



## OBSERVER REPORT

**BOARD OF HEALTH – 5-26-26**

**In person-Hybrid**

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

**Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Tom Massaro, Amanda Ritvo**

### **Swap Shed**

Mr. Petty introduced the volunteer manager of the Swap Shed. He noted how the community was grateful for its operation and had a large following. It is open Saturdays in the spring through the fall, and occasionally in the winter. The manager thanked him and asked that it not be forgotten the promise of new swap shed. Mr. Petty spoke further about the volume on Saturdays when the entire parking lot was full and more. There is a plan to add more parking spaces and a painted walkway to the facility. The manager gave the board member a sheet with the number of items that were “swapped” as well as the weights for the past year.

Gretchen explained how limited space and exhausting the work was in preparing and closing the swap shed each week. There are 14 dedicated volunteers and few occasional ones. Many of the volunteers are in their 70s and 80s. Physically moving the items in and out of the ship containers is difficult, especially the furniture. (In the past using scouts or high school students has not been helpful.) The tables that are used are heavy and surplus from the schools, etc. Another problem with the current setup is that when it rains, they are unable to open the shed because of the prospects of mold.

Discussion then turned toward a new facility. Mr. Petty talked about rolling units that could roll in and out of the shed. The proposed building would be on a footprint of 40x30 (or 20). The original plan for the building from many years ago (available on the website) was stylish and would have

garage style doors. There is conduit to the site for electricity in the future. As for the construction, Mr. Petty is looking at prefabs; some companies will do barn style designs. There was the thought of perhaps engaging students from Essex Agriculture and Technical school. As for “funding” this construction, there was mention of using money from the “revolving fund” from commercial use fees; perhaps of a Go-Fund-Me; of funds that could come from a proposed nonprofit 501(c)3 “Friend of Marblehead Public Health” or “Friends of the Swap Shed.”; or applying to the Elizabeth Shattuck fund.

### **Bathing Beaches**

Mr. Petty said that the water testing at the beaches will start on 6/3 with the anticipation of the beaches opening 6/5. Sampling will continue each Wednesday one hour before or after high tide until 9/13.

### **Curbside Collection Update**

Mr. Petty said that the distribution of the 65 and 95-gallon bins will begin on 6/1 and continue on schedule each day. 16000 barrels will be distributed to the 8000 residences. Once these are delivered, residents can take their old barrels to the transfer station to be disposed of.

At this point a resident from 17 Elm Street had an extended public comment. She said that MHD is not a one size town. There are residences such as hers that are attached to other units and there is no yard and no parking spaces. No place to store the bins. What choice do they have except to “opt out”. Bins everywhere are unsightly. Some residents are not even aware of the changes.

Mr. Petty replied that the “new system” is industry driven. Companies won’t even bid on the previous manual collection system only on an automated one. In Old Town the collection will continue as is. In addition, with these barrels they can regulate how much is put out. The regulations stipulate that all trash and recycling must be placed in their respective containers with lids closed. Mr. McMahon added that within a few years even the smaller companies will adopt the automated system.

The resident from Elm Street opined about other options - taking it to the transfer station yourself. Mr. Petty responded that they don’t have the capacity for that amount of traffic, nor the funds for keeping the TS open on Sundays. As for the size of the barrels the 95 gallon was considered if the town went to recycling pickup every other week. Mr. Petty said that all (with some exceptions) would start with the 65/95 barrels but that he had 180 pairs of 35/65 barrels for could be “swapped out” on a case-by-case basis.

Other discussion touched on the fact that this was not an “ideal” solution. Further talk was about the trash/recycling collection disposal override on the ballot and how it had been excluded from the general override.

### **Creating a Healthier Marblehead (CAHM)**

Dr. Massaro gave an update. On 5/27 the working group will be presented with the first “batch” report from the survey, focus groups, and MA demographic health data. He reminded the public that the purpose of the survey was to establish a set of priorities for public health for Marblehead. He hopes that by mid-June there will be a public presentation. The aim is to have five or six priorities to increase the wellness in MHD over the next several years.

### **Marblehead Cares website**

Dr. Massaro noted that the site that operated when the MHTF (Mental Health Task Force) was operating had “died” but was being resuscitated. He presented a motion to the board to allow Mr. Petty to contract with Flat Rock Creative (Peter Schalck) to revive the website. (This was passed.) Mr. Schalck has found the old website for MHD Cares and its archives. He will begin there and make it more robust. The funds for this contract will come from a grant to improve public health. The amount is not to exceed \$3000.

After some discussion including the upcoming June elections and overrides, the next meeting will be on 6/16.