



NEEDHAM PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION



Board of Health Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting DRAFT

Date: March 11, 2021

Location: Remote via Zoom per Governor Charles Baker's COVID-19 Executive Order 3/12/2020

Members: Kathleen Ward Brown, ScD, Chair
Edward Cosgrove, PhD, Member
Stephen Epstein, MD, MPP, Member
Christina S. Mathews, MPH, Member
Robert A. Partridge, MD, MPH, Vice Chair

Staff Present: Timothy M. McDonald, Director of Needham Department of Health and Human Services; Tara Gurge, Assistant Director of the Public Health Division; Tiffany Zike, Assistant Director of Public Health; Carol Read; Diana Acosta; Karen Shannon; Lynn Schoeff; Dawn Stiller; Maryanne Dinell; and Mary Fountaine. Also in attendance was D. J. Wilson, Massachusetts Municipal Association

Call to Order

Dr. Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00PM and initiated roll call. Present were Dr. Brown-Y, Dr. Cosgrove-Y, Dr. Epstein-Y, Ms. Mathews-Y and Dr. Partridge-Y.

The meeting is being conducted remotely using Zoom consistent with Governor Baker's March 12th order regarding COVID-19. The materials for this meeting were circulated previously and are available on the Town website. All votes will be voice votes by roll call.

Approval of Minutes – February 12 and February 24, 2021

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Mathews and seconded by Dr. Partridge, it was unanimously voted to approve the above sets of minutes as amended. Dr. Brown-Y, Dr. Cosgrove-Y (arrived late), Dr. Epstein-Y, Ms. Mathews-Y and Dr. Partridge-Y. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion of Tobacco Regulation, Site Revisions and Adoption of Site Fines

Ms. Gurge noted that the tobacco regulations had been revised in accordance with the recommendations of D. J. Wilson of the Massachusetts Municipal Association (see attached regulation.)



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Revise Article 1: Regulation Affecting Smoking and the Sale and Distribution of Tobacco Products in Needham

Dr. Brown announced that this hearing is being conducted to discuss the revisions to the above Article 1. Mr. Wilson highlighted the following revisions:

Violations

Violations result in both state *and* local suspensions.

Rolling Paper

Mr. Wilson noted that up until 2018 cities and towns were prohibited from regulating rolling paper. Discussion ensued on whether to ban all rolling papers or flavored papers only. Dr. Partridge noted that from the public health rationale and to be consistent with current regulations on non-flavored cigarette sales, flavored papers only be banned.

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Dr. Epstein and seconded by Dr. Cosgrove, it was unanimously voted to adopt the revision with regard to flavored rolling papers. Dr. Brown-Y, Dr. Cosgrove-Y, Dr. Epstein-Y, Ms. Mathews-Y and Dr. Partridge-Y. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion also ensued on revisions made to the nicotine content of electronic nicotine delivery systems and the adult only retail stores.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Cosgrove and seconded by Dr. Epstein, it was unanimously voted to approve all revisions to the tobacco regulations as presented by Mr. Wilson. Dr. Brown-Y, Dr. Cosgrove-Y, Dr. Epstein-Y, Ms. Mathews-Y and Dr. Partridge-Y. Motion passed 5-0.

At 6:20PM a motion was made by Dr. Cosgrove and seconded by Ms. Mathews to close the public hearing. Dr. Brown-Y, Dr. Cosgrove-Y, Dr. Epstein-Y, Ms. Mathews-Y and Dr. Partridge-Y. Motion passed 5-0.

Staff Reports

COVID-19 Update – Timothy McDonald

Mr. McDonald reported that Taleb Abdelrahim continues to train crucial Medical Reserve Corp volunteers as well as volunteers from Aging Services and Park and Recreation (see attached report.) With the closing of the vaccination clinics, volunteers are utilized answering the high volume of telephone calls to Aging Services, as well as initiating calls to elders on the Friendly Caller Program.

Mr. McDonald also reported that he is meeting tomorrow with the Assistant Commissioner of Public Health about the possibility of Needham leading a vaccine dispensary partnership. Because Needham is within 45 minutes of three mass vaccination sites, it may be challenging to achieve the regional partnership status, but Mr. McDonald will continue to advocate for it. Dr. Cosgrove suggested Mr. McDonald also advocate for teachers to be vaccinated.



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Substance Abuse Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN) – Karen Shannon

Ms. Shannon reported she continues to promote the vaping cessation program. With the assistance of SALSA students, cessation program flyers were posted at the high school. The flyer has also been translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Russian and will be made available to help ensure accessibility to the program. New vaping education is being integrated into the Wellness curriculum. Sixth grade students are receiving an online unit which includes several educational videos from Scholastic; the unit includes pre- and post- surveys. Ninth grade students will participate in a new online vaping unit produced by Everfi. The February mid-year grant report was submitted to Metro West Health Foundation.

On February 11, the SPAN Parent Action Team co-hosted a virtual event for middle-school parents, “Navigating Screen Time, Digital Socializing, and Parenting during COVID-19,” with guest speaker Dr. Jill Walsh. The event was attended by one-hundred and seventy parents. Two Needham High School students who are part of SALSA (Students Advocating Life Without Substance Abuse) attended a virtual leadership forum through the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), which included meetings with state legislators Senator Edward Markey and Representative Jake Auchincloss.

Regional Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative (SAPC) – Carol Read

Ms. Read expressed gratitude to be able to assist in the operation of the COVID vaccine clinics. Since there was no capacity for vaccination in Medfield, she was happy that residents had the option of the Needham clinic.

Travelling Meals – Maryanne Dinell

Ms. Dinell reported that the number of meals delivered was up in March. Summer staff will be hired to handle the expected demand.

Environmental Health – Tara Gurge and Diana Acosta

Ms. Gurge reported that the FDA grant will accommodate the hiring of an intern in May.

The resumption of outdoor dining will require the assessment of protocol by various town departments and the final approval of the Select Board. Jersey barriers are required around the perimeter of the tables as well as continued maintenance of appropriate distance between tables.

An increase in septic and well permits has been seen due to an increase in property sales. Ms. Gurge and Ms. Acosta continue to work with Terry Wolfson of the IT Dept. in developing additional online permit applications, and with Ms. Schoeff on updating the well regulations.

Ms. Gurge reached out to the owner of 169 St. Mary’s St. to set up a site visit with representatives of the Select Board, Building Commissioner and Board of Health. The purpose is to observe progress being made on the exterior removal of items stored at the property.



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Ms. Acosta reported an increase in housing issues. A visit, along with a representative from the Housing Authority, is planned at the property with regard to tenant complaint of bedbugs and verification of pest control. She noted that more tenant housing complaints are arising due to more folks being COVID-homebound.

Ms. Acosta also noted an increase in inquiries on outdoor pool reopening guidance due to the pandemic. Since the state has not updated the regulations, COVID pool protocols from last year will remain. Park and Recreation is planning to open pools in mid-June. Updated state regulations on outdoor pools are expected.

Ms. Acosta is processing tent permits.

Ms. Gurge reported that signage will be posted at clinics with advice about wearing masks and maintaining social distance even after vaccination.

Ms. Acosta reported an increase in inquiries on camps. The regulations will remain the same as last year until the state determines if there are to be revisions.

A body art inquiry has been received from Just Be. The beauty salon has inquired about offering microblading services and has provided the documentation of the required technician's training (at least 2 years apprenticeship.) Ms. Acosta said that she is waiting for a statement from the MA Board of Cosmetology confirming no variance is needed to offer this service, and that separate entrances are no longer required. The owner needs to submit a layout of the salon that shows a separate room for the service.

COVID-19 Update – Timothy McDonald

Mr. McDonald presented the report on COVID-19 data for the month of February. See attached PowerPoint presentation for detailed information on the following data:

- a) Daily and cumulative cases
- b) February cases
- c) Age and gender breakdown
- d) Monthly confirmed cases by age group
- e) Monthly confirmed cases by gender
- f) February cases – children and young adults
- g) Age breakdown – academic year to date
- h) Age distribution of cases vs. Needham population
- i) February incidence rate by age group
- j) Incidence rate among children and young adults
- k) Incidence rate over time
- l) Incidence rate for children and young adults
- m) February symptomatic and asymptomatic cases
- n) Percent of cases that are symptomatic
- o) COVID-19 clusters



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- p) Contacts
- q) COVID-19 vaccinations
- r) Vaccinations by town

Mr. McDonald spoke about an increase in the percentage of symptomatic cases over asymptomatic cases during February while the overall numbers were going down. Board members engaged in a discussion with Mr. McDonald and Ms. Fountaine about the complexities of running a report in the state-wide MAVEN system, the system used for disease tracking. She also spoke about a recent cluster at a daycare center. Although the daycare facility is outside of Needham, residents were involved in the cluster.

Discussion also ensued on vaccination. The Board was in favor of establishing a homebound vaccination program. If Needham is designated as a regional site with a steady supply of doses, this program may be pursued. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine would lend itself more to homebound administration in terms of storage and transport of dosage, etc.

Coordination with Schools – Timothy McDonald

Mr. McDonald noted the need to provide guidance to the School Committee on a safe plan to reopen schools. They are discussing phasing in students' return, starting with k-5 followed by middle and then high school, with testing provided at each phase. Dr. Epstein recommended that the Board advocate for the vaccination of teachers as a high-risk group before the opening of schools. However, until all teachers are vaccinated, he suggested that the School Committee consider providing teachers with the extra level of protection that high quality N95 masks can provide. Although the protocol for medical personnel is to be individually fit-tested, this requirement could be waived for teachers. Since N95 masks are more comfortable than cloth masks, the teachers would have less difficulty wearing them all day. Maintaining 6ft social distance in the classroom continues to be imperative. Dr. Brown will share the Board of Health's comments with the School Committee at its next meeting on Monday.

Other Business

Dr. Epstein is writing a letter to the editor of the New England Journal of Medicine with regard to the Board's position on mass vaccination sites. Dr. Cosgrove will join in the drafting of the letter.

Meeting Schedule

March 26 8:00-9:00AM COVID-focused meeting



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Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Epstein and seconded by Dr. Cosgrove, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Dr. Brown-Y, Dr. Cosgrove-Y, Dr. Epstein-Y, Ms. Matthews-Y and Dr. Partridge-Y. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:32PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford

Attachments:

Approved Minutes of February 12 and February 24, 2021

Regulation Affecting Smoking and the Sale and Distribution of Tobacco Products

Staff Reports

COVID-19 Update