

SWAMPSCOTT BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES JUNE 16, 2016

The Board of Health meeting of Thursday, June 16, 2016 was called to order at 6:10 PM. Attending were Martha Dansdill, Chairwoman, Marianne Hartmann, RN, Board Member, Jeffrey Vaughan, Director of Public Health, George Allen, Senior Air Quality Scientist for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Attorney Amy Friend Roberts, both of whom are Swampscott residents.

Martha Dansdill opened discussion regarding the Aggregate Industries quarry permit by saying that she was at the Board of Selectmen's meeting the previous evening where a resident from Boulder Way questioned whether there was seismograph data available. Residents are concerned with the blasting being done at the quarry even though it has been moved deeper into the pit. Other residents were interested in being placed on a notification list to be informed as to when the blasting would take place. The Board of Selectmen signed the contract last night and the Board of Health signed this evening.

Alison Oxtan, RN, MSN arrived at 6:16 PM.

Martha Dansdill, being the only Board Member present at the April 21, 2016 meeting, attested to the minutes of that date and the Board accepted them unanimously. The minutes of May 16, 2016 (Town Meeting) were accepted unanimously. The minutes of May 19, 2016 (Board of Health meeting) were amended and accepted as were the minutes for May 19, 2016 (Public Hearing regarding open burning).

Marianne Hartman, RN, spoke of the Good Samaritan Law. Currently, there is a video featuring the Attorney General, Martha Healey, on the Town website explaining that people can report an overdose victim without fear of repercussion if they have also been using illegal drugs themselves.

First Responders are carrying Narcan; a powerful medication to reverse the effects of opioids and overdose. The Healthy Streets program is combining with the Swampscott Police Department to visit with overdose victims and offer help and guidance. Last week there were three (3) overdoses in Swampscott. The Opioid Task Force is discussing the option of starting to educate children at an earlier age.

The Board discussed the health effects of open burning (specifically by beach fires) on residents. Last night the Board of Selectmen voted three (3) to one (1) to allow four (4) fire pits on Phillips Beach and two (2) fire pits on Fishermen's Beach. Each fire pit will be constructed of concrete and will be three feet (3') in diameter. These permanent structures will be buried approximately two feet (2') into the sand. Residents will be allowed to get a permit at the Swampscott Fire Department (SFD) for a one (1) day use between the hours of 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM.

George Allen is a Senior Air Quality Scientist for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) working on air pollution standards; as such, he has equipment at his home on Bay View Avenue, approximately three hundred (300) yards from Fishermen's Beach, that measure wood smoke particles in the air. Mr. Allen has data showing heavy spikes in particles for two to three (2-3) hours while fires are burning. He claims that there are no safe exposure levels to smoke particles and that there is much research to show that short term exposure affects human lungs in outdoor settings as well as indoor wood burning chimneys.

Attorney Amy Friend Roberts, who also has a background in nursing, stated that there are Harvard studies suggesting that breathing wood smoke is fifteen (15) times worse than exposure to cigarette smoke. She reminded the Board that they had regulated tobacco use as a health precaution to second hand smoke inhalers and encouraged the Board to move towards making concessions for residents that may have respiratory disease or other health related issues. Ms. Roberts lives on Morton Road, three (3) long blocks from Phillips Beach, and is physically disturbed by the smoke being carried on the wind. Attorney Roberts stated that she would like the Board of Health to request that the fires not be allowed to be stoked, that the hours be shortened, and that neighbor complaints will result in immediate extinguishment of the fire instead of investigation as that would be too subjective.

Alison Oxtan, RN, MSN, mentioned that she had heard a rumor that there are fires at the Beach Club as well. It was confirmed that this is happening on a semi-regular basis.

Marianne Hartmann, RN, said that she had had no problem regulating cigarette smoking on the beaches and that it seems that the fires are getting more abundant and difficult to monitor. Suspicions leaned towards non-residents knowing the fire rules and directives are lax. Ms. Oxtan states that there is not enough of a Police presence on-site. Marianne Hartman agreed that if there is no fine structure, there is no consequence for wrong actions.

Martha Dansdill stated that these fires are intended as cooking fires only which the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) describes as a fire that last approximately one (1) hour and are promptly extinguished. Ms. Hartmann asked if the Board could obtain that definition in writing as it would be difficult to press legally otherwise.

Chairwoman Dansdill asked Jeff Vaughan if the Health Department has ever received a complaint regarding the smoke from fires on the beaches. The answer was "no". Ms. Dansdill stated that she has received many complaints which are the catalyst that brought this issue to the Board of Health. It was suggested that a complaint log be taken from the information called into the Swampscott Fire Department when permitting begins.

Ms. Dansdill noted that twenty-two (22) Massachusetts communities have banned open burning, although none of them are beach communities. As we are the local branch representatives for the Massachusetts DEP, the Chairwoman would like to prepare a statement regarding open burning.

All agreed that something needed to be done to curtail the amount of fires on the beaches. As so many different studies were being quoted, it was decided to work from the same papers. George Allen will e-mail these papers to Jeff Vaughan for distribution to the Board of Health.

George Allen and Amy Friends Roberts left at 7:40 PM.

Martha Dansdill stated that she has communicated with Mr. Allen and Ms. Roberts for a number of years as they are passionate about this cause and the health of the community. Ms. Hartmann said that it was nice to be able to have an open back and forth discussion and discover why the problem is more prevalent now than five (5) years ago and proposed that a reasonable control be found. Ms. Oxton would like to educate the residents about what is not healthy to burn ie: plywood and pressure treated wood. Ms. Dansdill voiced her concern that when the tide is high at Phillips Beach, the sand gets crowded and with fires beginning at 6:00 PM, it could make for an uncomfortable situation for families with young children.

The Board formulated the following list of suggestions to present to the Board of Selectmen: Limit dates from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Add fines for those burning without a permit, Limit stoking heights, and Adequately control flames.

Marianne Hartmann, RN, suggested that the Board invite George Allen and Amy Friend Roberts back in August to see if there have been any changes in the smoke conditions after implementing the permitting of the fire pits.

Martha Dansdill asked if the Board would like to prepare a statement similar to the DEP statement being used in the City of Arlington. Alison Oxton, RN, MSN, suggested including cooking fires. Jeff Vaughan suggested adding chimeneas. Marianne Hartman, RN, was comfortable with the statement without adding the fire pits, chimeneas and etcetera. When explained that it was a definition of what causes health risks and not a ban on any specific items, it was agreed to add these articles. The statement reads:

The Department of Environmental Protection and Swampscott Board of Health recognize that open burning can pose a health and safety risk when it is not adequately controlled. Open burning, including but not limited to: chimeneas, outdoor fire pits, outdoor fireplaces, cooking fires, and etcetera, pollutes the air and can make it difficult for people with respiratory problems to breathe when the air is stagnant, open burning can pose smoke and odor nuisances and health risks to nearby residents particularly in densely populated areas.

When the statement is complete the Board of Health will send it to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Health will also draft a position statement regarding open burning.

Jeff Vaughan, Director of Public Health, requested that the Board of Health make a motion to accept the 2013 Edition of the Federal Food Code. Currently, the Health Inspector is operating on the 1999 edition. Dates have been set by the North Shore Shared Public Health Services Program to educate restaurant managers and a video will be available for those who cannot attend the educational program.

Marianne Hartman, RN, moved to adopt the document "Food Code -2013" issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration, as the basis for regulatory compliance in the community of Swampscott. The 2013 Food Code, in conjunction with state regulation 105 CMR 590.000 State Sanitary Code Chapter X—Minimum Sanitation Standards For Food Establishments, will serve as the basis for retail food establishment inspection and enforcement in the Town of Swampscott, effective November 1, 2016.

Alison Oxton, RN, MSN, seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Household Hazardous Waste Day was held on Saturday, June 4, 2016. The next event is scheduled for Saturday, November 7, 2016. Although there was an ample turnout, some residents were put off by the high costs of Ethical Electronic disposal this year and chose not to recycle their televisions.

The Board of Health discussed an editorial printed in the Boston Globe regarding alleged pollution on King's Beach at Stacey Brook. The Town has had no reports or complaints concerning this issue. Gino Cresta, Director of Public Works has worked closely with the City of Lynn to rectify any problem with old sewer lines and pipe cracks that feed into the outflow onto that beach. The Swampscott DPW used to add chlorine to the line until earlier this year when the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) asked them to stop. Repairs to this system will be a long and costly project.

Mr. Vaughan stated that beach testing has begun and that all six (6) beach samples passed at one hundred percent (100%).

Marianne Hartman, RN, stated that the Opioid Task Force has created a pamphlet of resources where drug addicts can seek assistance. At the next meeting a recovering addict will share his experience. When the data is collected from a youth behavior survey that was given at the schools, the Task Force will show a film entitled "If Only" in hopes of stimulating discussion and education with parents. The Town website will soon have all the information regarding the Opioid Task Force events.

Martha Dansdill set up a Public Health informational table at the Farmer's Market on Sunday, June 12, 2016. She handed out many pamphlets, reusable grocery bags and tick extractors. Ms. Dansdill answered many

questions that day and guided residents with expired Epipens to bring them to the Health Department for disposal.

Kathryn Larsen from Bay State Textiles Recycling Rebate Program has e-mailed the Board of Health asking to be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Larsen would like to speak to the Board about ways to raise money for the Town of Swampscott by recycling unwanted fabric products and footwear. An invitation will be sent.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 20, 2016 at 6:00 PM in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall on 22 Monument Avenue.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.