

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2022 – 9:30a

Present:

Board:

Shepard Cohen, MPA, Chair
Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Vice Chair
Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Secretary

Staff:

Deadra Doku-Gardner, MS, Administrator
Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nursing Supervisor
Vivian Zeng, Senior Environmental Health
Jhana Wallace, Community Health Coordinator
Adam DiPersio, Environmental Health

In attendance:

Violetta Semenova – Owner, Beauty Republic West
Viktoriiia Suleimanova – staff, Beauty Republic West
Kunduz Kokobaeva – staff, Beauty Republic West, staff
Shira Doron, MD, Resident
Diane Soderholm, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 9:36a.m.

Citizens speak

Diane Soderholm reported on her concerns about the proposed biosafety lab to be located at 93 Worcester Street. Ms. Soderholm reported that many Massachusetts communities have biosafety lab regulations, permit processes, and committees in place. She strongly suggests that Wellesley follows their lead and immediately create a committee to review the regulations and permitting process, in order to protect the health and safety of Wellesley residents.

Chairmans Report

Shep Cohen briefly reviewed the Board of Health meeting that took place last night.

1. Administration

a) Variance Request – Beauty Republic (572 Washington St, Suite #2)

Vivian Zeng reviewed the variance request sought by Beauty Republic.

Ms. Zeng reviewed the permitting process and the local body art code.

Ms. Zeng noted the landlord (Grossman) has denied the facility the permission to make any plumbing changes to the rental space. Ms Zeng elaborated on Chapter 19 Section 5 (a) of the Wellesley code sections related to the physical facility.

Ms Zeng explained that the location requires a variance as the procedure room does not have a plumbed hand sink and the janitorial sink is not within the suite but is located on separate floor of the building.

The owner of the establishment, Ms Semenova reported on how she intends to meet the health and safety requirements by purchasing a commercial grade sink that has capacity for 5 gallons of fresh water and a waste-water tank. The unit will be installed in the procedure room. Ms Semenova will be contracting with a cleaning contractor who will use the janitorial mop sink located in the building. This contractor will clean the floors and surfaces using the building's commercial sink.

Ms. Zeng will be requiring that the annual cleaning contract be submitted annually with permit renewal. In addition, a letter will be required from the landlord indicating that Beauty Republic will be permitted to use the janitorial sink located on another floor of the building.

Linda Oliver Grape inquired about the handles of the commercial grade sink – noting that the sink unit be required to have hand blades to turn the water off and on. Ms. Oliver Grape also inquired as to the use of an autoclave. Beauty Republic does not use an autoclave as everything is disposable.

The Board of Health voted to approve both variance requests for the hand sink and the mop sink and that efforts be made to replace the faucets with hand blades. The conditions of the approval will be forwarded to the establishment by Vivian Zeng.

2. Community Health

a) COVID update

Ann Marie McCauley reported on the Covid cases of the last several weeks of May noting that the case numbers are slowly trending down. She reported that in the early weeks of May 2022 there were approximately 20 positive cases reported per day however as of today there have been only 10 reported positive cases. (These are PCR state reported cases, home testing is not reportable) The reduction in cases may be due to the colleges heading out for the summer.

Ms McCauley also reported that Wellesley High School and Middle School have a handful of cases and no clusters are present. Schools continue to plan graduations, concerts etc. Only events being held inside are to be masked.

In addition, Marcia Testa Simonson reported there has also been a reduction of Covid infection detected in wastewater samples across the region. That data was released yesterday (5/24/22).

Shira Doron reported that there has been a decrease in cases day over day in the hospitals since May 15 and believes that the virus now peaked. She did report that they hospitals are seeing influenza type A and a little influenza type B. Ms McCauley reported that she has received ten cases of influenza B. Marcia Testa Simonson and Shire Doron reviewed current hospitalizations within the state reporting that hospitalizations are not primarily for Covid.

The Board of Health discussed implementing waste water testing in Wellesley. Dr Doron stated that the town would get what they already receive from the state testing. Wellesley is included in the south region of the MWRA test. Linda Oliver Grape would like to obtain pricing. She noted that this might help identify other illnesses and opioid use etc. Given that information, the department could implement and recommend intervention programs.

Jhana Wallace reported on the recent Newton-Wellesley Hospital Community Benefits meeting. At the meeting she learned that there was an increase in Emergency Room admissions— but these were not for Covid related cases.

Linda Oliver Grape reported that she would like to review a PFAS plan for the coming year.

b) Masking

Marcia Testa Simonson addressed the masking issue that was addressed during the Select Board meeting last night. The Select Board has been receiving questions from the community.

Marcia Testa Simonson reported that Wellesley did not have a mask mandate prior to now. She explained that public health moves towards education and that the threat of the virus is no larger than it was before. The Board of Health must continue with the policies and recommendations that are already in place rather than change them.

Linda Oliver Grape agreed noting that with the warmer weather people are outdoors more frequently and she agrees with the approach for education. Large groups should continue to be encouraged to wear masks indoors.

Shira Doron reviewed the various masks available and their uses. She reported that people are going to places and doing things that they have to take the mask off. Masks work. PPE works to protect the individual. Dr Doron reported that individuals who are higher risk need to protect themselves.

The Board has requested that Jhana Wallace prepare a document for news and announcements with additional vaccine and educational information . The board asked that the document highlight the Health Department suggestions regarding masks and the importance of vaccination.

c) Mental Health

Shep Cohen reported that that Wanda Alvarez and Joyce Saret participated and provided programming events over the last month.

d) HRS Contract

The Board of Health is anticipating reviewing the revised HRS FY23 contract at the next meeting.

2. Environmental Health

a) Update

Vivian Zeng provided a brief update on the following:

- Summer camps
- Morses Pond opening
- Upcoming and opening restaurants and bakeries
- New body art establishment
- Seasonal pools- all been inspected and ready for opening Memorial Day weekend

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2022, at 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner, Administrator