AGENDA

Fertilizer Ordinance Meeting

Wednesday November 13 at 4:00pm
South Portland Community Center, 2nd fl conference room

Ad Hoc Working Group Members

Julie Rosenbach, Sustainability Coordinator
Fred Dillon, Stormwater Program Coordinator
Jesse O’Brien, Agronomist, Downeast Turf
Chip Osborne, Osborne Organics (absent)
Linden Thigpen, Resident
April Caricchio, City Councilor (absent)
Rick Peruzzi, Athletic Fields & Golf Course Manager, Parks & Rec Dept.
Cathy Ramsdell, Friends of Casco Bay
Breece Sleeper, Always Green Tree Lawn and Landscape (absent)
Rachel Mason Burger, Resident (absent)
Andrew Capelutti, Resident

Guests
Newell Augur – Pierce Atwood
Palmer Higgins – Mainely Grass

Agenda

1. Review of last meeting & updates
   • Meeting minutes: make sure all minutes are ready for review before next meeting
   • Removed erosion from Purpose statement – JR generally happy with statement’s focus on waterways, nutrient runoff and soil
   • Prohibitions:
     o Developed by JR and JO
     o Apply to every application
     o Clarifications
       ▪ Question about 75’ buffer – most important thing is to keep soil in place with well-established turf
For the purposes of vegetation establishment, important to fertilize when turf is dry and to water it in; maybe OK to have a light rain
  • Also important to understand that we don’t want to encourage turf within 75’ buffer

Summer dormancy – not a good time to apply fertilizer unless there’s irrigation; need to allow for / consider turf irrigation
  • UNLESS NEEDED – no fertilizer during dormant state?
  • Summer dormancy caused by drought and heat
  • Add summer dormancy to definitions section; dormancy state determined by soil temp? Maybe when it exceeds a certain level.
  • Defining what constitutes a rain event: 1 – 1.5”? How to address storm intensity?
  • Reality is homeowners will water during the summer so they can enjoy their lawns during this time
  • Potentially allows for lawns to never enter summer dormancy due to perpetual irrigation?
  • Or still protected since ordinance requires soil test to demonstrate need for fertilizer?

Allowed applications (p. 4)
  • Slow release of 50% OK
  • 3.25 lb / 1000 sf / yr app of N (Rick thinks this is low)
    • There may be exceptions where there isn’t adequate growth
  • Exception for hydroseeding (define) doesn’t allow for incorporation – depth of incorporation at least 2-3”: needs to be covered with some sort of material

Overseeding / slice seeding: putting seed over established turf would be another exception (define overseeding / slice seeding – applies to est. turf); best defense against weeds
  • Considerations for soil quality / topsoil: does it belong in ordinance? Probably better in zoning ordinance – need to approach P&D
- Remove re-establishment? Residential lawns don’t need fertilizer?
  - Would eliminate the ability to do overseeding: P is most needed during germination/root development
  - Thick healthy turf consistently needs to be overseeded/slice seeded and P needs to be at a shallow level (P is the “baby food” of turf); typically NPK all applied for overseeding
  - Question about how often overseeding needs to be done
  - Is re-establishment just for P?
  - Is 1 lb/1000 sf needed for new dev/re-establishment?
    - On a per app basis
    - Also need to specify per year basis
    - New dev on bare soil: needs proper irrigation
    - Shouldn’t require starter fert more than once?
    - Define starter fertilizer – also N max content
    - Depends on soil – use as little as you can
    - Soil tests (not the standard type – which doesn’t measure N) can help
    - What should the max amount be?
    - When is more important than how much?
    - Re-establishment shouldn’t include N and only P
- 3rd bullet (allowed apps on p. 4): should say “on all turfs including residential lawns”
  - 2 lb per year max for residential lawns should be sufficient
  - Performance turf, re-establishment and all other turf
  - Does P belong here?
- Do we need a separate bullet for re-establishment?
- Don’t use P unless there’s seed
- What is re-establishment? When new seed is being introduced.
- Loophole is that any time seed is applied it’s OK to apply P
2. Continue discussion of prohibitions
   • Ran out of time...

3. Identify best management practices
   • Ran out of time...