

May 12 Town Council Speech

I have been asking one simple question of the Town Council and to date no one has given me an answer.

What retail fertilizer meets the following proposed Ordinance's requirements?

- A maximum of 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year.
- A maximum of 1 pound of phosphorous per 1,000 square feet per year.
- Application limited to two times per year.
- Allowed fertilizers shall be applied according to manufacturer's instructions.

The organic fertilizer manufacturer's instructions in the "approved section" at Falmouth stores state that fertilizers should be applied 4 times per year in early spring, late spring, late summer, and fall. Falmouth stores recommended Organic fertilizers as their solution to the Ordinance. They do not meet the Ordinance requirements. I cannot find a fertilizer that does. After extensive Google and Amazon searches, I found eleven retail organic fertilizer manufacturers and they all recommended 4 or 5 applications per year. The major manufacturers have different fertilizer products for each season because lawns need different nutrients in spring, during summer heat and in preparation for winter.

Fertilizer instructions explain how to apply medicine to your lawn. They provide the dose and how often to take the medicine. The doses vary from 3 to 6 ½ lbs. per 1,000 square feet and manufacturers simplify the dose by recommending spreader settings. Instructions say a new dose is needed every 6 to 8 weeks. That is simplified to early spring, late spring, late summer and fall.

The proposed Ordinance also states that "Violators of this Ordinance may be subject to a penalty of \$250 for the first violation and shall be subject to

a penalty, per violation, of not more than \$1,000 for each subsequent violation.”

Therefore, homeowners are subject to a \$250 fine for the 3rd fertilizer application and possibly \$1,000 fine for the 4th application.

First, if the Ordinance had been prepared by professionals, the limit of 2 applications per year would not have been in the Ordinance. The State of Maine athletic field Best Practices recommend 2-4 lbs. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet annually applied 7-10 times during the year. Scientists at Kansas State University recommend 2-4 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet with 3-4 applications per year. The proposed Ordinance maximum of 2 lbs. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet is the minimum that our lawns need to be healthy.

Second, if the Ordinance had been prepared by professionals, they would have permitted the treatment of tree diseases. Falmouth’s proposed ordinance is the only one in the State of Maine that would not allow these treatments.

My conclusion is simple. The proposed Ordinance was not prepared by professionals.

Most Falmouth homeowners do not use professional applicators. They select fertilizer, figure out spreader settings, mow and do weed control. It is a personal preference – not just a financial one. On my street in the Woodlands, 4 of 9 homeowners do all the work themselves to maintain their lawns.

Falmouth homeowners deserve an answer!

What retail fertilizer meets the proposed Ordinance’s requirements?

I am not an attorney but with the magnitude of the ordinance flaws, it would not surprise me if a class action lawsuit is filed against the Town.

Professional applicators have suffered financial losses, and if passed, will suffer more losses from the proposed regulations.

