

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2021
ZOOM Meeting

Diane Mortensen, Chair
Ronald Etskovitz, Member
Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director

Chris Daniele, Vice Chair
Koduvayur Narayana, Member
Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Member

Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:

Diane Mortensen, Chris Daniele, Ron Etskovitz and Koduvayur Narayana

Members Absent:

Barbra Sekesogundu Simon

Others Present:

Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Secretary
Sgt. Ed Burman, Ashland Police Department
Jenn Ball, Assistant Town Manager
Kathy Rooney, Resident
Mark Dassoni, Resident
Steve Mitchell, Resident
Rob Moolenbeek, Resident
Robert Hoffman, Resident
Robert Hall, Resident
Dona Walsh, Animal Inspector
Constance Mannal, Resident
Cynthia Brumm, Resident
Dana Angelo, E.A. Fish Development
Jessica Faillace, Dellbrook Construction
Joe Henderson, Dellbrook Construction
Julie Nardone, Resident
Kelly Joseph, Community Health Manager for Framingham Health Department
Olivia Dufour, Tobacco Control Manager for Metrowest Tobacco Control District

Call Meeting to Order - 6:00 PM

Ms. Mortensen called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and noted the meeting is being televised live on WACA-TV.

Citizen's Participation

Board Members thanked Chris Daniele for his years of service and dedication to the Ashland Board of Health; Board Members noted he will be missed and all expressed hope that he will return to the Board in the future. Mr. Daniele thanked his fellow Board Members, past and present, including Jon Fetherston and Judi Teller. Mark Dassoni also thanked Mr. Daniele, for his service and his patience.

Mr. Dassoni inquired to Sgt. Burman regarding the status of homebound residents; Sgt. Burman noted he will address this during his update.

Kathy Rooney inquired as to the Robert Hill Way Well; Ms. Mortensen noted this will be addressed during the meeting.

Introduction of Rajit Gupta, Ashland Health Agent/Director

Ms. Mortensen announced that the Town has hired a new Health Director, Rajit Gupta, who is coming to us from Watertown; Ms. Mortensen met with him today and looks forward to working with him. Mr. Gupta noted that he is here for the community; residents should feel free to reach out to him at any time. Mr. Gupta thanked Mr. Daniele for his service on the Board. Board Members welcomed Mr. Gupta aboard.

COVID-19 Update

Sergeant Burman noted that the COVID numbers are coming down; one of the concerns is an uptick in the daycares. A couple preschool classrooms were closed for a short time.

Sgt. Burman announced that the Vaccine Collaboration with the six partnering communities is going very well; this will be a great collaboration as we look towards the future as well, it has been an excellent partnership. Last week, over the course of three days, 1,533 doses of Moderna were distributed. There are still quite a few openings for this week's clinic, a reverse 9-1-1 call was sent out to the community to advise of the vaccine's availability. On Saturday there will be a clinic for 17 and 18 year olds. Pfizer should be getting FDA approval to vaccinate 12-15 year olds. Sgt. Burman announced that they are working with the State on getting the vaccine to the homebound residents. Anyone who is homebound and hasn't been contacted by the State should call Sgt. Burman at 508-532-7900.

Ashland Farmers' Market, Season 10, Opening Day, June 12, 2021, Steve Mitchell

Steve Mitchell explained that the layout of the Farmers' Market will be the same as last year with a slight modification. At this point, masks will be required but hopes that as the season moves forward there will be some relaxations. The layout of the Market was put on the screen; there will be a single point entry and exit. Mr. Mitchell would like the Board to approve their plan for the 2021 Season, their 10th season. Mr. Mitchell explained this has been a team effort and thanked all involved. Mr. Daniele noted that it is a testament to the dedication of the people who run the Farmers' Market, that 2020 was as successful as it was.

Motion: Mr. Daniele made a motion to give Mr. Mitchell the Board's blessing for the layout and plans for the Farmers' Market. Mr. Narayana seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the Board for their approval and support. Mr. Mitchell welcomed Mr. Gupta to the Community and noted he looks forward to working with him. Mr. Mitchell acknowledged Mr. Daniele's years on the Board of Health and thanked him for his service. Rob Moolenbeek noted there are questions regarding food sampling and being able to handle produce; he will follow up with Mr. Gupta and Mr. Curran.

Animal Permit Waiver Request, 36 Lartridge Lane, Richard Hoffman

Ms. Mortensen noted that Richard Hoffman, is here to discuss a waiver to have a pony on his property at 36 Lartridge Lane. Ms. Mortensen noted that she did go to the property to do a site visit; she also noted that the Animal Regulations require one acre of land to keep a pony.

Mr. Hoffman noted that this is his daughter's family's home, he is listed on the mortgage/deed and supports their request to have a pony on the property. Robert Hall discussed his experience with horses and noted he has spoken with the neighbors who have signed a letter on their behalf. Mr. Hall discussed the manure removal plan. Ms. Mortensen clarified that the Board will be looking at updating the Animal Regulations; she noted that any waivers must be given to the property owner. Ms. Mortensen discussed the layout of the property that she observed and noted she does not have a problem in issuing the waiver. Dona Walsh, Animal Inspector, noted that she visited the property also; she believes the property would work well for a pony without being an impact to neighbors.

Questions were asked by the Board Members. Neighbor, Constance Mannel, said she was concerned with the common land, but was glad to hear that the pen will be within the boundaries. Cynthia Brumm spoke in support of the Hall family, she noted they are direct abutters and she has no issue with this.

Motion: Mr. Daniele made a motion that we grant the waiver to Richard Hoffman for the pony as requested. Mr. Narayana seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Robert Hall thanked his neighbors for their support.

Irrigation Well, Waiver request, E.A. Fish, Robert Hill Way

Dana Angelo, of EA Fish Development, explained that they are here to request that the Board consider granting a waiver from Well Regulations 312-3 to Robert Hill Way Development, LLC, the owner of The Ledges, so that the existing well, which is on the Town's property, may be used temporarily for irrigation. Ms. Mortensen explained that a well is required to be on the lot that it is servicing, the property the well is located on is owned by the Town of Ashland. The distance of the well to the property line is 15.9 feet. Kathy Rooney, resident, commented that she believes that any well draws down the aquifer, that people on Town water who cannot have a well must pay for water while those who drill a well can use it unmetered; she believes it is an environmental and economic justice issue. Mr. Daniele read an email from the Town Manager which noted that if the Board were to approve the waiver, additional steps would need to be taken by the Developer, including the installation of a water meter and paying water charges at the regular rate. Ms. Rooney does not believe irrigation wells should be allowed due to the water shortage issues. Julie Nardone, resident, noted that if the Town charges for this well, it would then require the Town to charge for other projects. Mr. Angelo noted that, based on his understanding, the Pump Station that will be installed will mitigate the water pressure issue on Independence Lane. Mr. Narayana suggested trucking in water, and noted that he does not support this request. Mr. Angelo acknowledged that a mistake was made, but it was not intentional. Mr. Etskovitz inquired as to whether the Developers could purchase that section of land from the Town; Ms. Mortensen noted any easement of land would need to go to Town Meeting. Mr. Angelo noted that there are feasible locations on their property which could be drilled, but cannot be sure whether they would achieve the same results. Mr. Gupta noted that if there is low water pressure in the area, it is possible that we could get complaints from residents, which would fall under the Housing Code. Jessica Faillace, of Dellbrook Construction, noted the pump station is in production and they are looking at mid-August for delivery. Mr. Angelo explained that they were informed about the low pressure in the area which was the reason for installing the well; he noted that the pump station would allow them to consider using Town water or drilling another well on their property. No motion was put on the floor for the approval of the waiver.

Metrowest Tobacco Control District Presentation, Kelly Joseph, Olivia Dufour

Ms. Mortensen introduced Kelly Joseph and Olivia Dufour, who both work for the City of Framingham; Olivia Dufour is the Tobacco Agent for the Region and will need to be appointed by the Board tonight. Ms. Joseph shared a PowerPoint Presentation and discussed the history and goals of the Metrowest Tobacco Control District (MTCP). Ms. Joseph reported that the DPH Grant for the continuation of MTCP has been extended through June 30th 2022. Ms. Joseph explained the new fining structure which supersedes any local regulations; she also reviewed Program components, efforts and outcomes to date. The minimum number of inspections is at least one retail and one compliance check per year; not including follow up inspections or complaint-based inspection. Ms. Mortensen noted that Melissa Evans completed a compliance check in January, and there was 100% compliance. The Board agreed that any additional help in the area of tobacco compliance is welcomed.

Ms. Rooney asked if tobacco vendors could be asked to remind patrons to properly dispose of used vaping cartridges, she noted she sees many on the streets and sidewalks.

Regulation of the Ashland Board of Health Restricting the Sale of Tobacco and Nicotine Products and Delivery Systems, Discussion and Vote on State mandated fines

Ms. Mortensen noted that the Tobacco Regulation changes were reviewed at the last meeting; they have been updated to include the new fine structure.

Motion: Mr. Narayana made a motion to adopt the Regulations updated by Chris Daniele and voted on by the Board. Mr. Daniele seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Appointment of Olivia Dufour, Tobacco Control Agent
- b. Year-to-Date Budget, FY2021
- c. Appoint Dona Walsh as Animal Inspector; previous vote stated ‘Animal Control Officer’
- d. Town Election - May 18, 2021
- e. Town Meeting - June 12, 2021

Motion: Mr. Narayana made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Daniele seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Chair’s Agenda

a. Inter-Municipal Agreement for Nursing Services

Ms. Mortensen noted that this Grant expires at the end of June, she has not received any viable options on how to use this Grant. There is another Grant opportunity with Hudson as lead agency; it is a Fill in the Gap grant. Ms. Mortensen will forward any information to the Board as it becomes available.

b. Medical Reserve Corps, Update on Recruitment

Ms. Mortensen noted the importance of the Medical Reserve Corps to have active members who want to volunteer, particularly under situations like we are dealing with now, and for town events. She is actively looking for ways to recruit new members and emphasized the need for a strong Medical Reserve Corps in Ashland. Ms. Mortensen would like to work with Mr. Gupta in getting the MRC membership revised.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings, June 1, 2021

Ms. Mortensen noted that the next meeting will be June 1, due to the election on May 18th. If there are any issues, the Board can always schedule a meeting if necessary. Mr. Mortensen noted that the first agenda item will be reorganization of the Board; if Board Members have any items they want put on the agenda, let us know. Ms. Mortensen hopes to have Animal Regulation drafts ready for a future meeting; Ms. Mortensen and Ms. Walsh will meet to discuss making the Regulations more definitive.

Mr. Gupta noted that he is thankful for his opportunity to work in Ashland and feels like he has learned so much about the Town already; he looks forward to working with everyone.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Daniele made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Narayana seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

The Board adjourned at 7:59 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 5/4/2021 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. COVID-19 Number of Cases/Graphs
2. Ashland Farmers' Market, Layout
3. Waiver Letter/Request to House a Pony at 36 Larcridge Lane
4. Signed Letter from abutters of 36 Larcridge Lane
5. Animal Permit Application with layout sketch and photos
6. Keeping of Animal Regulations
7. Waiver Letter/Request from Well Regulations from EA Fish Development
8. PPT Slide Presentation, Metrowest Tobacco Control Project
9. Revised Tobacco Regulations to include State Fines for Sales Violations
10. YTD Budget Report
11. A recording of the meeting can be found on WACA-TV