

Town of Concord
Board of Health

Minutes of the Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2016

PRESENT: Dr. Alan Woodward, Chairman
Ray Considine
Jack Bergman

Susan G. Rask, Public Health Director
Karen M. Byrne, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS: Deborah Farnsworth, BOH Liaison for 2229 Main Street Oversight
Committee; Walter Congram, resident; Janet Miller, resident; Philip Swaim

1. Open Meeting

The meeting opened at approximately 7:00 p.m.

2. Update from 2229 Main Street Committee

The Board met with Deborah Farnsworth, BOH Liaison to the 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee to provide it with a progress report of the cleanup since September 2015 and the committee's last technical meeting with the EPA on December 9, 2015 as well as an update from Melissa Taylor, EPA Project Manager for the project. Ms. Farnsworth stated that all the equipment on the building rooftops had been removed with the exception of piece of machinery and that all perimeter air monitoring results (for dust) collected during that endeavor were "non-detect" to which she attributed to the diligence by the EPA and contractors for the time consuming efforts used to control dust during the demolition of this operation. Prior to the anticipated removal of the actual structures, Ms. Farnsworth noted that EPA plans to install sub-slabs under the buildings and installed borings for groundwater monitoring to obtain information if anything was under the buildings prior to removal – that is slated for January/February 2016. At the Committee's meeting earlier in the morning, Melissa Taylor advised it that the EPA had contracted with Energy Solutions to dispose of the radioactive material (Depleted Uranium) from the site to Utah. Additionally, Ms. Taylor informed the committee that all of the radioactive materials have been removed from the site and that the buildings are now "empty shells" – all excellent news.

At the same meeting, the Committee and EPA representatives reviewed and discussed at length the groundwater monitoring studies conducted in 2015, specifically, the issue of 1.4-dioxine heading towards the Assabet River. To further fill in some of the data gaps, she noted that there was a proposal to install additional groundwater monitoring wells on the other side of the river within the next week and those results would be available shortly, but that at this point, the data available indicates a fairly clear picture that the 1.4-dioxine was indeed going under the river and affecting the Town of Acton's water supply (a position that Ms. Farnsworth noted representatives from Acton were taking). She reviewed the report closely and in her opinion, felt the conclusions of the EPA and its' consultants were correct. Ms. Farnsworth provided the Board with a copy of a

map showing the cross-sections of data collection, monitoring wells and color-coded index of contaminants collected. The detection limit for the 1,4-dioxin is .466 ppb's and that one of the readings collected was 47 ppb which is considerable for that contaminant.¹

In closing, Ms. Farnsworth said at this point, the primary concern for additional "action" was on the other side of the river (Acton) and determining what mitigation plans the EPA would put in place to remedy the situation. Board members found it unusual that the EPA would classify the elevated 1-4 dioxin cleanup as "Non-Critical Removal Action – NTCRA". PHD Director Rask stated that due the potential impact on Acton's water supply the EPA has already expedited this plan and was designing a treatment plan for quick implementation.

Board members thanked Ms. Farnsworth for her report and continued efforts as the liaison.

3. DISCUSSION – Proposed Signage at Artificial Turf Fields

Background

At the April 2015 meeting, the Board discussed language for possible turf field signage that included the following draft language:

The Concord Board of Health Encourages All Those Using Artificial Turf Fields To:

1. Wash hands and other exposed body areas after playing on fields, and before eating and drinking.
2. Avoid transferring dust and fibers to other locations (e.g. after using the field, turn clothing inside out as soon as possible, remove shoes and clothing before entering a home.
3. Keep water bottle nozzles, food containers, and other beverages closed in bags/coolers when not drinking.
4. Watch for signs of heat related illness and dehydration – fields can get excessively hot on warm and sunny days. On hot days, increase hydration and take frequent breaks to cool off.
5. Wear protective clothing to avoid abrasions. Treat skin abrasions promptly to prevent potential infections.

At that time, the Board directed staff to contact other communities where this issue had been controversial and to inquire whether they had posted signage on fields that had artificial turf.²

Discussion

Public Health Director Rask provided the language used for signage from both the towns of Medway and Needham respectively, two of the places where artificial turf fields had been controversial and the Board discussed at length. It also reviewed proposed language drafted by Dr. Alan Woodward and Tom McKean incorporating points most pertinent as it related to possible signage in Concord. Dr. Woodward reminded Board members as well as the audience that the

¹ Draft copy of Map provided by Geosyntec dated December 2015

² Examples of language and signage from the Towns of Medway and Needham respectively

Board of Health did not have enforcement authority to order the School Department or the Town to install signage, but could make recommendations it deemed appropriate relative to potential health concerns. PHD Rask also conveyed the general consensus by the School Committee via email correspondence with School Committee member Kathi Snook³ that signage was not necessary.

Following a lengthy discussion and careful consideration during many meetings the consensus of Board members was that it was within its' purview as a Public Health entity to make limited recommendations (for signs) based on the information presented over the past several months relative to the potential health impacts of artificial turf fields, with the caveat that participants on natural turf fields also be advised to adhere to those same recommendations. Therefore, Jack Bergman moved that the following language be forwarded to the Town Manager for consideration:

Field Precautions

1. Be aware that on hot days the temperature may be higher on synthetic turf fields than on natural turf. On hot days, on all fields, use caution, take frequent breaks and increase hydration.
2. After playing on field, wash hands and face before eating or drinking.
3. Minimize potential skin abrasions by wearing appropriate protective equipment and treat abrasions promptly to prevent potential infection.
4. At the end of play on synthetic turf fields, dust clothes and clean or remove shoes to avoid tracking crumb rubber off the field.

Ray Considine seconded it. All VOTED in favor.

The Board directed PHD Rask to forward its' recommendations to the Town Manager for input and perhaps review by other appropriate parties (Town Counsel and insurance carrier) prior to sending it to the School Committee.

Audience members Walter Comgram and Janet Miller both thanked the Board for its consideration to recommend proposed signage language to School Committee and Town Manager and appreciated the clear statement its' recommendation. Mr. Comgram added that he hoped the School Committee and/or whomever the appropriate authorities were to authorize the signage would be receptive. Dr. Woodward also mentioned that he would share what the Board of Health discussed at the Chair breakfast (1/20/16).

4. SEPTIC BETTERMENT LOAN PROGRAM

Final Betterment Lien Assessments

Karen Byrne advised the Board that the on-site sewage disposal system for the following property had been completed and all invoices processed:

- 299 Park Lane (\$26,665) – Park/On

³ Email correspondence dated 12/10/15

Staff requested that the Board issue the Order to Assess the Betterment.

Jack Bergman moved that the Board VOTE to issue the Order to Assess the Betterment for the above mentioned property in the amount of (\$26,665) and that such Order be forwarded to the Town Collector. Ray Considine seconded it. All VOTED in favor.

5. CHAIRMAN & BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Dr. Woodward informed the Board that his 3 year term as Chairman on the Tobacco Free Massachusetts had ended and that Linda Young, another member and past President of Mass Medical had taken over that position. He expected an omnibus bill later in January that would put Massachusetts on the forefront of tobacco control if passed by the House and Senate and signed by the Governor with whom Dr. Woodward expected to meet next week for preliminary discussions.

Dr. Woodward also mentioned that the Public Health Leadership Forum (at Mass Medical Society) would be on gun violence as it relates to public health with experts from around the country speaking on the topic. He noted that an invitation had been extended to President Obama and although it was unlikely he would be in attendance due to significant security/public safety issues, an offer was extended for him to do a video presentation and/or send an article for publication in the New England Journal of Medicine to get him some credibility on the topic.

PHD Rask said that she was thrilled that public health was taking this issue on. Dr. Woodward stated that the issues of inter-personal, domestic and gun violence are some of the greatest public health crises currently faced. Board members Jack Bergman and Ray Considine concurred. Mr. Bergman reiterated a public position the Board of Health had taken following the horrific events of Sandy Hook and felt at that time it would be a “no-brainer” for stronger public policies or at minimum redefinitions but clearly that had not been the case in his opinion. Mr. Considine noted the confirmation of the President’s appointment for Surgeon General was recently held up due to his “anti-gun” position which he personally found amazing. Board members expressed strong support and felt public health efforts to address these issues should be applauded. Dr. Woodward closed by providing the Board and audience with the website for the conference that had the agenda and list of presenters.

6. STAFF REPORTS

Water Quality – Concord Middle Schools

PHD Rask provided the Board with a copy of the Water Quality Screening report by OccuHealth, Inc.⁴ (OHI) of drinking water assessments conducted on October 23, 2015 for Peabody, Sanborn Middle Schools and Pre-School at the Ripley Building. All samples collected for lead, total coliform, fecal coliform and E. Coli tested negative and/or well-below action levels.

Board Membership

Staff provided the Board with a copy of APP #10 – Policy for Boards & Committees Seeking New Members for its review in anticipation for two upcoming vacancies on the Board in

⁴ OHI Testing Report dated 11/16/15

May 2016. Following a brief discussion, Board members reiterated strongly their belief that the Board of Health warranted members with specialized expertise (legal, medical, nursing, etc.) due to the broad scope of issues it dealt with and felt that concern needed to be conveyed to the Town Manager (who is the appointing authority). Dr. Woodward advised that he would discuss it at the Chair Breakfast the following day.

Cancer Incidence in Massachusetts 2007-2011

Staff submitted the Board with a copy of the Cancer Incidence in Massachusetts 2007-2011, City and Town Supplement provided by the Department of Public Health. Although there were not any alarming statistics specifically, the Board did note a slightly higher than average percentage of reported melanoma of skin (in males). It directed staff to reach out to some local dermatologists and get their feedback on what is seen in their practices and perhaps write an article for the Concord Journal reminding people on the importance of sun screen and prevention. PHD Rask noted (unrelated to this study) the Concord Schools were redoubling their sun prevention education and considering installing sun screen dispensaries.

Drinking Water Well Variance

The owner of 695 Monument Street withdrew her petition for a variance to use a converted irrigation well for drinking water (when town water was available). After meeting with the Board in December and following extensive conversations with the Water Department the applicant decided that it was much more complicated than originally thought and would be reconnecting to the municipal system within the month.

7. MINUTES AND BOARD CALENDAR

The Board reviewed and discussed the minutes from the November 17, 2015 meeting. Ray Considine moved to approve as submitted. Jack Bergman seconded it. All VOTED in favor.

The Board reviewed the calendar for upcoming meetings – there were no changes. The next regular BOH meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:05 p.m.

Board of Health
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Respectfully submitted,

Karen M. O'Keefe-Byrne, Administrative Assistant
Concord Board of Health

Dr. Alan Woodward, Chairman

Ray Considine

Jack Bergman