a designated office of the Town.

## **§8 Emergency Waivers**

If an emergency situation warrants the use of pesticides which would otherwise not be permitted under this Policy, the Supervisor shall have the authority to grant a temporary waiver for a period of 30 days. Notice of the waiver shall be given to the Advisory Committee and unless the Town is able to resolve the problem, the Town Board may extend the waiver for an additional period not to exceed six months. Nothing in this waiver provision prohibits the Town from adopting additional waiver resolutions for as long as the condition

exists, again not to exceed six months for any individual resolution. The Supervisor shall determine if such a waiver is warranted based on the following criteria:

1. The pest situation poses an immediate threat to human health and/or environmental quality, including fauna or flora; and
2. Viable alternatives consistent with this Policy do not exist.

The chemical controls employed under any such waiver shall be applied to affected areas only in a site-specific manner to minimize contamination of broader unaffected areas. Any Town department using a pesticide under a Town waiver shall comply with the following notification procedures:

1. Signs shall be posted (with prior notification when possible) of pesticide application and remain in place for at least four days after the application.
2. Signs shall be of a standardized design that are easily recognizable to the public and workers.
3. Signs shall contain the date and time of application, the name of the pesticide and the target pest, the date of re-entry, and the Town department responsible for the application.