

RYE MOSQUITO CONTROL COMMISSION

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

4:30 p.m. – Rye Town Hall

Commissioners Present: Chair Tim Sanborn, James Farrelly and Mark Troy

Also Present: Sarah MacGregor from Dragon Mosquito Control

I. Call to Order

Chair Sanborn called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

II. Approval of August 17th Meeting Minutes

Tabled to the October meeting.

III. Old Business

Sarah McGregor reported that after the last meeting she spoke with Health Officer Gail Snow about spraying at the schools. This was done before the start of school at all sites. Ms. McGregor also sent an email the Recreation Director but has not heard back. It was noted that Meghan Spaulding is the new Recreation Director for Rye.

IV. New Business

1. Dragon Update – Sarah McGregor; Dragon field work/End of season status

Ms. McGregor noted that there was not as much rain in August as July. However, they were just as busy on the saltmarshes. At times, they were able to transition back to freshwater. She pointed out that saltmarshes are always needing attention. The season is winding down, as the photoperiod is shortening and the nighttime temperatures are dropping. These are triggers for mosquitos to stop breeding and they start to slow down.

There has been a positive batch of mosquitos detected in Portsmouth recently for West Nile. Fortunately, the species it was detected in mostly bites birds, not humans. It has been a slow season for disease, mostly because of the prior drought. Given that there has been fairly high number of certain species, it is anticipated there will be something a bit different seen for next year, in terms of disease activity.

Ms. McGregor reported that there was a human case of Jamestown Canyon Virus in Dublin. There have been positive mosquitos found in Portsmouth, Manchester and Salem for West Nile and quite a few other towns for Jamestown Canyon. She explained that testing for the mosquitos for Jamestown is limited, as it's a pilot program. The State focuses on towns that

have had human cases or are next to a community that has had a human case. Given how many mosquitos they found to date with Jamestown, it's probably wide spread. She pointed out that disease is carried by deer, as opposed to West Nile which is carried by birds. She reported that Triple E has not been detected in the State.

The Greenhead traps have been brought in from the field and have been put away for the winter. These are stored in the Goss Farm barn. Currently, there are 184 traps.

It is expected that work will be wrapped up by the end of October. In years past, it was Labor Day and now it's Halloween. There has definitely been an extension of the season through the decades, due to climate change. Also, the State was not testing mosquitos in the olden days. There were no disease test results to say that spraying should continue, as there might be more cases. At that time, it was easy to wrap up the spraying right after the tourist left because it was mostly a nuisance program. Today, it's a public health program. The State stops testing mosquitos around October 15th.

2. Citizen Input

The commission listened to a message left from a resident, who lives on Brackett Road, on Chair Sanborn's voicemail on August 27th. The resident expressed concerns about the excessive mosquito activity over this past season and commented on the financials for mosquito control. They alleged that the Commission may be withholding money from budgeted mosquito services. The resident clearly stated in the message that they were not unhappy with the services of Dragon Mosquito Control.

Chair Sanborn noted that the Mosquito Control Commission has a budget. None of that money is being withheld from satisfying the needs of the citizens of Rye in regards to mosquito control.

Ms. McGregor pointed out that the resident was not happy ten years ago when the road spraying was done away with.

Commissioner Troy commented this is an irrational person who is lashing out because she has been personally attacked by mosquitos. It has nothing to do with the Commission's purview or anything they can control. She should be referred to someone who can address the issue or referred to the website to submit an official complaint.

Chair Sanborn pointed out that the resident called the Town Hall and was told by Janice Ireland (Selectmen's Secretary) to go to the website and file a complaint. The resident said in the message that she doesn't believe it and will not file a complaint.

Ms. McGregor commented that it has been a bad year for mosquito activity.

Chair Sanborn agreed. He reiterated that the Commission has not withheld any funds that would cause these issues. Everyone who pays taxes has a voice in this town. There is a process for

people to file a complaint or give feedback on the website. This happens to be a resident who claims she doesn't believe it and won't do it.

Ms. McGregor reported that to date, Dragon has put down over two tons of BTI on the saltmarshes, including marshes off Brackett Road. It's not that less work has been done out there. It's just an unusual year, as the area has been impounded by rain. The rain and heat mean more mosquitos. It's very frustrating to Dragon when they know how hard they are working and there are still too many mosquitos or complaints.

Commissioner Farrelly pointed out that spraying the recreation area, junior high, elementary school and Parsons Field, in advance of the start of school, is a \$1,500 tab.

Ms. McGregor noted that road spraying would cost probably \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year to spray every week. It's an easy thing to cut when towns want to save money. It's also a highly contentious part of the program because some people don't like it. She also pointed out that fewer and fewer towns are doing street spraying.

Commissioner Troy commented it's a no-win situation. Unfortunately, there's not much that can be done, except to respond and guide in the best way possible.

Chair Sanborn asked if they should respond if she refuses to follow the guidance to go to the website to file a complaint.

After some discussion, Commissioner Troy offered to call the resident.

Chair Sanborn replied that he is not sure this will help. He wanted to bring this to the Commission's attention that he received the call, even though there was a process set up for people to call the Town Hall.

3. Dragon Invoice approval

The Commissioners reviewed Invoice #31451 in the amount of \$14,125 from Dragon Mosquito Control, which is in line with the 2021 Budget.

Motion by Tim Sanborn to approve Invoice #31451 in the amount of \$14,125 to Dragon. Seconded by James Farrelly. All in favor.

4. Rye Civic League Communications

Commissioner Farrelly reported that he did not received feedback from Mr. Borne about the last submission sent to him. He will reach out to Mr. Borne directly. He thinks that the Civic League may be looking for something briefer for their newsletter.

5. Rye Master Plan Survey Input

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed responses to the Master Plan Survey. Nothing further was added.

6. Meeting Scheduling

- **Next meeting scheduled for October 19th, 5:00 p.m.**

Adjournment

Motion by Tim Sanborn to adjourn at 5:20 p.m. Seconded by Mark Troy. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger