SWAMPSCOTT BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES MARCH 18, 2015

The Board of Health meeting of Wednesday, March 18, 2015 was called to order at 6:00 PM. Attending were Martha Dansdill, Chair, Dr. Deborah Shelkan Remis and Dr. Larry Block, Board Members, and Sarah Pruett, candidate for Board of Health.

The minutes of February 19, 2015 were accepted.

Martha Dansdill spoke about changes that were made to the Health Department website and made suggestions to consolidate the four (4) trash and recycling links to avoid redundancy. Other suggestions for informational links included adding recommendations on how to avoid diseases brought on by ticks and mosquitoes. Also, it was planned to add a link to the recycling infomercial being developed by Dr. Shelkan Remis, Tom Reid, Audio/Video Director, and Bernie Kravitz, Teacher with the Environmental Sciences Department, of the Swampscott High School (SHS).

Regarding the recycling infomercial for cable television, Dr. Deborah Shelkan Remis reported that students are currently working on the script. The Board of Health would like to see this effort stimulate the Principal of SHS or the Superintendent of Schools to further expand on school recycling and education. Swampscott Middle School (SMS) has a recycling club but there is no similar group at the Swampscott High School (SHS). Ideally a committee should be formed to take control of this responsibility.

Martha Dansdill suggested that the Board of Health set up an information table at the Town Meeting in May to distribute flyers. Some of the subjects discussed were: Household Hazardous Waste Day, Spring Alert flyer, Leaf blower Advisory, and having recycle stickers available. This table could be shared with the Open Space Committee or Farmer’s Market Committee.

Dr. Larry Block offered an advisory draft regarding gas-powered leaf blowers and other lawn care power tools after seeing an article in the New England Journal citing a study which observed lung function in children in California. As air pollution dropped, due to strict regulations on emissions from cars, businesses, and leaf blowers, children’s lung development and function was significantly better.

Dr. Shelkan Remis asked that the difference between a two (2) stroke and four (4) stoke engines be defined and that words like “forbid” and “insist” be stricken.

Dr. Block asked Sarah Pruett for her recommendations. Ms. Pruett stated that she would like employees of landscapers to be required to wear masks as well as eye and ear protection.

Martha Dansdill suggested that Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommendations for workers be added as well.

Dr. Block will rework the draft for a vote at the next meeting. Once the advisory is complete it will be sent to the Patch and the Swampscott Reporter. If grant monies are available, a mass mailing will go out to all residents and landscapers. The Board of Health will then ask the Board of Selectmen to endorse the advisory.

Prior to Sarah Pruett leaving at 6:40 PM, she handed out a flyer regarding chemical sensitivity brought on by air fresheners.

The Farmer’s Market has invited the Open Space Committee and the Board of Health to set up a table at the market. Danielle Strauss, Director of Swampscott Recreation, put forward that the Zero Waste Day be held at the Farmer’s Market as well. Martha Dansdill will contact Ms. Strauss.

Chairwoman Dansdill gave an overview of the Toxic Action Center Environmental Conference that she attended. Ms. Dansdill attended three (3) talks.

The first seminar focused on the toxins in flame retardant materials. Fire Fighters of Massachusetts have endorsed the efforts of abolishing flame retardant materials in furniture as the chemicals are toxic during fires. These chemicals also break down into a dust form in everyday use. In 2015, people will be given the option to buy furniture without the flame retardant chemicals added.

The second seminar focused on restoring soil. Due to the use of agro-chemicals, deforestation, and human interference in ecosystems over the years, soil is becoming depleted of its nutrients.

The third seminar focused on organic turf. Resident of Marblehead, Chip Osborne, of Osborne Organics, is a nationally recognized consultant in the field of Organics. He is currently working with the City of Springfield, MA to convert city-owned parks and fields to be managed organically. The Board will invite Mr. Osborne to speak to residents and Town decision makers on organic maintenance of properties in Swampscott.

Martha Dansdill stated that she has been approached by the Open Space Committee to revitalize the Pesticide Awareness Committee. The Open Space Committee asked for a liaison from the Board of Health to join

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their committee. Ms. Dansdill volunteered and invited other Board members who are interested to do the same.

Dr. Deborah Shelkan Remis left at 7:00 PM.

Martha Dansdill reported that Jeff Vaughan, Director of Public Health, advised her that the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a three (3) year contract for trash and recycling went out this morning.

Mr. Vaughan also notified Martha Dansdill that the final curbside Christmas tree pick-up will be during the week of March 23rd through 27th.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15, at 6:00 PM in the 2nd floor conference room of the Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.