

Ponds/Healthy Watersheds, 11/16/24

To: Planning Board, re follow up to April visioning workshop

Dear Board Members,

We have met 12 times since the visioning workshop in April, deliberating issues that impact the health of our watersheds and waterbodies.

This letter and attached spreadsheet are a distillation of all of our conversations.

We drafted a one page handout (attached) that was distributed at the annual August meeting of the Tisbury Great Pond riparian owners; members of our group gave a short presentation. This handout urged riparian owners to eliminate the use of lawn fertilizer, limit the size of their lawns, have their septic systems tested and upgraded as needed, and to preserve/maintain natural vegetated buffer zones adjacent to wetland resource areas. Riparian owners present voluntarily and unanimously (save for one owner who wanted to do more research) to self impose a ban on fertilizer on their properties. The same flyer was distributed to James Pond riparian owners.

We met several times with the West Tisbury conservation commission to request that they add two new regulations to their local bylaw regulations. These regulations, passed unanimously by the board after an advertised public hearing, prohibit the use of fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides and insecticides (including Permethrin and pyrethroid products) within the 100' Buffer Zone, AND within the 200' Riverfront Area.

We also plan to meet with the West Tisbury board of health to urge them to amend existing fertilizer regulations to be consistent with revised conservation commission regulations. Existing board of health regulations allow the application of fertilizer within 10' of any wetland resource area.

The attached spreadsheet is our attempt to collate the issues impacting our water resources, identify the existing responsible entities, and list possible goals/actions. We understand that our town boards and employees work incredibly hard. It also appears that many boards/departments are overwhelmed by the sheer number of development applications.

We suggest that the town consider a new position that would augment existing efforts, and coordinate any issues that fall under the heading of 'natural resources'. You will see this suggestion listed under the 'Goals/Actions' column. We feel that the town has reached a point in its growth, and with even larger issues of water quality and wastewater management planning coming our way from the state level, that creating such a full-time position is the next logical step

Thank you,

Nelia Decker, Laura Murphy, Prudy Burt, James Graham, Valerie Becker, Sue Hruby, Roberta Kirn.