

Revised Minutes
Contra Costa County IPM Advisory Committee
Subcommittee on IPM Decision-Making
October 27, 2016

Members present: Andrew Sutherland (chair), Jim Cartan, Jim Donnelly, Larry Yost

Members absent: Susan Captain

Staff present: Jill Ray, Supervisor Andersen's office; Jason Chen and Victoria Skerritt, Public Works Special Districts; Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator

Members of the public present: Ben Pittenger, Richmond resident; Susan JunFish, Parents for a Safer Environment

1. Introductions

2. Public comment on items not on the agenda

Susan JunFish read a comment on pesticides and cancer.

3. Approve minutes from September 15, 2016

Public Comment

Susan JunFish questioned the wording of a comment by Susan Captain under #4 and the wording of her own comment under #4.

Susan Captain was absent and could not clarify her statement. Susan JunFish will send the recording of the meeting to the IPM Coordinator to check the wording.

Approving the minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

4. Discuss decision-making documents, vertebrate pest manager purchase order, and landscape standards with Special Districts manager

Jason Chen, acting Special Districts Manager provided the following information to the committee:

- He will be managing Special Districts until a replacement is found for Susan Cohen who retired.
- Special Districts does not typically provide landscape services, but if a community wants to assess itself to pay for the services, Special Districts can provide them through contractors or the County Grounds Division.

Contracts and purchase orders

- Contracts are not on fiscal year schedule. Some will be coming up for renewal next year.
- Jon Katayanagi, the vertebrate pest manager, is the only contractor providing pest management services for Special Districts.
- The new Special Districts manager will be overseeing purchase orders and contracts, just as the former manager was.
- Staff is in continuous communication with the vertebrate pest manager to be sure he is doing what is wanted and that sufficient funds are available for the work.
- The vertebrate pest manager is hired through a purchase order and not a contract. The purchase order is up in November 2017.
- In the past, it has been difficult for Special Districts to get qualified applicants for vertebrate pest work through formal solicitations. Solicitations are costly to develop and manage, and many qualified companies are unwilling to apply for such a small amount of work (the purchase order is only for a maximum of \$10K per year).

Funding for Special Districts

- Some Special Districts zones were formed a long time ago and didn't build in an assessment escalator, so over the years they have become underfunded.

- The only way to increase fees in Special Districts is to put it to a public vote. This is very expensive and the process may cost more than the total assessment for the zone. There is always a good chance that the public may reject assessing themselves the increased fees.
- Residents vary in their involvement in the activities of the Special District.
- Special Districts staff meet regularly with the residents of the various zones and engage in outreach to the community. A good deal of time has been spent looking at alternatives to pesticides. The mind set in Special Districts has changed: no longer do they jump immediately to a chemical solution. The vertebrate pest manager is paid to monitor the sites under management and he only takes action if a threshold is reached. Trapping is an integral part of his work.

Public Works Landscape Standards

- At a minimum, the Standards are reviewed every four years, but they can be reviewed and revised as needed. The subcommittee is welcome to make recommendations on revisions and additions.

Public Comment

Comments from Susan JunFish and Ben Pittenger included the following:

- Can't believe that people are not aware of or care about what is going on with pest management in their Special District.
- The County should set up community meetings to explain pest management.
- Don't hire a generically trained person. Look for a contractor who is willing to actively research alternatives.
- Need to include language in the gopher decision-making document to maximize biocontrol and not automatically move to chemical controls because they can harm the biocontrols.
- ~~The current vertebrate pest manager is not qualified. He should be sent to the training that Parents for a Safer Environment will be holding in January with Chip Osbourne.~~

5. Hear reports from committee members on contacting vegetation managers in surrounding counties

This item was discussed briefly and it was agreed to have it on the agenda for the next meeting.

6. Discuss decision document for gopher management in Special Districts

This item will be taken up at the next meeting. The possibility of having the vertebrate pest manager come to the next meeting was raised, but there was concern about his feeling attacked in the meeting.

Public Comment

Susan JunFish had concerns about the document and will send the IPM Coordinator a list of those issues.

7. Discuss topics and speakers for future subcommittee or full committee meetings

Suggestions:

- Peter Gollinger from Contra Costa County roadside vegetation management
- Vegetation managers from other counties
 - There was concern that it may be difficult to have these managers come to Contra Costa to talk to the committee—they are paid to do vegetation management and making a presentation to another county may not be considered part of their job.
 - The IPM Coordinator will speak with Peter Gollinger about what the committee is proposing to get his opinion on how to get the vegetation managers to come to the committee.
 - San Mateo County uses only mowing along their roadsides and Yolo County uses only spraying. It would be interesting to hear from those two counties.

8. Plan next agenda

Next Meeting: December 12, 10:00 am to noon

- Discuss suggestions for improvement in the County's Landscape Standards
- Hear information from Andrew Sutherland about gopher management in schools
- Approve the gopher decision document
- Discuss a method for displaying the information gleaned from other counties on their vegetation management along roadsides and flood control channels.
- Plan work for next year