

JESSICA COLLINS, Chair
TONY JUDGE, Vice-Chair
KAREN WALSH PIO, LICSW, LADC 1, Clerk
CHRISTINA REMIE, RN
JOHANNA RAVENHURST, MSPH

SHARON D. HART, Public Health Director

Board of Health Minutes

February 9, 2021

As Approved – March 9, 2021

Present: Jessica Collins, Chair; Tony Judge, Vice-Chair, Karen Walsh Pio, Clerk; Johanna Ravenhurst, Board of Health Member; Christina Remie, Board of Health Member; Sharon Hart, Public Health Director; Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Public Health Director, Monasia Ceasar, Health Compliance Specialist; Dr. Lauren Appio, Appio Psychological Consulting; Michelle Theroux, Master Plan Committee

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Chair Collins.

1: Acceptance of Minutes:

Chair Collins stated she would accept a motion to approve the minutes for the January 12, 2021 meeting.

Judge made the motion to approve the minutes and Walsh Pio seconded the motion. A roll call was then taken:

Collins: Aye
Judge: Aye
Ravenhurst: Aye
Walsh Pio: Aye
Remie: Abstained

2: Announcements and Open Forum:

Sharon Hart introduced Monasia Ceasar, the new Health Compliance Specialist. She outlined her assigned job duties which entails processing permits, reviewing COVID- 19 business/event plans, and investigating COVID complaints.

Tony Judge asked for clarification on COVID complaints.

Sharon Hart clarified that the COVID complaints are in adherence to businesses that are not operating in compliance to the guidelines and standards set up by the governor. She then went into greater detail

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about the other tasks handled in the department. These tasks include animal control, housing inspections, permitting of businesses, contact tracing, records requests, etc.

Karen Walsh Pio asked if she could propose two items for future consideration. The two items were surrounding the Board of Health possibly giving the School Committee support in regards to COVID and how does the public receive COVID updates on the town website.

3: New Business

COVID Update:

Sharon Hart presented the latest specs on positive cases and sets the average for 5 cases a day. Information on vaccines can be found on the town website. There are currently two regional clinics set up by local Boards of Health in Northampton and Amherst. Those 75 and older are the only ones being administered the vaccines at this time. Eligible parties can register via email, phone, and through the Council of Aging. Sharon Hart and the Board of Health in Easthampton have been volunteering at these sites on Saturdays.

Tony Judge highlighted Hampshire County as being among one of the areas with the highest infection rates and attributed it to the spike in cases at UMASS.

Racism as a Public Health Crisis:

Dr. Lauren Appio is a New York based psychologist who has been working in collaboration with the town to institute anti-racism, diversity training, and inclusion measures to share with employees, residents, and visitors. Her approach has been centered around finding what style of program would best suit the town and its needs. This was done by distributing surveys to employees asking them their exposure and familiarity with these issues. Focus groups will be created to properly execute programs and trainings throughout various departments to develop necessary skills and knowledge.

Master Planning:

Michelle Theroux spoke on the desire to receive feedback on the current draft. It can be found on the town's website. As a member of the advisory committee her efforts are stirred towards ensuring that the community is pleased with the draft and that any substantial concerns or suggestions are included in

the revision. The plan will last a duration of 10 years once implemented. There is an estimate for the fall of 2021 for the final draft presentation.

Jessica Collins raised a question on who has water rights on the project and who would be the designated point of contact surrounding bylaws and regulations. Sharon Hart highlighted the water regulations surrounding public schools and buildings and suggested that doing the most within your jurisdiction to address water regulation would be an adequate approach. Johanna asked the best way to provide feedback once the drafts are thoroughly reviewed. Mitchell suggested complying all of the feedback and sending it to the planning board. Sharon Hart instructed the members to send all of the suggestions into the office so they can be sent out accordingly.

4: Old Business

North Pole Estates:

Jessica Collins provided an update of the latest letter received from Mr. Ouellette detailing the hiring of an environmental firm to conduct assessments that address issues highlighted in the disapproval letter of the subdivision installation. Mr. Ouellette was told additional conversations would not be had until all of the concerns were addressed.

Chicopee Concrete Monitoring Wells:

Frank Tacoma states the Water commissioner does not have authority to force decommission of the wells and believes it is up to the Board of Health. Sharon Hart discloses a letter was sent from Mark Aiken detailing the destruction of some wells.

Jessica Collins provides an outline of the project, highlighting issues surrounding monitoring wells on the property. She calls on the need for the property owners to confirm the existence and destruction of these wells. There is some discrepancy over who has authority to order them to do so.

Frank recites a letter from the building commissioner written to the property owners reiterating that enforcing monitoring well regulations is not within his jurisdiction, but safe guarding the wells according to their permit is. As a result, he is requesting records and documents that show the lost, destruction, or closing of these wells to rule out potential hazards.

Jessica Collins tells the board she spoke with town counsel and was advised to draft up a formal letter expressing the concerns to the owners. She also expressed that concerned residents have also drafted up a memo conveying their concerns. Robert spoke on behalf of the residents. He highlighted the owner's failure to provide proper documentation of the decommissioning of the wells and possible hazards and risks that are associated with that. He suggested that it be a collaborative effort between the Water district and Board of Health to enforce the owner to comply.

Tony Judge urges for action on this critical matter and to call for the immediate close and decommission of the wells. Jessica Collins proposes writing a letter to the water district and/or the property owners to hold them accountable for rectifying the situation. Karen Walsh Pio suggests referencing the support of the Water commissioner and building commissioner in the letter to strengthen the claim.

Christina Remie agrees with the need for action and decommissioning of the wells. Sharon Hart reveals Water District 1 has documentation showing that those monitoring wells may not have went in. She also provided clarification on the difference between a monitoring well and drinking well.

Jessica Collins responds that updated information has been presented that prove otherwise. She also volunteers to draft up the letter to the property owner and Water District 2 expressing the concern and need of notice detailing the status of the wells as well as an expected solution to the situation by a set date. Sharon mentioned the need to include that the wells must be decommissioned properly in the letter. Robert Pleasure suggested referencing the latest hydrogeological study when discussing the presence of the wells. Jessica informed the board that everyone must agree to the outline of the letter prior to drafting to ensure that it could be sent off before the next meeting. Everyone complied.

The next Board of Health Meeting was set to March 9, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m. by Chair Collins and all were in agreement.

Respectfully submitted,

Monasia Ceasar
Health Compliance Specialist

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ATTACHMENT A

DOCUMENT

RECORD LOCATION

MPIC material E-mail

BOH File

Hydro Study E-mail

BOH File

District 2 Water Commissioner Letter

BOH File

Kathy Davis Study

BOH File