



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH - 4/5/22 LWVM Observer – Thomas Krueger

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

Meeting - Emergency

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - via Zoom

The meeting was opened with a brief statement about opening meetings, followed by a roll call.

COVID Update

Andrew presented the most recent MHD Covid statistics as of 4/1. Total cases = 3422, cases in past 2 weeks = 51, active = 49, probable (3/18-4/1) = 6. The age distributions was 0-4, 4; 5-11, 11; 12-19, 19; 20-29, 3; 30-39, 7; 40-49, 4; 50-59, 5; 60-60, 15; 70-79, 3; 80+, 2. The average incidence per 100,000 = 17.3 (an increase), total tests 104,000+, tests (PCR) in last 2 weeks = 1330; percent positive - 3.61% (an increase).

Andrew stated the CDC following FDA recommendations suggested mRNA boosters for those who are immune suppressed or over the age of 50, and who had had a booster more than 4 months ago. Those who were vaccinated with the J&J vaccine and for whom it was more than 4 months ago could also be vaccinated with the mRNA vaccine. There will be a clinic in MHD in late April for boosters, open to the public.

It is still recommended to use a rapid COVID test before a large gathering as COVID, especially the BA.2 variant is in the area. One should also take other precautions.

Question: where can one go for a test? Andrew said that many PCR testing sites had closed down and diagnosis was relying more on the rapid antigen tests. One could contact their PCP's office about where to go for PCR testing. He added that the results of the rapid tests are not in the statistics above, so the figures are less accurate. The country is swinging to using more rapid testing vs PCR.

MHTF (Mental Health Task Force)

The task force is responding to the mental health concerns of families and others, and is working with a number of other organizations (MHS, Riverside Trauma Center, etc.) A program is planned for 4/6 at MHS working with Lisa Macorio and school staff to discuss the grieving process and other resources in the aftermath of the recent tragic death of a high school senior. This is a rapid response to a pressing MH need and will be taped by MHTV. Live streaming and the MHTV tapes will be available - see marbleheadcares.org.

Another program is planned for 5/5 with the focus on mental health needs and challenges of seniors and their adult children. Sharon Doliber will moderate and tools and resources will be presented for such needs.

Fowl Permitting Process

A resident presented before the Board the current process and hurdles of obtaining a fowl permit for having chickens, questioning the onus put on the petitioner, the sign off process, the power of one neighbor over another, and even the legality. The resident presented the numerous beneficial reasons for having chickens (fresh eggs, self-sustaining, support pets, good for the environment). The chickens are only hens, and as to noise at 25 feet away chickens are no louder than a normal human conversation. Smell and rodents are also not an issue. The process currently requires that all abutters must agree, and without that the petitioner is not even allowed a hearing. Of all the abutters (5), only one had not agreed. Of 11 other surrounding towns, none requires the sign off by abutters and only 3 of 11 require notifying the abutters. The current process in MHD seems unreasonable.

A lawyer for this resident went on to point out is that there is no general law that states this. In fact, the only bylaw is an application, the number of fowl, upholding the BOH conditions and paying a fee. There is no law to require abutters approval. If there was a problem, the abutter could go to the BOH for a hearing. This puts the resident in "the power" of the abutter and strips the BOH of its jurisdiction, and could even lead the abutter to ask for other considerations (e.g money).

In a Q and A period, Andrew stated that this policy dated back to 2009, "before his time." The resident also stated that they are 75-80 feet away from the objecting abutter and the resident has a large almost one-acre lot. When asked about talking to the objecting abutter, the resident has done this. One BOH member noted that they have never received complaints about other chickens in town. It was noted this puts the resident in a very uncomfortable position.

The BOH decided to table this discussion and a decision until the next meeting on 5/10.

Transfer Station

Tonight is the night to vote on one of two options for the transfer station improvements. Andrew reviewed very briefly the two options. Option A is a \$6M option with building a new transfer station, and would require going to Town Meeting to ask for the funds. Option B is a \$1.5M option with renovations to a number of structures and building a new swap shed, staff building, etc. He noted that choosing Option A would mean it is “set in stone”, no changes, whereas Option B would not be.

Option A would separate commercial and residential drop off, and “future proof” the facility (i.e., with a sorting floor, allowing for separating commercial waste if dumps began restricting what could be dumped.) In addition, there would be indoor space for parking equipment which is now done outside. The crisscrossing of commercial and residential traffic would continue. The cons of this option are expense (would have to go to Town Meeting and be approved by voters); traffic crisscrossing; extensive construction and disruption for ~ 18 months.

Option B would provide for a new scale house, new staff facility, new swap shop, as well as repairs to existing structures. The project could go forward with remaining funds and the disruption from construction would be less than a year. The cons most notably are no sorting floor, no indoor storage, and the traffic flow onto Green Street. Note that Option A would use the existing ingress and egress onto Beacon Street whereas Option B would use the access road from Green Street for residential ingress and egress and commercial for ingress with Beacon for egress. At the time of meeting a third option, a modification of Option B, was suggested. This would be ingress at Beacon, a separate stream for residential and commercial, an egress for commercial onto Beacon, and an egress for residential onto Green Street.

Since the last BOH meeting, Ms. Miller met with residents from Arnold Terrace on 3/24 to hear their concerns. It was clear that a traffic study and its impact was needed. David Lieberman, a resident of Arnold Terrace, sent a letter to HD discussing the health concerns of the residents. (The contents of the letter are available on MHD Patch.)

Further discussion involved the need for a traffic study on and off peak involving other departments, e.g. Planning Board, etc. The cost of such a study is \$8-10K and would proceed over several weeks.

During public comment the following was mentioned: a comprehensive traffic study; issues of trucks and cars idling; concerns with traffic, noise and pollution; how can a vote be taken without a traffic study; the need for an oversight committee; employees not satisfied with current working conditions; discussion about cost, etc. of changing the trailers for the employees.

After this discussion, the board voted and unanimously chose Option B. Immediately afterwards a motion was made to have a traffic study done, which was passed

unanimously. Items 37 and 38 on the Town Warrant were also voted to be “indefinitely postponed.”

Director Report

1. Household Hazardous Waste - another successful day with 79 residents participating. The next is scheduled for 6/8 and will be posted on the town website.
2. SPUR will have a beach (Devereaux, Seaside, Riverhead, etc.) clean up 4/9 from 7am-12noon. Contact SPUR if you want to volunteer.
3. A shrink wrap receptacle is at the Transfer Station
4. Leave, grass, etc. curbside pick will occur the weeks of 4/25, 5/16, and 6/6

The next BOH meeting is scheduled for 5/10/22 at 7:30 pm