



## OBSERVER REPORT

**Board of Health** - 6-15-22 LWV Observer - Thomas Krueger

Members in Attendance via Zoom - Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker (chairperson), Sec. Andrea Flaxer, Joanne Greer Miller, Helaine Hazlett

Meeting - regularly scheduled

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - Hybrid (In person and Zoom)

### AGENDA

#### COVID-19 Update

Andrew gave an update of recent MHD COVID statistics. As of 6/9 total cases: 4046; active cases 64; probable cases 13. Age distribution: 0-4, 4; 5-11, 9; 12-19, 2; 20-29, 7; 30-39, 8; 40-49, 19; 50-59, 13; 60-69, 19; 70-79, 9; 80+, 7. The average daily incidence rate per 100,000 = 39.4 (lower); total tests to date = 111,977; tests (PCR) in last 14 days = 1,278; percent positive = 8.84% (lower). In summary MHD is on the downslope from the peak, which had trended up by 3/9, peaked after 5/9. Hopefully there will be a quiet summer.

#### Fowl Permit Application -17 Haley Road

The attorney for the applicants for the above fowl permit came forward. She reviewed all the steps for the application that the applicants had completed, including application, notice of intent, letter to abutters, receipt from postal office, etc. She stated there was no rational reason not to grant the application. She went on to say the applicants had done extensive research, talked to the Conservation Commission whose land abuts, environmental agencies, etc. She noted the chickens will be in a coop, so unlikely to escape. Noise level would be about that of a dog or child. Other concerns can all be addressed and coop and area can be re-inspected by the HD if needed. The board chair stated that there has been the right to go and inspect. Andrew asked a few questions about specifics, e.g. how manure would be handled, etc.

The Chair then asked for public comment. Seven neighbors/abutters rose and presented their arguments to deny this permit. A major concern was that of coyotes and the possibility that the chickens would attract coyotes to the area, especially with the chickens' scent. There have been a number of coyotes in the area that have been heard, tracks seen, and physically seen. It especially concerning for pets and young children. A path used by children passes near the property. (An unprovoked attack by a coyote of man in Swampscott had recently happened.) Other concerns were that the coop would attract rodents, noise and smell in a densely populated area. Another abutter said the plans did not address electricity, plumbing, and lacked a building permit. It was stated that there were more abutters than just the one who had concerns.

In response one of the applicants addressed each issue. The applicant had sent letters to the abutters but only heard back from two. The applicant has contacted wildlife experts about the concerns and had been told if all the precautions were taken coyotes and rodents would not be a problem. Regarding a building permit this is only obtained after a fowl permit has been granted. There is no need for plumbing and lighting would be solar. Water would be brought daily and food removed at night. The structure would be as far as possible from the neighbors, and the construction would not permit a fowl to escape. The noise level is about 60 decibels, travels about 25 feet - a dog's bark is about 80-90 db. Eastern coyotes are very territorial and the ones in MHD would keep others out. Avian flu very unlikely as coop will have a cover, and the major risk is from wild water fowl and shore birds. The applicant stated that they would secure the trash cans per the request of the neighbor.

In a further response the neighbors/abutters said they did not want to have self-police this coop. More comments were made about coyote behavior - dogs and cats attract coyotes, etc.

At this point (an hour and a half later) the BOH deliberated this difficult decision. They noted that there are already coyotes in the area, the town already has 12 other fowl permits, and in the past five years there has been only one complaint - rodents had been attracted to food on the ground which was resolved when this was stopped. One board member asked Andrew to read parts of the Rules and Regulations, especially concerning formal complaints and their investigation. He went on to explain the process: once a fowl permit is granted, a building permit is sought, then as building proceeds, he inspects the structure, etc. If there is an issue, e.g., rodent control, a specialist is called in. At the conclusion, the permit was granted in unanimous vote.

### **Seaglass Village**

A representative of the Seaglass Village organization gave a presentation to acquaint the BOH with the program and possibly see if there were ways they could work together. Briefly, she and her husband are in their 80s and would like to continue to live in their home, but as they are aging upkeep gets to physically impossible. In this case it was to remove shutters so that she could repaint them. She gave a call to Seaglass Village and volunteer came out and removed them. This is an example of what the organization can offer to seniors who want to continue to live in their home or area. The idea is enable seniors to live in place, safely, independently, and enjoyably with volunteer help. The assistance can be much broader - rides to doctor's visits, help finding services, services beyond hospice, how to call town departments, social outreach, walk dogs, etc. etc. Seaglass Village is an organization that started 20 years ago and there are 300 Villages across the nation.

Questions were asked about the specifics of the program. Cost is \$360 per year although scholarships of \$5/month are offered. They do have a paid director and the office is located in the basement of a church in Swampscott, though not affiliated with the church. They feel that they can do some things that the COA can't do because of greater flexibility.

There was some discussion of what the SV could do - help get word out about issues, perhaps participate in the MHD Mental Health Task Force.

### **Transfer Station Update**

Briefly, it was reported that a traffic flow study had been done at the Transfer Station, and only preliminary data was available. The study involved various radar and other instruments for collecting data. The firm was asked to evaluate two possible traffic patterns - commercial using exclusively Beacon St. entrance and commercial and residential using the Green St entrance for ingress and to egress on Beacon St. A complete presentation will likely be available in the next 2 weeks.

### **Mental Health Task Force Update**

Ms. Miller gave an update on the task force recent work. They reviewed the 5/5 meeting that was quite successful. There were 100 attendees, excellent feedback, robust discussion about MH needs of the elderly and their adult children. One excellent "take away" was that the mental health of seniors could be improved by turning off the television, especially the news. A program is planned in the future discussing positive parenting to be held at the high school. Also, in the fall another program is planned - the NAN Project - that deals with mental health (depression) and suicide.

Ms. Miller also reported that MHD Police Department had a grant for MH training for the police force up to 40 hours. There are funds for a 24 hour/week professional to work on a jail diversion program, especially when issues are those of mental health crisis.

### **Director's Report**

1. Andrew reported that a MHD business was being fined \$2000 for a second violation of selling tobacco to an underage individual. There is also a 7-day suspension of the business's tobacco license.
2. Sea water beach testing has begun and Gashouse Beach has been closed because of high counts x 2 with a third sample taken today. In the past these have followed rain events. Of note when samples are collected, other aspects of the surface are assessed, e.g., bird dropping which can affect the results
3. Juneteenth - on 6/19 JRM will do regular trash collection but the Transfer Station will be closed. It will also be closed on 6/20 for maintenance.
4. Household Hazardous Waste went well today and 100 MHD and Swampscott residents participated.

The next scheduled BOH meeting is scheduled for 7/12/22 at 7:30 PM