

Council Chair Jay Trickett's Presentation, 2/24 Mtg

Falmouth Town Council**

Video Time 1:51 - 2:17, ~26 min. duration

The following is a combination of paraphrase and direct quotes. This is a summary of the Chair's statement, as one of the two dissenting votes on the 7 member Town Council. I encourage all to view and listen to the entire discussion of the Pesticide Ordinance, Item No. 7, reference website noted below.

David Andrews

Introduction: I continue to feel like this is a mistake, and I am going to vote against it.

I acknowledge the time, effort and compromise that has been provided by our Conservation Commission Chair.

This is not a criticism of people who have worked on this.

This ordinance will have the most profound impact on Falmouth residents of any action taken by this town government since I have lived here for 12 years.

No single issue has generated more unsolicited public feedback.

We don't know if the majority of the community supports this ordinance.

I raised the issue of doing another survey, no other counselor was interested in doing such.

600 responses to our initial survey, more than we have ever seen, 378 respondents opposed.

(Time 1:55:25)

This has more direct impact on people, property management, and for some, livelihood, than any action we have taken.

Our obligation is to approach such an issue with humility.

Community must trust that we knew what we were doing.

I admit that I am not personally competent to do a full analysis of this issue.

At state level we have the experts who have this as a full time job.

I am not a scientist, I went to law school. We need real experts to answer these questions.

(Time 2:02:40)

This is in contrast to what happens at federal government.

Congress creates law with broad legislative goals, and they then fund experts to make the detailed rules, and these agencies continue to monitor and study the issue after enactment.

How can we be in a position to make a call that the state got the neonicotinoid issue wrong?

The state Board (of Pesticide Control) experts took a year to create the allowed neonicotinoid applications, but we concluded that state scientists were wrong.

(Time 2:06:55)

Given the impact that this ordinance is going to have on both people and the environment, I think we have gone too far in taking that on, not only today, but going forward.

We can't credibly undertake this action. We don't have the staff, the resources, we don't have the money, and we don't have the expertise in house.

No one disagrees that we have a fertilizer problem.

If this were a fertilizer ordinance, I could have potentially supported it.

The EPA has an entire office, 600 employees, \$135 M budget, mostly scientists and physicians, who evaluate pesticides.

What we did in Falmouth though, is instead, we looked to the National List of prohibited and approved substances. Was that list created by EPA, CDC, NIH?

No. It was created by the US Dept of Agriculture, and the purpose of it is to identify the substances that can and cannot be used while still being certified as an organic farmer. It is not primarily about public or environmental health.

(Time 2:12:14)

Councilor Trickett presents example of how this approach is flawed:

Copper sulfate is a fungicide that is a non-synthetic substance, and on the approved list, but it is water soluble, highly toxic to honey bees, highly toxic to aquatic life, and it doesn't go away. It may also cause kidney cancer (with occupational exposure, per on-line state material).

There are synthetic fungicides that are environmentally safer than copper sulfate, but these would not be permitted in Falmouth, not being permitted per the National List.

The National List is not designed for what we are using it.

This is very concerning, and that's only one example. The neonicotinoid issue is another.

This ordinance, though well intentioned, ... nobody in Falmouth has the resources or expertise, .. that we should say to the state and Federal government, what you are doing is wrong.

The community should not trust us with this ordinance.

I am deeply concerned that this is going to erode further the public confidence in the town government.

(Time 2:17:10)

Paraphrased conclusion: I applaud the efforts of the Conservation Commission and the Council, but I think this is a mistake for us to do.

Reference:

Falmouth website: <https://play.champds.com/falmouthme/event/3183>

Feb 24th Meeting, Scroll down to Agenda Item 7.

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****The vote taken on February 24 was declared void as the ordinance had not gone before the Board of Pesticide Control for review, as required by statute. Another vote is now scheduled for the March 24 Council meeting.**