

BOARD OF HEALTH
Emergency On-Line Zoom Teleconference, City of Northampton:
<https://zoom.us/j/547347182>
April 2, 2020 Minutes

BOH Members Present: Joanne Levin; Suzanne Smith; Cynthia Suopis; and Laurent Levy

BOH Members Absent: None

Staff: Merridith O’Leary, Director; Melissa Roberts-Cote, BOH Clerk and Attorney Alan Seewald, City Solicitor

Staff Absent: None

Meeting opened April 2, 2020 at 5:33 p.m. by Joanne Levin

I.Public Comment Session: No Virtual Waiting Room Participants Comments

II. Discussion: Farmers Markets

The Board discussed opening Farmers Markets during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cynthia Suopis led a virtual meeting with the managers of the Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday Markets to discuss strategies to opening the markets safely. Terry Masterson from Economic Development, Michael Skillcorn from Grow Food Northampton, and Jasmine Ward, Health Inspector also attended. Concerns, suggestions, strategies, and guidelines were discussed related to limiting the spread of COVID-19 and people's exposure to the virus. Some of the suggestions were to increase the footprint of the market by increasing the space between tents/vendors to 10 feet, to have one entrance and one exit, maintain social distancing of customers, staff and vendors, to have one person handling money and another to handling the products. Some of the concerns were limiting the number of people into the markets, making hand washing stations and hand sanitizer available to all, staff monitoring of customers to enforce no social gathering and no sampling rules at the markets. The Farmers Market managers have been getting guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and feel they can safely operate the market. Attorney Seewald advised that regulations can be created specific to the Farmers Market. Director O’Leary will draft an order with Attorney Seewald, working collaboratively with Cynthia Suopis to account for the factors discussed during the virtual meeting with the Farmers Market Group and to ensure the overall safety and wellbeing of the community. The Board agreed that the Farmers Market would have to comply with any regulation issued in order to operate.

III. Updates:

- **Health Orders Passed by Director O’Leary**

Director O’Leary advised the Board that one of the biggest complaints received recently with regard to the Coronavirus or COVID-19 is people congregating in recreational areas. Director O’Leary will put together a list of the various places where such concerns were identified or may be occurring and write an order to cease gatherings in these specific locations. Additionally, Chief Kasper is having two lieutenants identify and close non-essential businesses that are continuing to operate.

- **Shelter Operations at Northampton High School (NHS)**

Director O’Leary advised that the shelter opened April 2, 2020. The Northampton Health Department partnered with Service Net. The shelter is in operation 24/7 with 3 shifts per day, and is staffed with Service Net staff, volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corp. (MRC), and security by the Northampton Police Department. On the first day of operation, 34 people registered to stay at the shelter. The shelter had checkpoints to go through to enter the shelter including a handwashing station at the entrance, registration, and a temperature checkpoint. On registration, two people had possible COVID-19 related symptoms and were placed in isolation. There are 3 meals being served per day, provided by Smith College, and the Hampshire County Jail. McDonalds has also provided breakfast sandwiches one day. The staff are conducting screenings two times a day to verify no changes with any of the residents of the shelter.

Meeting Closed: Motion to Close Meeting: Motion made to close the Board of Health meeting by Cynthia Suopis, seconded by Suzanne Smith, all in favor (4-0)

Meeting closed at 6:29 PM.

The next scheduled Board of Health Meeting: TBD

Melissa Roberts-Cote, BOH Clerk
