

CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Board of Health
Minutes of the Meeting
September 3, 2020
6:00 p.m.
Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Board members virtually present courtesy of a system organized by the City's IT Department: Chairperson: Dr. Richard Sagall; Vice–Chairperson: Robert Harris; Frederick Cowan; and Claudia Schweitzer. Present from the Health Department: Health Director: Karin Carroll; Assistant Director: Max Schenk. Absent: Joe Rosa.

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law. Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. If you are calling in on a phone you can press Star 9 (*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device there is a "raise hand" button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.

PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATION

There was no "Public Oral Communication".

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Schweitzer to approve the Gloucester Board of Health minutes of the meeting of August 6, 2020 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.**

OLD BUSINESS

UPDATE: 159 East Main Street Noise Complaint and Sound Re-test Requirement from July 11, 2019-

Mr. Schenk thanked Mr. Cowan for doing a late night sound test at Atlantic Fish and Seafood. He stated that the results of the sound test fell under the base for the limit allowed. He stated that according to the report they are falling under compliance.

Mr. Cowan stated that once they shut everything off at the building the ambient sound level dropped below a violation. The ambient noise remaining was coming from the neighborhood, mostly from the air conditioners of the homes in the area. He stated that the homes in the area that hot and humid night were responsible for near 50 decibels of sound.

Nick Osgood, managing partner of NSDJ Real Estate LLC and president of Atlantic Fish and Seafood at 159 East Main Street appeared before the board via telephone. He stated that he is happy to have worked through this issue and happy that they have the decibels down to an acceptable level. He stated that he is open to working with the neighbors if the building gets loud again in the future.

Mr. Schenk stated he spoke with Chris Leghorn, an abutter to Atlantic Fish and Seafood, and her comments that the changes that were made did make a significant difference in the evening. Concerns remain for her in the daytime hours but she understands that there are greater levels allowed during the daytime hours and she is appreciative of the progress that has happened. *Mr. Schenk* stated that he will update the Building Department on the issue. *Ms. Schweitzer* stated that the Ward Councilor should be updated as well.

Chairperson Sagall asked if there was anyone who would like to speak on the issue. There was no one.

Update on Covid-19 Response Actions-

Mayor Romeo -Theken appeared before the board. She thanked the Board of Health and the Health Department for all their work during the pandemic. She stated that she truly appreciates all the work they have been doing. She stated that they should consider writing a letter to the Governor regarding testing for the homeless community.

Ms. Carroll stated that the Dental Center will open back up in a couple weeks at a limited capacity. She stated that if schools stay open they are hoping to transition to doing work on site as they had planned to. She stated that Mass in Motion are working with the Seniors on the Go program to provide produce. She stated that there are three active cases in Gloucester currently. She stated that the wastewater testing will restart and they will add that data to the weekly report. She stated that the main area for concern is trying to get more testing sites in Cape Ann. She stated that they are no longer testing at the homeless shelter being cost prohibitive and due to State mandated Social Distancing there are currently 38 people on the waiting list for the shelter. She stated that they are working closely with the schools on the reopening plan.

Mr. Cowan asked if teachers are responsible for their own masks. *Ms. Carroll* stated that she thinks teachers and students are responsible for their own masks but the schools will have some on hand in case they are forgotten.

Ms. Schweitzer asked if the schools were following Department of Education safety guidelines or the CDC. *Ms. Carroll* responded that the Department of Education now matches the CDC guidelines.

Chairperson Sagall stated that children over ten years old should be treated as an adult in terms of the severity of the disease.

Mr. Schenk thanked Brian Meuleman, the Food Inspector for all his work during the pandemic.

The board thanked the Health Department for their efforts around the pandemic.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion Re: Options for Mosquito Control District Participation-

Mr. Schenk stated that he was approached by Debra Kramer regarding the new legislation and looking at some of the provisions outlined in the bill to gain participation in the testing component of the mosquito control district. He stated that the new legislation is geared towards communities in Western Massachusetts who have the type of vector mosquitoes that are of concern but do not have a mosquito control district that they can participate in. He stated that Gloucester has mostly salt marsh mosquitoes that are not vectors for EEE or West Nile Virus. He stated that nothing much has changed as far as Gloucester is concerned and there is still a three-year requirement for joining the mosquito control district and the cost three years ago was approximately \$80,000 a year.

Debra Kramer, of 318 Concord Street, appeared before the board via telephone. She stated that there has been a change in the law regarding mosquito control. She stated that she has spoken to the Board of Health in the past about joining the Northeast Mosquito Control District and the City Council was not eager to join because of the cost. She stated that under the new law it may be possible to request testing for EEE. She stated that they are not interested in spraying but knowing what types of risks are in mosquitoes so they know how to behave accordingly. She stated that she understood the new legislation to be an evaluation of mosquito control programs in Massachusetts with the opportunity to have an effect on how decisions are made about assessments for particular towns and cities to join. She stated that it is based on the total amount of square miles not on the amount of wetlands there is. She stated that disparities in the way the formula they use are huge.

Mr. Schenk stated that in the past the Health Department has reached out to the Department of Public Health about testing themselves but they did not receive a positive response. He stated that the companies who do the testing are only interested in working with the mosquito control district.

Ms. Kramer stated that she will reach out to Ann-Margaret Ferrante to see if she can persuade them to look into the establishment of a committee to determine the equity of the mosquito control district.

The board thanked Ms. Kramer for her attention to the issue.

Discussion Re: 2020 Flu Vaccinations for Seniors-

Ms. Carroll stated that they are doing lots of planning for the flu clinics. She stated that they have a phased approach planned. She stated that phase one will be to offer the flu vaccines to seniors living in Gloucester Housing Authority facilities going from apartment to apartment if necessary to achieve total coverage, City workers, and the schools for staff and students. She stated that at this point they do not have the guidance to explore a drive-thru flu clinic but perhaps a clinic in the Senior Center where social distancing can be practiced will be possible. She stated that they have been discussing the clinics with Walgreens and CVS. She stated that companies can reach out to these private pharmacies and if they have 20 or more employees interested, they will have a flu clinic on site for those companies.

Discussion Re: Whether There are Any Health Impacts Related to 5G Phone Networks-

Mr. Schenk stated that this item was brought forward by Ward 4 Councilor Gilman through the Mayor's Office. He stated that 5G phone networks are being proposed to the community. He stated that the Health Department submitted research to the Board of Health members. He stated that 5G networks have smaller transmission units compared to the large cell towers. He stated 5G can provide better, fastest coverage by using a higher frequency at shorter distances. He stated that there was a study done with rats where the male rats developed a heart cancer over time and there was no impact on the female rats. He stated that the type of non-ionizing radiation lacks sufficient power to break through the skin and harm DNA. He stated that the radiation levels are lower than the 4G transmitters they are using now. *Chairperson Sagall* stated that the International Agency for Research on Cancer has determined that 5G transmission is deemed a Group 2B, which is a possible carcinogen to humans. There is some evidence that it can cause cancer to humans but it is inclusive. He stated that Aloe Vera, pickled vegetables, wine, turmeric, etc, are also in Group 2B.

Cece Doucette, from Ashland appeared before the board via telephone. She stated that she spent years bringing wifi into schools but then was informed there was an environmental impact and started to research the issue. She stated that there are thousands of studies that link non-ionizing, non-thermal, low-level radio frequency to child and adult cancers. She stated that it is also linked to cognitive disease and infertility.

Councilor Gilman appeared before the board via telephone. She stated that there was a petition on Salt Island and another one in the Brier Neck with concerns regarding cell technology. She stated that the 5G providers were proposing installing boxes at distances varying from every 2 to 12 houses with one box to be within 20-30 feet of where people were sleeping. When brought to the installer's attention, that box was moved to another location. She stated that other city councilors are also concerned about this technology and thanked the board for looking into the issue.

Chairperson Sagall asked Ms. Doucette to forward her research to the Health Department.

The board decided that they need more time to make a recommendation.

CONCERNS OF BOARD MEMBERS

Pollution at the Beaches- *Mr. Cowan* asked if there was any cause for such high single-day pollution levels at the beach. *Mr. Schenk* responded that there is a human impact and also water temperature causes bacteria to grow faster.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting Board of Health- The next Board of Health monthly meeting will be on October 1, 2020 at 6 pm.

MOTION by Mr. Cowan to adjourn.
Seconded by Mr. Harris. **CARRIED.**
MEETING ADJOURNED – 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

Richard Sagall, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:

September 3, 2020 Board of Health Agenda
Minutes of August 6, 2020 meeting