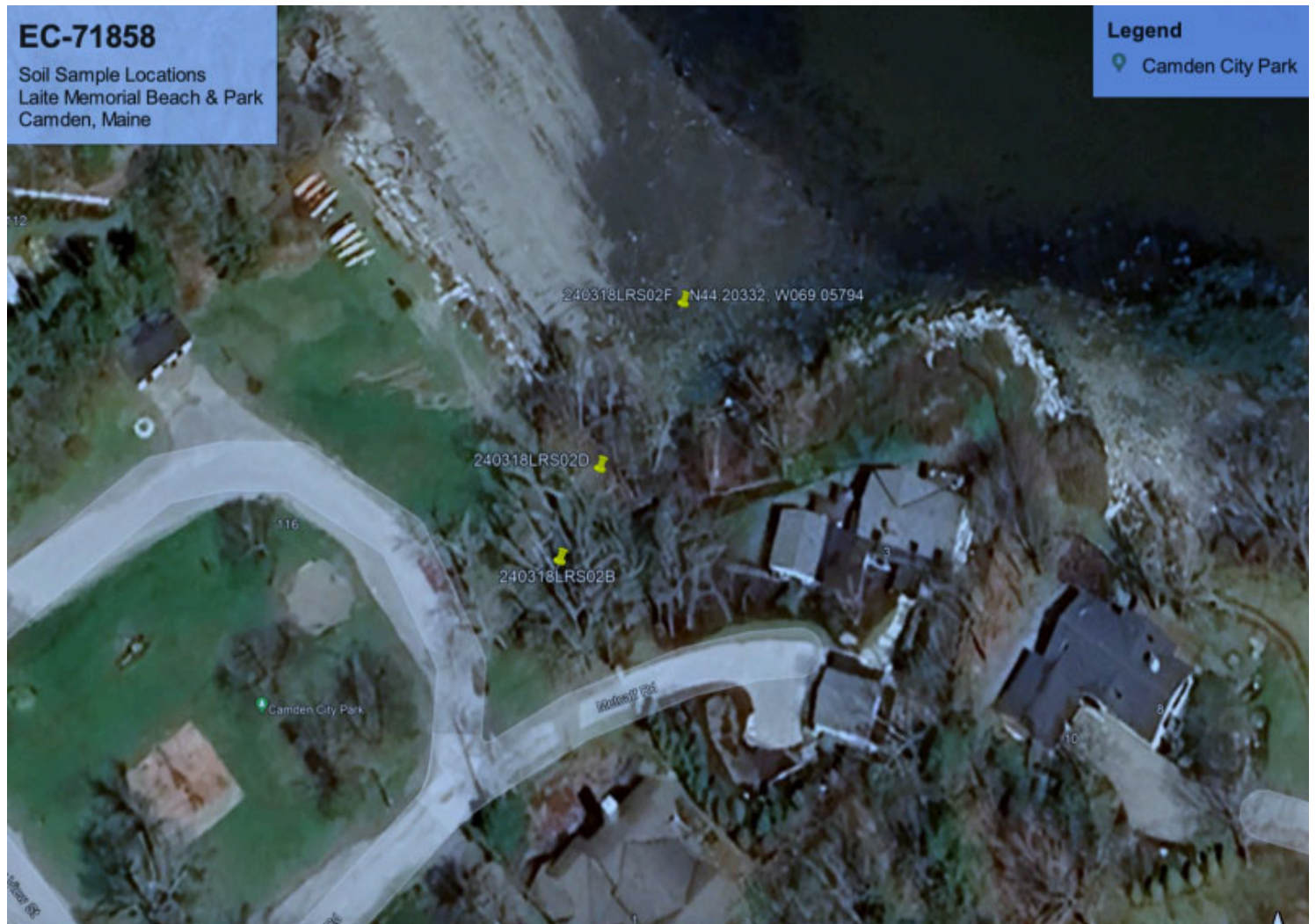


Select Board meeting tonight

Regulating pesticides and herbicides under Camden ordinance to be discussed July 2

Lynda Clancy

Tue, 07/02/2024 - 2:15pm



Where test bores were drilled in March in order to test Laite Beach, in Camden, for the presence of toxic chemicals that leached from property on Metcalf Road. The amount detected has been determined minimal, but the Camden Select Board Chair said in March: "It's [Alligare] in our park. It's on our beach, where our citizens, our children, our pets go."

Camden's Select Board will open a discussion July 2 at its regular scheduled meeting about initiating an amendment to the town ordinance that would regulate herbicide and pesticide use.

The illegal herbicide applications to Camden Harbor waterfront property in 2021 that poisoned trees and leached toxins onto the publicly owned Laite Beach has helped to elevate the conversation about regulating chemicals at the municipal level.

But it is a process that first requires research and public education, those involved emphasize. And any proposed ordinance amendments would first require the approval of Maine’s Bureau of Pesticide Control, the state agency that oversees herbicide and pesticide use and abuse.

The Camden Select Board is to convene in the French Conference Room of the Camden Town Office at 6:30 p.m.

Select Board meetings are broadcast live on Spectrum Cable TV channel 1303 and [streamed live](https://www.youtube.com/TownofCamdenMaine). (<http://www.youtube.com/TownofCamdenMaine>)

For those wishing to participate remotely, click this [Zoom link](#)

The agenda also includes:

Approval of Board Minutes – June 4, 2024 and June 18, 2024

3. Consent Agenda:

- a) Approval of annual request for block party on July 20th from 4 to 8 p.m. on Central Street between Cross and Trim streets
- b) Consideration of approval of Benches for People Place Fundraiser

4. Select Board Reports

5. Town Manager’s Report

6. Action Items

- a) Award of RFP Harbor Resiliency
- b) Election of Member for Legislative Policy Committee for MMA

7. Discussion Items

- a) Overview of Articles Passed
- b) Pesticide/Herbicide Amendment to Code of Ordinances

8. Adjournment

See the full Select Board packet here.

A small group of Camden residents began meeting a few years ago to educate themselves about pesticides and herbicides, how those chemicals are regulated in Maine, and their possible effects on humans and pets.

“It is a small group of concerned citizens that got together,” said Jo-Ann Wilson, of Camden, adding that the inception of their meetings predated the, “Bond incident.”

The Bond incident is the 2021 herbicide application that resulted tree and vegetation poisoning on Metcalf Road property. It was followed by a \$210,000 consent agreement between private landowners Arthur III and Amelia Bond, of St. Louis,



Attachments

[DearbornPesticide HC 11-7-2007.pdf](#)

Maritime Energy logo featuring an anchor. To the right, a list of services: SALES | SERVICE, INSTALLATION, FURNACE, BOILER, HEAT PUMPS, PROPANE, HOT WATER. A small photo of a person in a blue uniform is on the far right.

Rockport Farmers' Market logo with a yellow background and text: "ROCKPORT FARMERS MARKET SATURDAYS YEAR ROUND". To the right, text: "Rockport Farmers' Market 9 a.m. to noon Saturdays, year-round Located at Guini Ridge, Rt. 1".

Advertisement with a photo of a woman and text: "YOUR AD CAN APPEAR HERE! \$25 P/WK Contact Janis 207-706-6656 janisbunting@penbaypilot.com".

Union Farm Equipment logo with a tractor and text: "UNION FARM EQUIPMENT 'The Friendly Folks'". To the right is the Cub Cadet logo and a photo of a yellow tractor.

Missouri, and the Town of Camden, and a \$1.58 million private settlement between the Bonds and their neighbor, Lisa Gorman, whose property had been affected.

Gorman's property fronts the harbor and is adjacent to Camden's popular Laite Beach, frequented year-round by locals and visitors. Laite Beach fronts Camden Harbor, which is part of Penobscot Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

Samples taken last winter from test bores at the publicly-owned Laite Beach on Camden Harbor tested positive for [Alligare, the herbicide](#) used illegally on nearby property.

On March 6, the [Camden Select Board voted to elevate their concerns](#) to the office of Maine's Attorney General and the Maine Legislature.

"It's [Alligare] in our park," said Board Chair Tom Hedstrom, at a [March 6 Select Board meeting](#). "It's on our beach, where our citizens, our children, our pets go."

He said at that March meeting: "I would make a public call right now to our Attorney General and our District Attorney to seriously consider criminal charges against the Bonds for this application of poison into our property, our resident's property, our harbor, and endangering all of us."

In April, Maine's Office of Attorney General responded to a March 13 appeal from Camden Town Manager Audra Caler for support in pursuing additional enforcement.

Scott Boak, Assistant Attorney General listed the facts to date, which included the private settlement between the Bonds and Gorman, the consent agreement between the Bonds and Town of Camden, and the consent agreement between the Bonds and Maine's Bureau of Pesticide Control, of \$4,500.

Boak said his office would, "consider all of this information and the underlying situation carefully, in consultation with the BPC, DEP, and other interested state agencies, as we consider your request related to further enforcement."

The AG's office does comment on open investigations, nor does it confirm if it is even investigating a case.

For Camden's informal group of citizens researching herbicides and pesticides, the Bond incident produced a silver lining, as Jo-Ann Wilson wrote in a recent [letter to the editor](#).

"The silver lining to this story may be to recognize and bring an awareness of how we all may be slowly poisoning our own health, our loved ones and the natural world by innocently using such toxic agents."

The discussion at the July 2 board meeting will touch on various aspects of the group's research. They have so far learned that 33 municipalities in Maine restrict or ban pesticides within town lines.

In 2008, Camden [instituted a policy](#) that instructs the town to "refrain from the use of pesticides upon property it owns, uses or controls, except in situations that pose an imminent threat of serious injury to persons, property or agriculture."

According to the Maine Bureau of Pesticide Control, the sample results from Laite Beach are as follows:

240318LRS02B – 0.017 ppm (parts per million)

240318LRS02D – Q detection, present at less than reporting limit of 0.0025 ppm

240318LRS02F – 0.0029 ppm

"Please see the attachment, DearbornPesticide HC 11-7-2007.pdf, for information regarding the potential public health hazard of tebuthiuron in residential soils. This Health Consultation following tebuthiuron contamination at residential properties in

Dearborn, Michigan, concludes that there is no apparent public health hazard to people living at or visiting properties where tebuthiuron contamination has occurred.”

The policy said: “All pesticides are toxic to some degree and the widespread use of pesticides is both a major environmental problem and a public health issue. Federal regulation of pesticides is no guarantee of safety. Camden recognizes that the use of pesticides may have profound effects upon indigenous plants, surface water and ground water, as well as unintended effects upon people, birds and other animals in the vicinity of treated areas. Camden recognizes that all citizens, particularly children, have a right to protection from exposure to hazardous chemicals and pesticides.”

In 2008, the Citizens for a Green Camden were the catalyst for that effort, with Marsha Smith at the helm.

She has passed the torch to the more recent group that has been meeting, and both she and Beedy Parker, another longtime steward of Camden’s environmental health, have said it is time to control what is being applied on private property.

“Not only are the chemicals currently being used a hazard to our environment but more directly to our children and pets and future generations,” Smith wrote. “Chemical runoffs are poisoning the lakes, rivers, harbor and the bay. Many of these are forever chemicals. Recent situations in town amplify the urgent need to protect our environment.”

The current group of citizens recognize the need to disseminate information.

A grassroots effort in Ogunquit spent two years with volunteers educating the public, going door-to-door with information before the voters passed an [herbicide/pesticide amendment](#) to their municipal ordinance.

“The slower you go, the faster you get there,” said Wilson.

She hopes the Town of Camden will establish an *ad hoc* committee to produce recommendations and support educational efforts.

The group dreams even that some day towns along the west side of Penobscot Bay might band together and share similar policies regarding the use of toxic chemicals in the environment.

Reach Editorial Director Lynda Clancy at lyndaclancy@penbaypilot.com; 207-706-6657

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It would help a lot to know the concentrations of the chemicals of concern at the beach.

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There is a sidebar with the reported amounts in the article, and a reference to a PDF that is attached to the article. That may illuminate more what the numbers indicate that were reported. Thank you.

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