

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 11, 2023
Virtual Meeting

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, Alicia Reddin

MEMBERS ABSENT

Peter Sheckman

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Jeffrey Vaughan, Director of Public Health; Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse

OPEN MEETING

- The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

- Tabled until next meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER

- Alicia Reddin has been elected to the Board of Health. Reddin moved to Swampscott last year and has a history of doing work with public health, public safety, and public services. She is a veteran and currently works as a learning and development consultant for the company DoorDash

OFFICIALLY VOTE BOH MEMBER TO SWAC

- On MOTION from Reddin and SECONDED by Hartmann, the Board of Health voted to appoint Peter Sheckman to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Roll call: Hartmann (yes), Reddin (yes)

BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH SWAC CHAIR REGARDING PLASTIC TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS

- Wayne Spritz from Solid Waste Advisory Committee joined the meeting to discuss the article in the upcoming Annual Town Meeting warrant which will ban single use plastic in town

- The Solid Waste Advisory Committee exists to advise the town regarding solid waste and perform outreach
- The Town Administrator drafted a bylaw change to ban single use plastic
- The SWAC proposes indefinite postponement on this article. SWAC has also voted to create a working group to study the use of single use takeout plastics in the Town's food and beverage businesses. There will be four main components to this study:
 - Reduce Swampscott's food and beverage plastic footprint
 - Policy construction & process
 - Food packaging health considerations
 - Food waste diversion
- The SWAC wants to ensure that the alternative non-single use plastic products including "compostable" and "bio-degradable" packaging are safe for use if switched over. The SWAC is asking the BOH to consider a motion to study PFAS family chemicals used in the food and beverage industry and recommend any actions necessary to protect the health of the town's residents and the perpetuation of these forever chemicals in the waste stream
- Currently, several states have implemented or set a date to implement the ban of packaging with PFAS. A similar bill is currently before the MA senate.
- The SWAC would like to draft a policy recommendation to the Select Board for a new or amended bylaw consideration before the next fall Town Meeting. Guidance from the BOH is fundamental to creating a comprehensive policy package. The SWAC is asking the BOH to consider a motion to study PFAS family chemicals used in the food and beverage industry and recommend any further action which would educate residents and restrict their presence in food and beverage packaging and other points of direct contact including cooking surfaces in the Town of Swampscott. They would also like the BOH voted to evaluate whether there is a concern about plasticizing chemicals leaching into food and beverages when using non-PFAS "traditional" plastics used for single use food and beverage containers and whether that danger is enhanced if food or beverages are reheated in said containers. The study would include:
 - Evaluation of medical literature, FDA guidance, CDC guidance, and other established peer reviewed public bodies of evidence
 - Evaluation of current pending MA legislation and others States who currently have regulations for PFAS in f&b packaging
 - Public input including food and beverage businesses, professional associations, and environmental groups
 - Evaluation and current status of third party PFAS-free certification options and alternative materials in the marketplace
- On MOTION from Hartmann and SECONDED by Reddin, the BOH voted to study and evaluate the above. The motion unanimously passed

PH NURSE / PH EMERGENCY MGMT. COORDINATOR UPDATE

COVID UPDATES

- Both the Federal and State public health emergencies end today, May 11, 2023
- Access to Covid-19 vaccines will generally not be affected for now. They will still be available for free while supplies last. The cost of PCR tests is going to go up regardless of health insurance

coverage status. Having access to free at-home testing will depend greatly on which insurance someone has

- Medication to prevent severe Covid-19, such as Paxlovid, will remain available for free while supplies last. After that, the price will be determined by the medication manufacturer and your health insurance coverage
- Some Pilot brand test kits were recalled by the FDA.
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (MDPH) Public Health Emergency Order directing universal facemask use for all individuals, including healthcare personnel (HCP) in health care settings will also terminate on May 11th. All HCP should return to using PPE, including facemasks if indicated as part of transmission-based precautions, in accordance with DPH return to work guidance and as outlined in their health care provider's policies and procedures, including evidence-based infection prevention and control policies and procedures. All healthcare providers will need to continue to make face masks available to health care personnel and patients.
- Health care facilities and EMS:
 - Are expected to develop and update their infection prevention and control policies to incorporate actions the licensee will take to mitigate the risk of transmission of respiratory illness, including but not limited to COVID-19 and influenza, within their facilities, particularly during periods when there are increased levels of respiratory illness in their communities
 - Should identify and monitor respiratory illness metrics to indicate when there are increased levels which necessitate implementing additional infection control measures
- There are no changes to the isolation, exposure, and quarantine guidance (same guidance since fall 2022)
- As of May 11, 2023, Swampscott has had 4320 lab-confirmed cases. This total does not include at-home tests or presumed positives
- Average Daily Incidence Rate as of May 4, 2023 was 2.4
- As of May 4, 2023, Essex County has a rating of "yellow" or "moderate transmission (lab-confirmed cases only). Massachusetts as a community level is at the "green" or "low" level.
- Dominant variants:
 - XBB.1.5 – 66.9%
 - XBB.1.16 – 12.5%
 - XBB.1.9.1 – 9.4%

OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATES

- Supporting/participating in regional events:
 - PHE meetings
 - PHN meetings
 - NS MVP
 - Diaper Drive
 - Took place in April. Very successful
- Emergency preparedness
- Climate change
 - The Health Department is working on a climate change initiative with the Senior Center to educate residents about the effects of climate change, educate residents about the benefits of composting, increase the number of residents that compost, and implement a composting program at the Senior Center

- Narcan distribution program update
 - The program has launched. Information is available on the town website. Following a meeting with Neia and educational training, residents can receive free Narcan and free fentanyl test strips. The Town is also hosting training sessions. The next trainings are scheduled in June. Registration is required but personal information (including your name) does not need to be provided, it is simply to get a headcount and make sure an adequate number of kits are available

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

- Permit renewal information has been sent out.
- Jeff has visited food permit establishments to see how they are doing on the new bylaw changes regarding plastic straws and plastic bags. Jeff visited 60 establishments. Around 7 were still using plastic straws. They received verbal warnings. If they are still using plastic straws at Jeff's follow up visit, they will receive a fine.
- Jeff spoke to the Facilities Director regarding rodent issues. The Facilities Director informed Jeff that pest control companies have changed their products to poison/ingredients that reduce the risk of secondary poisonings (ie. if a bird eats a rat that has been poisoned, the bird will not be poisoned)

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOH

- Hartmann asked Jeff if he has any update on the restaurant that will be going into the former Zestfriendz space. They are not quite ready yet

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting has been scheduled for Monday, June 12th at 6 PM

ADJOURN

- On MOTION by Reddin and SECONDED by Hartmann, it was VOTED by roll call to adjourn the meeting: Hartmann (yes), Reddin (yes)
- The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM

True Attest,

Brittney Jones