SWAMPSCOTT BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES MAY 20, 2015

The Board of Health meeting of Wednesday, May 20, 2015 was called to order at 6:05 PM. Attending were Martha Dansdill, Chair, Dr. Larry Block and Marianne Hartmann, RN, Board Members, and Jeff Vaughan, Director of Public Health.

The minutes of April 15, 2015 were accepted. The minutes of May 5, 2015 were tabled.

The Board unanimously reelected Martha Dansdill as Chair.

On behalf of the Board, Martha Dansdill welcomed, newly elected member, Marianne Hartmann, RN.

Martha Dansdill attended the May 7, 2015 meeting of the Athletic Field Advisory Committee to speak about an estimate they received to treat the athletic fields. Ms. Dansdill asked the Committee to deter the use of chemical pesticides and look into safer alternatives. The Committee is quite receptive to protecting the safety of the residents of Swampscott and agreed with Ms. Dansdill’s suggestions. Any chemicals used will have a Material Data Sheet submitted to the Board of Health that they may educate themselves and others about the potential hazards of each chemical. Also, a yellow flag will be placed on the fields that are treated signifying no use of that field for twenty-four (24) hours.

The Board of Health spoke of a letter they received from the Tobacco Industry stating tobacco regulations should not be put on retailers, but the responsibility should be on the smoker. Jeff Vaughan, Public Health Director, stated that many Boards of Health are denouncing the letter as is the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). Martha Dansdill stated that a study at the Albert Einstein Institute has stated that smoking e-cigarettes suppresses the ability to cough which could lead to many health problems.

Town Meeting has approved the artificial turf Envirofill, or a like product, for use in the new field at Blocksidge Field. This is a product that the Board of Health researched thoroughly and endorsed as a healthier alternative to crumb rubber or coconut husk in-fills. It is estimated that, once funding is raised, the field should be operational in 2016.

Marianne Hartmann, RN, stated that she has contacted the Topsfield Public Health Director regarding a Tick Talk being held at the Topsfield Town Hall. Ms. Hartmann would like to have a similar talk offered to the residents of Swampscott and Marblehead. Due to the excessive snowfall this winter, it is projected that there will be a larger tick population this season. Ms. Hartmann, RN, will contact an Epidemiologist about availability, research a venue to hold the event and write an informational article for the local newspaper.

Jeff Vaughan stated that with monies from a grant supplied by the District Incentive Grant a tick bite lab presentation will be shown at the Swampscott Farmer’s Market on June 21st and July 28th. This display will also be available at the Strawberry Festival on July 28th. A Public Health Intern will be present to exhibit the bite lab and answer any questions residents have.

Dr. Block spoke of a product (Progaea) from Pure Solutions advertising a natural tick and mosquito repellent spray. Dr. Block spoke with the owner of the company asking for evidence that the product was safe and effective. Studies are still in progress and will conclude this summer. Martha Dansdill noted that the product is flammable and, because it is primarily oil based, cannot be extinguished with water. Ms. Dansdill stated that it appears that the product works by soaking the arachnid and drowning it questioning the value of the product once it has dried. Ms. Dansdill noted that there is additionally no information regarding the consequences this product may have on ground dwelling bees. The Board will invite the owner of Pure Solutions to the next meeting to discuss this product further.

Jeff Vaughan informed the Board that the trash disposal fee contracts have been signed. The bid was awarded to Covanta Energy who has a transfer station in Lynn, MA and an incinerator in Haverhill, MA. Prices for the trash disposal tipping fees have dropped from eight-eight dollars ($88.00) per ton to sixty-two dollars ($62.00) per ton. This contract is valid until 2018. Hiltz Waste Disposal was, once again, awarded the trash and recycling contract.

It was noted that Household Hazardous Waste Day will be on Saturday, May 30, 2015 at the Public Health Garage on Tower Way in Marblehead. Both Martha Dansdill and Jeff Vaughan have sent information to the local newspapers regarding this event. This year residents will be able to dispose of rigid plastics and Styrofoam at the event.

Marianne Hartmann, RN, stated that she received a telephone call from a concerned resident of Ryan Place stating that there was a rat problem in the neighborhood. The residents believe the problem is being caused by dumping on the lot at DiLisio Brothers Landscaping on Essex Street, although it may be caused by construction on Fairview Avenue. Jeff Vaughan has sent letters to residents with suggestions on how to deter rodents. Resident’s would be responsible for baiting their property if they are inclined to do so.

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Ms. Hartmann asked about the availability of the Animal Control Officer during non-office hours. Jeff Vaughan stated that the Health Department manages Diane Treadwell’s hours during the Monday through Friday hourly operations of the Department. During off-hours residents are encouraged to contact the Swampscott Police Department who will in turn contact and dispatch Ms. Treadwell. Mr. Vaughan stated that he is the Animal Inspector for the Town of Swampscott which deals with rabies education and animal bites.

Martha Dansdill spoke of a resident who approached her at Town Meeting regarding open fire burning in fire pits. The resident stated that he cannot open his windows in the summer due to the smoke being generated from his neighbor’s fire pit. When these complaints come into the Health Department, Jeff Vaughan tells the resident to not burn open fires if the wind is blowing in the direction of the neighbor’s home. Currently, there is no regulation regarding the use of fire pits. The Fire Department will respond to these complaints as well.

Jeff Vaughan mentioned that he has been working on a design for reusable grocery bags to be purchased with the one thousand dollar ($1,000.00) grant monies from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The grocery bags must be made of at least thirty percent (30%) recyclable materials. With the one thousand dollars ($1,000.00) the Health Department should be able to afford approximately five hundred (500) bags. This grant must be spent by the end of June. Martha Dansdill offered to take the design to her sister, a graphic artist.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, at 6:00 PM in the 2nd floor conference room of the Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.