

NORTHAMPTON BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES

September 15, 2011

On this date a meeting was held at the City Hall Hearing Room, 2nd Floor, 210 Main St.

Present: Donna Salloom, Chair; Suzanne Smith, M.D.; Joanne Levin, M.D.

Ben Wood, Director

At 5:00 pm Chairperson Donna Salloom called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Suzanne Smith moved to accept the minutes from the July 21, 2011 board meeting. Donna Salloom seconded. All Approved.

NEW BUSINESS

1. SIP, Coffee & Tea Bar, 8 Crafts Ave., Variance

Donna Salloom introduced a letter from SIP requesting that they be allowed to use time as a food control and that Inspector Daniel Wasiuk recommended that they be allowed the variance. Suzanne Smith moved to approve the variance. Donna Salloom seconded. All approved.

2. Well Study

Ben Wood explained that the department has incomplete data on private wells in Northampton. The Health Department complies with the state regulations which require that all setback regulations related to Title V be met when issuing well permits. Mr. Wood explained that he would like for more comprehensive data to be available. Mr. Wood continued that he has arranged for several Health Department interns to conduct a survey of properties in the city. These interns would gather data from the MA Department of Environmental Protection. They would also conduct a field assessment gathering GPS data, well completion reports, and water quality tests. The goal of this study is to locate and map as many Northampton wells as possible and to possibly formulate expanded well regulations in the future.

3. Flu Vaccine Update

Ben Wood reported that the state supplied flu vaccine is less than last year and has a very narrow definition of priority population. The defined priority population for this year is age 19 and under, as well as the underinsured and uninsured. This leaves out seniors which are a large segment of Northampton residents that traditionally utilize our Flu Clinics. As a result, we will be purchasing a larger than normal amount of vaccine for use in the “nonpriority” populations: Seniors, Employees, both school and city. Also, for the first time, aggressively going after reimbursement for this purchased vaccine. The Health Department has applied for and received a ‘Medicare Provider Number’ to allow us to bill Medicare for vaccine cost and administration. The department has also contracted with Commonwealth Billing, a third party billing service, to help us with reimbursement from private insurance companies. Mr. Wood went on to explain that the city has agreed to set up a revolving fund specifically for flu vaccine clinics which will allow us to continue providing this vital service, even as the state supplied vaccine dwindles.

4. Office Hours

Ben Wood reported that beginning September 12, 2011 the Northampton Health Department’s official help desk hours will be 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM. These hours correspond with the department clerk’s hours. The office will open 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM for self service access to permit applications, complaint forms and form drop off in the lobby, as well as inspector help by appointment or by chance. These changes have been accepted by the mayor’s office and have been announced to the city by email and website announcement.

5. Multi Unit Smoking Analysis

Ben Wood stated that Jennifer Brown, Northampton Health Department’s Tobacco/Asthma Intern, has received a great response to the Housing Authority Smoking Survey. There were more than 175 responses and many good comments. The data is currently being analyzed and further reports will be forthcoming. The next step is a survey directed to Northampton Multi unit Landlords that will be mailed in mid October.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Drozdal Funeral Home

Ben Wood announced that there are no updates. The Commonwealth’s hearing has been postponed, therefore we are still waiting to act until their ruling has been decided.

2. October Board of Health Meeting

Ben Wood asked the board members to confirm the date change for the October Board of Health Meeting from October 20th to October 13th. All confirmed.

3. Florence Casket Company

Ben Wood reported that a professor at Smith College had offered the Health Department the loan of some sophisticated air quality testing equipment. Mr. Wood explained that the department had set up a schedule of “walk by” inspections over the summer months and that this would be a good opportunity to supplement that data.

4. District Incentive Grant

Donna Salloom reported that the District Incentive Grant meetings are coming to a close and that the process is moving onto the next phase in regionalization discussions.

A discussion followed with Suzanne Smith making the assertion the Northampton Board of Health is in favor of the concept of regionalization however we are going to delay a decision on moving forward until more information is available. Joanne Levin and Donna Salloom agreed.

5. Wildlife Ordinance Discussion and Proposal

Donna Salloom introduced the continuing discussion about the proposed wildlife ordinance. The purpose of the proposal is to control the nuisance of wildlife, especially black bears, that may cause harm to property, to safety or to the public’s health in the city of Northampton.

Major points of discussion included:

- Maureen Carney has agreed to cosponsor, with the Health Department, this recommendation to city council.
- Silk Mill Building: a recent positive example of change related to wildlife problems. The management company has made a switch to a bear proof dumpster and has included a locking mechanism as a result of bear activity/ break ins.
- Making Bear Resistant Refuge Containers and Bear Resistant Dumpster Enclosures a major part of the proposed regulations.
- The inclusion of substantial fines on a graduated scale, as recommended by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.
- Placing an importance on education of city residents on the public health issues as well as the nuisance issues related to intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife.

6. Standard Operating Guidelines

Donna Salloom introduced the continuing discussion of the Standard Operating Guidelines for the Northampton Board of Health. After a brief discussion, Chairperson Salloom decided to table the discussion because of time constraints. She asked the board to look over the proposed guidelines and to email suggestions and comments to Director Ben Wood so that these could be included in the next discussion.

Donna Salloom adjourned the meeting at 7:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Heather McBride