

Harvard Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, August 25, 2020
Approved: September 8, 2020

Board of Health Members present: Sharon McCarthy, Chair; Chris Mitchell; Libby Levison.

Attending: Ira Grossman, Health Agent, Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (“NABH”); Alison Flynn, Clerk, Harvard Board of Health (“BOH”); Joan Eliyesil, The Harvard Press; Bruce Leicher, Chair, Bare Hill Pond Management Committee.

Ms. McCarthy called the meeting to order 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Flynn read aloud the Remote Meeting Preamble.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Leicher stated that the Bare Hill Pond’s wetlands consultant, Wendy Gendron, brought the algal bloom to Mr. Leicher’s attention the week of Saturday, August 22nd, and thanked Mr. Grossman for coming to the Pond to inspect the algae. Mr. Leicher also explained that he subsequently spoke with Marc Nascarella, Director of the Environmental Toxicology Program at the Department of Public Health (DPH), who advised Mr. Leicher that it would be important for Mr. Grossman to take a look at the algae at minimum, as done, and to test the algae to rule-out toxicity if they would like the Pond opened for resident use. Ms. McCarthy asked that response to Mr. Leicher be held until Ms. Flynn can share information received from DPH that afternoon under Clerk Update.

Ms. Eliyesil asked to reserve the right to ask questions until the end of the meeting; Ms. McCarthy agreed. Later in the meeting, Ms. Eliyesil asked whether it was the BOH who closed the beach; Mr. Grossman and the members confirmed that it was closed for swimming by the BOH. Mr. Grossman explained that it was closed because of a lack of water clarity. Mr. Mitchell added that if the clarity of the water improves to the point that the BOH considers the water safe, the BOH would consider allowing swimming. Ms. McCarthy explained that the purpose of the testing that Mr. Leicher described is to determine toxicity; Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Grossman confirmed that toxicity was not the basis of the closure at the current time. Mr. Grossman stated that the BOH was waiting until they hear back from DPH regarding whether DPH can do the cyanobacteria testing before posting a warning to keep animals out of the Pond. Ms. McCarthy agreed to write to DPH to ask more about what testing they are offering, and how soon results can be expected. She agreed to advise Ms. Eliyesil of the answers received.

MINUTES

Ms. Levison made a motion to approve the minutes of 7/28/20 as amended; Mr. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor by roll call vote.

Ms. Levison made a motion to approve the minutes of 8/3/20 as written; Mr. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor by roll call vote.

The Members discussed the decisions made at the meeting of 8/11/20 regarding restrictive covenant and bedroom deed restrictions. It was agreed that a restrictive covenant does not need to be signed by the BOH members, but the bedroom deed restrictions should be signed by one BOH member subsequent to approval vote by the BOH. Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes of 8/11/20 as amended; Ms. Levison seconded. All were in favor by roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discuss PFAS testing, status of DEP MCL and updating our water quality regulations to include PFAS testing- Ms. Levison requested Mr. Grossman advise the BOH on how to incorporate a requirement for PFAS testing in anticipation of home sale of properties in certain areas of Town. Mr. Grossman advised that the private well regulation allows for the BOH to include additional requirements as deemed necessary. Mr. Grossman recommended the BOH adopt a guideline that describes a certain geographic area or streets, and indicated it would be prudent to share this guideline with local real estate brokers. Mr. Mitchell agreed to work with Mr. Grossman to identify this geographic area.
- b. Discuss RCAP Solutions North Central MA Private Well Program- Ms. McCarthy stated that upon review of the documents received from RCAP Solutions, she noted that they are looking to test only twenty wells in North Central Massachusetts. Mr. Mitchell opined that to consider disseminating information about this Program, the BOH would need more details on what RCAP is looking for in participants and how they are going to select the same. Mr. Grossman stated he is unaware of NABH working with RCAP Solutions on this Program, as suggested in the correspondence. He agreed to find out more information about the program and advise the BOH.
- c. Discuss unexploded ordnances in Nashua River- The BOH members discussed the recent EPA letter to the Army regarding unexploded ordnances found in the Nashua River. The members agreed that no response action is needed by the BOH at this time.
- d. Update from School Reopening Task Force- Ms. McCarthy and Mr. Mitchell reported that the Schools are working to finalize procedures for quarantine at this time. Ms. McCarthy will follow-up with Town Nurse, Tamara Bedard, for additional guidance. Ms. McCarthy reported that there has been no formal proposal received from the parent group working on negotiating lab testing for students, but that Dr. Katie Brown, of DPH, responded to a caller from another Town suggesting such programs are not a great idea because of the potential for false positives with antigen testing. Ms. McCarthy stated that Dr. Dwight indicated the Schools would not approve such a testing program without the endorsement of the BOH & NABH.
- e. Update from recent DPH COVID-19 Conference Calls- The BOH Members agreed that there was nothing remarkable noted in the most recent Friday and Tuesday DPH calls.
- f. Update from the Emergency Response Team- Ms. Levison stated that Dr. Dwight confirmed that the soccer practice previously reported to the BOH was not school affiliated, and that future concerns about sports and Covid should be shared with Bromfield School Principal, Scott Hoffman.

Ms. Levison also reported that Deb Thompson offered the use of the Hildreth House porch for fall flu clinics, and that the Fire Department and Ambulance Service offered assistance in facilitating the flu clinic. Ms. Levison will write Mr. Garreffo to communicate the same.

Ms. Levison reported that Mr. Bragan confirmed that the Bromfield School does not use the leach field from the old septic system, but does use the tank.

g. Clerk & Health Agent Update-

- Ms. Flynn advised the Board that she received an e-mail from the Environmental Toxicology Program at DPH offering to provide algae testing at Bare Hill Pond. Ms. McCarthy stated that the testing offered is for purposes of lifting the advisory, and was described as two rounds of samples, one week apart. Ms. McCarthy indicated the e-mail stated that once the BOH advises that the bloom has cleared, DPH will begin sampling. She further stated that she believes DPH will sample once now and once when the bloom is over. Ms. McCarthy indicated that the BOH is only responsible for the beach; Mr. Grossman questioned whether the BOH is responsible for the beach at this time as it is not permitted or open. He indicated that the beach is posted as closed for swimming not because of a toxic algal bloom, but because there is a bloom and the visual quality is so poor that you probably cannot see three feet. Mr. Leicher stated his secchi disc readings were consistent with Mr. Grossman's estimate of three feet. Mr. Grossman indicated that he has not yet seen DPH's e-mail, but questioned the timing of what is being offered. Mr. Leicher indicated that Ms. McCarthy's interpretation of the e-mail reflected his telephone conversation with Mr. Nascarella. Mr. Leicher further stated that he does not believe it matters from where at the Pond the sample is pulled, that the sample would be representative of the toxicity in other areas of the Pond; Mr. Grossman disagreed. Mr. Leicher indicated that he was not sure why the BOH would not want to take advantage of the DPH's offer to test, and indicated that he sees the issue as a townwide, opposed to a beach, concern. Mr. Mitchell made a motion to take advantage of the state offered testing; Ms. Levison seconded. All members were in favor by roll call vote. Ms. McCarthy volunteered to respond to DPH and ask when they would be able to sample.
- Ms. Flynn asked the BOH members whether they had the opportunity to review the e-mail she received from the Harvard Soccer Club and her sent response. They confirmed they had and did not feel any additional response was needed at this time.
- Ms. Levison indicated she received a question from resident Marge Darby regarding difficulties repairing her generator powering her sewer pump, but the issue has since been resolved. The BOH members agreed that future such concerns should be addressed by the Town Sewer & Water Commission.
- Ms. Levison reported that she was contacted by a resident asking if there are monitoring wells at the old landfill. Mr. Grossman confirmed that the landfill was closed in accordance with DEP guidelines in place at the time, and if there are no monitoring wells, as suggested to Ms. McCarthy by the Department of Public Works Director, it is because they were not required by DEP.
- Mr. Grossman reported that he was contacted by Bob Douglas, of the Deer Management Subcommittee, wondering if the BOH would be interested in collaborating on a program to test the ticks found on deer killed by hunters. Mr. Grossman will respond that while the BOH acknowledges that the results would be a valuable tool, the BOH is not inclined to find funding for a research project. Ms. Levison expressed concern that results would be used to support an argument that if deer are killed in Harvard there will be less Lyme Disease. She further expressed concern with past and

the Deer Management SubCommittee's inconsistent messaging in the past. Mr. Grossman will also suggest to Mr. Douglas that he contact UMASS Laboratory of Zoology to negotiate another reduce cost testing arrangement, separate from that already established by the Board of Health for testing of ticks found on Harvard residents. Mr. Grossman will advise Mr. Douglas that the BOH would also like to be involved in communicating and interpreting the results of testing the ticks.

- Ms. Flynn provided a brief update on her participation of the Harvard GIS Listening Session organized by Mr. Ryan.

OLD BUSINESS

a. COVID-19: Continued response, preparedness, messaging, and enforcement of the Governor's Orders and MA guidelines- the BOH members agreed that there were no additional COVID-19 issues to discuss.

b. Transfer Station Committee: Status of participation- Ms. Flynn advised that she reviewed the taped discussion from the Select Board (SB) Meeting of August 4, 2020, and learned that the SB would like the Transfer Station Committee (TSC) to be comprised of 1 BOH member, 2 SB members, and 2 members of the public, with a charge to consider the transfer station feasibility going forward. Ms. McCarthy will reach out to Ms. Von Loesecke for a definition of the responsibly and expected time commitment of the BOH volunteer. Ms. Levison expressed that she believes Mr. Philippou did a really good job on the Transfer Station Committee and hopes that the SB would consider him as a member of the public. Ms. Levison stated past meetings were kept to 1 hour, approximately once every 1-2 months, with occasional increased frequency during busy times.

c. Discuss arbovirus awareness- The BOH members reviewed and revised the draft EEE Information Sheet. Ms. Flynn confirmed that the aerial spraying notification links were added to the "Mosquitoes" webpage and e-mailed to Ms. Jucharatz. Ms. Levison suggested an interesting senior project could use GIS to identify how many Harvard residences are within 300 feet of the road and within a clear line of sight from the road; Ms. McCarthy indicated she does not think the project would be enough of a community service. Ms. McCarthy agreed to work with Ms. Flynn to update the draft News & Announcement regarding EEE and WNV to be sent to BOH e-subscribers and posted on the BOH webpage.

d. Discuss drought status awareness- The BOH members reviewed and revised a draft News & Announcement to be sent to BOH e-subscribers and posted on the BOH webpage.

e. Review Action Items- Action items were reviewed. It was agreed that further investigation into a Blackboard announcement for aerial mosquito spraying is not needed at this time. Ms. Levison suggested that if in the next month, there is aerial spraying close to Harvard, the BOH could send a News & Announcement alert providing the web link for aerial spray notifications.

PERMITS- Permits were not reviewed and issued.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA- Items for the next agenda were reviewed.

ADJOURNMENT- Mr. Mitchell made the motion to adjourn at 8:43 p.m.; Ms. Levison seconded. All members were in favor by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Flynn, Clerk

Documents Referenced:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of 7/28/20, 8/3/20, and 8/11/20
- Revised draft EEE Information Sheet
- Draft drought status News & Announcement