



Office of the Mayor

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To: Madison Food Policy Council

From: Mark Woulf, Food and Alcohol Policy Director

Re: Summary of Committee Action and Staff Recommendation – Pollinator Protection Task Force Report and Resolution

At the direction of the Mayor and Common Council, the Madison Food Policy Council was charged with the convening and overseeing of the work of the Pollinator Protection Task Force (PPTF). The PPTF met 16 times since December 2014 to research the issue of pollinator loss, learn about city department procedures and practices, and develop recommendations to improve the health and habitat of pollinators.

The PPTF completed its work in August 2015 and issued a report of its findings and recommendations. The content of the report and the accompanying resolution are currently up for your review. Several committees/commissions were referred the report and resolution; here is a summary of their actions (most recent listed first):

Community Gardens Committee recommended adoption of the report and resolution revising #2(c) to include references to the Terrace Rain Garden Program and Edible Landscape and Terrace Planting Ordinances on page 27.

Parks Commission recommended adoption of the report and resolution with the following change on Recommendation #1 on page 25 regarding neonicotinoid pesticides.

Parks' recommended language is "Consider additional neonicotinoid regulations and/or management practices, e.g. banning neonicotinoids on city land, and/or regulations on time of application. Timeframe: Medium."

This would replace the current language in the report of: The PPTF's recommendation was "Adopt a City ordinance banning the use of neonicotinoids on all City-owned land and property. Timeframe: Short."

Board of Public Works recommended adoption of the report and resolution. Engineering reported that additional staff are requested in the 2016 Operating Budget to assist with the more targeted mowing of greenway areas, consistent with recommendations in the report.

Water Utility Board recommended adoption of the report and resolution with little discussion. The General Manager responded that the WU does have significant land holdings, mostly in small parcels; he's supportive of less mowing and they'll do what they can, but noted that public expectations have to be taken into account.

Sustainable Madison Committee recommended adoption of the report and resolution. Members raised some concern about the compatibility of the terrace planting ordinance with goals of PPTF, particularly the height of plantings which can vary from year to year and their distance from the curb.

Committee on the Environment recommended adoption of the report and resolution. Comments included a request to prioritize updating the "natural lawns" ordinance to support goals of PPTF; Alder Wood said he would pursue.

Staff Recommendation

Your role as the lead committee in reviewing this report and resolution is to reconcile and provide input on any conflicting referral committee actions to provide a clear recommendation to the Common Council. There are not conflicting committee actions in this case; however, there are several requested additions that require your consideration. Several requests are related to emphasizing certain parts of the report or recommendations. One specific request is from the Parks Commission to alter language to a policy recommendation.

This report is critical to guide city action and practices as it relates to pollinator health. Major components of the recommendations are related to public land management, education, and partnerships. While it is important to debate the policy implications of several of these recommendations, the report itself was never intended to be the medium for that debate. What is more important at this stage is for the report to be adopted with full city department and committee support.

My recommendation is for the Madison Food Policy Council to recommend the adoption of the report and resolution with alterations to the report that incorporate the Parks Commission and Community Gardens Committee's recommended actions.

The MFPC should also review its responsibility for oversight of the implementation process. My recommendation is that a work group of the MFPC takes the responsibility to monitor progress on the implementation of the report. It will be helpful to have a citizen-oriented body oversee process, especially to continue building partnerships and promote accountability. The current language in the resolution allows the flexibility for the MFPC to create a new or utilize an existing work group.

Thank you for your consideration.