Request of Applications for Healthy Outdoor Public Spaces (HOPS) Advisory Committee

Background

In December 2020, Philadelphia's City Council unanimously voted to pass the Healthy Outdoor Public Space bill (HOPS: bill #200425). The following month, the bill was enacted into law.  HOPS authorized: 1) a timeline for a ban on synthetic herbicide use on city-owned & leased grounds; 2) the creation of an Organic Land Management Plan; 3) reporting requirements for all other synthetic pesticide use on public grounds, 4) the creation of a HOPS Advisory Committee within the Public Health Department, and 5) a waiver process to seek permission for the use of synthetic herbicides in certain limited emergency situations.

Purpose of HOPS Advisory Committee

The purpose of the HOPS Advisory Committee as outlined in the law is to convene a group knowledgeable about environmental justice, the toxic effects of synthetic herbicides and organic land management to support the overall implementation of the law.  The Committee is charged with reviewing and either denying or accepting waiver applications for permissible use of synthetic herbicides on public grounds according to a waiver process.  The bill outlines the limited circumstances in which a waiver shall be granted.

Duties of this committee include, but are not limited to:

1. Act as a resource and make recommendations to the city land managers on organic land management best practices to support the mandate of the law to transition to organic land management;
2. Establish and administer a process for waivers in accordance with the requirements of the law;
3. Advise the Health Department on the creation of a pesticide reporting protocol for all city departments and entities that must comply with the law that includes the information required by the law and a summary analysis of pesticide usage by all departments;
4. Review the pesticide report annually and verify accuracy to ensure all departments and entities are complying with the law;
5. Ensure transparency by informing the public through an annual report published on the Health Department website that includes the pesticide report and an analysis of the spatial distribution of pesticides applied throughout the city and addressing the public health and environmental implications of pesticide application as reported by the Department of Records;
6. Advise the Health Department on the establishment of a public education program about the dangers and harms of synthetic pesticides.
7. Interface with the Environmental Justice Commission regarding pesticide use reduction, reporting, and public health impacts in Environmental Justice communities.

Individuals to serve on the Committee must:

* Commit to a minimum of 4 full committee meetings per year.
* Be able and willing to work a possible additional 10-15 hours per month. This may include time in meetings, reviewing waiver applications, reviewing pesticide use reports, and/or researching best or new practices in organic land management.
* Commit to serving a 3 year term.
* Fulfill **one** of three areas of expertise:
  + Have a minimum of 2 years experience in environmental justice advocacy.
  + Or, have a minimum of 2 years experience in organic land care management. At least one if not all members shall be accredited by the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA), Rutgers University in Organic Land Care, or comparable institution.
  + Or, hold a PhD, MPH or MD with a specialization in Environmental Health, Occupational Health, or Environmental Epidemiology with knowledge of the research pertaining to synthetic pesticide exposures.

Additional desirable traits in committee members include:

* Experience in and commitment to advancing environmental justice in their neighborhood and the larger Philadelphia community. Experience working for an environmental justice advocacy group directly representing communities that experience exposure to environmental pollution is a plus.
* Be knowledgeable of the myriad ways in which toxic herbicide use impacts public health, which can include anything from personal experience to robust peer-reviewed scientific findings.
* Practical experience in organic land management and in eliminating synthetic herbicides from land management practices.
* Be able and willing to work with colleagues from different fields, communicating different points of view towards a common cause of protecting the public welfare.

**How to Apply**

The deadline to apply is May 22, 2022, at midnight. Submit an application through the online form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqFO_MG7euGLlYKekEdIwEz4NrC8Kaxg4cF_uTUsPkloKmXQ/viewform?usp=sf_link>