

Received by Town Clerk
April 23, 2024 11:03am



TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT
Water & Sewer Infrastructure Advisory Committee
22 Monument Avenue
Swampscott, MA 01907

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: Wednesday, March 27th, 2024

TIME: 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

LOCATION: 1st Floor Conference Room, Swampscott Town Hall, 22 Monument Avenue

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Smith (Chair), Lauren Fisher, Kelley Begin, Ralph Souppa, Christopher Vockley (Vice Chair), Adam Smyth, Gino Cresta

Committee Alternates Present: Jeffrey Kaplan (Remote), Matthew Pelland (Remote), Terence Dansdill, Brian Drummond

Committee Members Present via Remote Access: None

Committee Members Absent: Charles Patsios

Other Town Officials Present: None

Other Attendees: None

Meeting opened at 7:30 PM and recording to Microsoft Teams started. A recording of the meeting will be uploaded to the Town's channel for resident viewing:

<https://swampscottma.tv/category/water-and-sewer-infrastructure>

NEW AND OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of 3/13/24 Meeting Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the March 13th, 2024 meeting was moved by Ralph, seconded by Chris; the motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Comment

There were no public attendees.

3. Alternate

Liz chose Terry Dansdill as a member in place of Charles Patsios for this meeting.

4. Update on Liability Protection for Committee Members

Liz delivered information from Sean, the town administrator, that town employees, members of the Select Board, and members of the various town committees are covered by the town's general liability coverage. He also expressed that since this committee is an advisory committee it cannot execute any official actions.

5. Water & Sewer Rate Review

The Water & Sewer Rate Review Committee was folded into the Water & Sewer Infrastructure Advisory Committee when the new committee was formed by the Select Board. New rates should be approved by the Select Board by the end of May.

Gino advised that there are about 4800 water accounts in Swampscott, and 1100 irrigation accounts. Account sewer usage is determined by total water usage, unless the resident has an irrigation account, in which case it is calculated on the water meter (excluding the irrigation amount.)

Liz proposes that a working group composed of Water & Sewer Infrastructure Advisory Committee members as well as select town staff be formed to advise the Select Board on rate setting.

Ralph outlined that the town's water and sewerage systems are financed as an enterprise system, which requires that each system must cover all costs via user charges or unit fees instead of taxes.

Kelley highlighted that the same state produced guide regarding rate setting also contains guidelines on how much a municipality should be spending on water and sewer infrastructure maintenance and questioned whether or not the committee should incorporate these guidelines in some way during rate setting exercises.

Gino shared that separating stormwater funding out into an enterprise fund has been considered in the past. Currently, stormwater is funded out of the general fund on an as

needed basis.

6. Beach Water & Outfall Testing Discussion

Chris gave a presentation assembled by the Testing, Signage, and Communication work group. In the presentation he outlined that King's Beach was closed for 92% of the 2023 season and highlighted testing results from the Fisherman's Beach outfall from 2022 that demonstrated potentially significant bacterial contamination. He also explained that rapid testing (~4 hour turnaround time) does not seem like a realistic option for the town due to cost and lack of availability of a nearby lab able to perform this testing.

Lauren presented a few proposals for beach water quality communication via the town website.

Liz proposed that the committee potentially vote on whether to recommend the working group recommendations at our next meeting on April 10.

7. Current & Planned Water & Sewer Projects

Blue Leaf Inc (Kleinfelder subcontractor) is coming to test the water at the town's now defunct chlorination station as part of the peracetic acid sanitization pilot program recommended by the King's Beach Lynn & Swampscott Steering Committee.

Kleinfelder is going to begin sampling in the King's Beach/Stacey's Brook Phase 2 area in coming weeks with the aim of having construction design for phase 2 completed in early December 2024.

An additional \$1.8M in capital improvement funds are being requested at the Annual Town Meeting in addition to the already allocated \$1.7M of earmarked ARPA funds for construction in phase 2A - for a total of \$3.5M for Phase 2A. This is in addition to the \$400,000 for Phase 2 Investigation and Design (of the total \$2.5M earmarked for King's Beach.)

8. Lynn Water & Sewer Commision - King's Beach Work

Tabled until the next meeting.

9. Work Group Update

Tabled until the next meeting.

10. Information & Education Opportunities - Possible Formation of Study Groups

Tabled until the next meeting.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Terry and seconded by Ralph. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 PM.

DOCUMENT LIST

1. Presentation titled "Water and Sewer Rate Review Committee" presented by Ralph
2. Comparison of Water & Sewer Rates between North Shore Communities
3. Presentation titled "W&S Committee - Testing and Website Content" presented by Chris, Kelley, and Lauren

**Next Meeting is on April 10th, 2024 at 7:30 PM
(Subsequently revised to 4/09/24 at 7:00 PM)**



Expanded Beach Testing Options for Swampscott

Testing, Signage, and Communication Working Group:
Kelley Begin, Lauren Fisher, and Chris Vockley

Background: What are Enterococci?

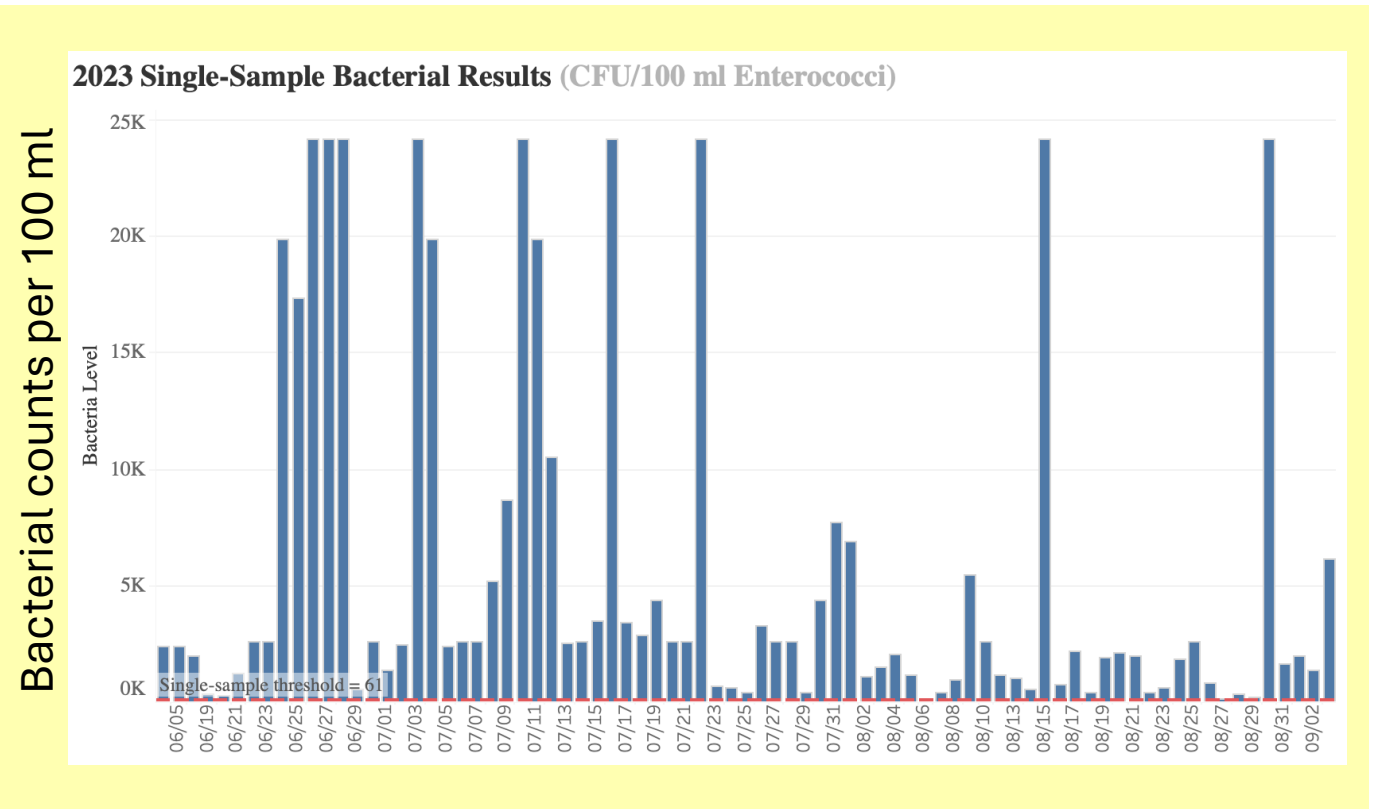
- Enterococci are bacteria that live in the intestinal tracts of warm-blooded animals, including humans, and therefore indicate possible contamination of water with fecal waste.
- Sources of fecal indicator bacteria such as enterococci include wastewater treatment plant effluent, leaking septic systems, stormwater runoff, sewage discharged or dumped from recreational boats, etc.

Why test for Enterococci?

- Enterococci are typically not harmful, but their presence in the environment may indicate that other disease-causing agents such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoa may also be present.
- Fecal bacteria in the water can cause beach closures, swimming and boating bans and closures of fishing and shellfishing areas.
- We are required to test weekly by the MDPH.
- The maximum contamination is 104 enterococci/100 milliliter for ocean waters.

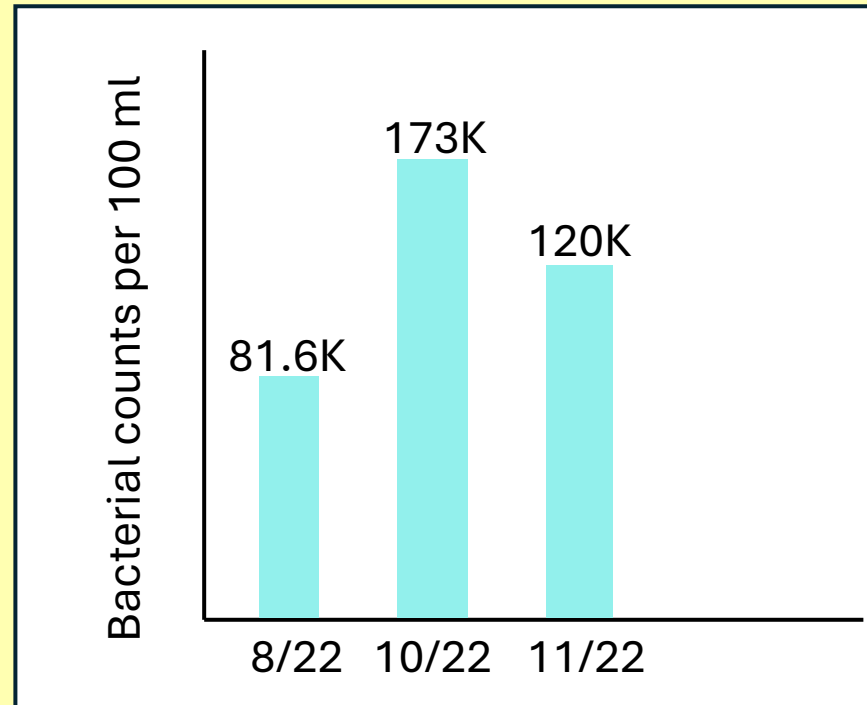
Enterococci levels at Swampscott beaches

Stacy's Brook, King's Beach: closed 92% of the 2023 season



Enterococci levels at Swampscott beaches

Fisherman's Beach Outfall Fall 2022 (most recent data)



Safe Levels=
104/100ml

Scope of Testing

“The majority of beaches in Massachusetts are tested once a week following sampling frequency guidelines from the US EPA. Testing frequency depends on how likely the beach is to have water quality issues. Low-use beaches or beaches with few, if any, water quality issues are tested less often. High-use beaches or beaches with historic water quality issues are tested more often.” (Mass.gov)

Based on this guidance, Fisherman’s Beach testing should be expanded.

Kinds of Tests

	<u>Rapid Tests (~4h)</u>	<u>24H Tests</u>
How to they work?	Detect bacterial DNA	Detect living bacteria
How much expertise is required?	Dedicated staff required	Can be run by lay person
Cost to outsource:	\$??/test	\$50/test
Setup costs:	\$100-500K	\$7.5K
Cost per assay in house:	\$??/test	~\$16/test

In-house: Enterolert Assay



2024 Testing Discussion

Due to heavy recreational use and major known contamination events, it is likely be necessary to increase testing at Fisherman's Beach (and potentially other beaches) in the 2024 season.



Proposed testing strategy:

Proposed testing strategy:

Daily testing at fisherman's beach outfall and at three sites on the beach. (4sites *92 tests)

Daily testing in the Swampscott arm of the Stacy's Brook outfall, and at the middle of the beach on the Swampscott side of Stacy's Brook. (2 sites*92 tests)

Weekly testing of the outfalls at other town beaches. (4 beaches *13 tests)

604 Total Tests

In-house

Consumables: \$9621.72

One-time set-up cost: \$7.5K

Outsourced:

\$30.2K

Break even point:

If we do more than 220 tests, the in-house testing will pay for itself this season

Mass DPH mandates that at least one test per week is done by an accredited lab, paid for by grants.

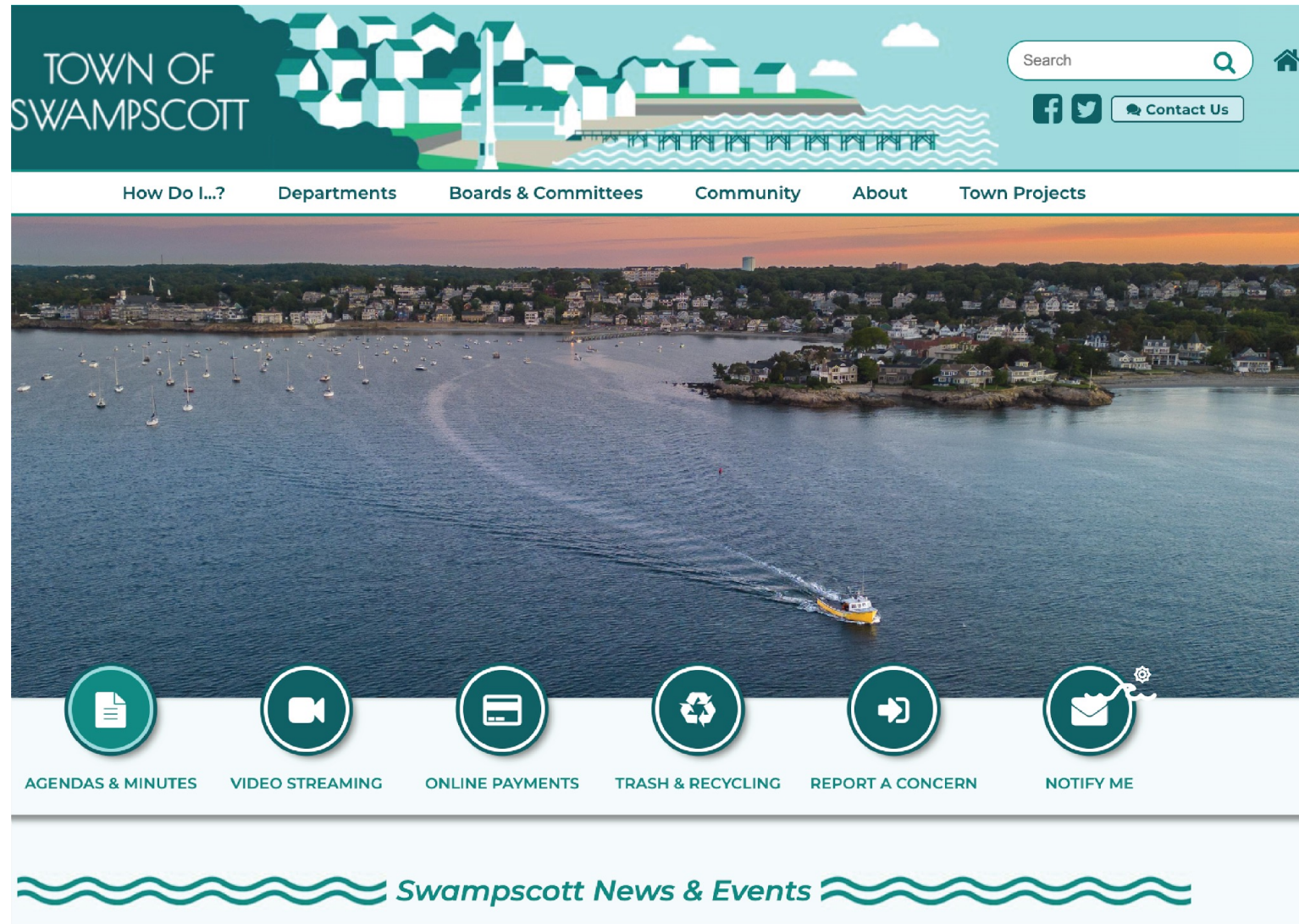
Signage Considerations

- We propose that signage be congruent with DCR signage/flags at King's Beach.
- Red Flags every 50 meters on no swim periods.
- Caution tape across beach entrances after CSO events.
- If daily testing is done at any beach, then "safe to swim" flags should be flown on safe to swim days.
- Signs near each outfall indicating that outfalls and outfall-adjacent areas should be avoided at all times, especially after heavy rains.

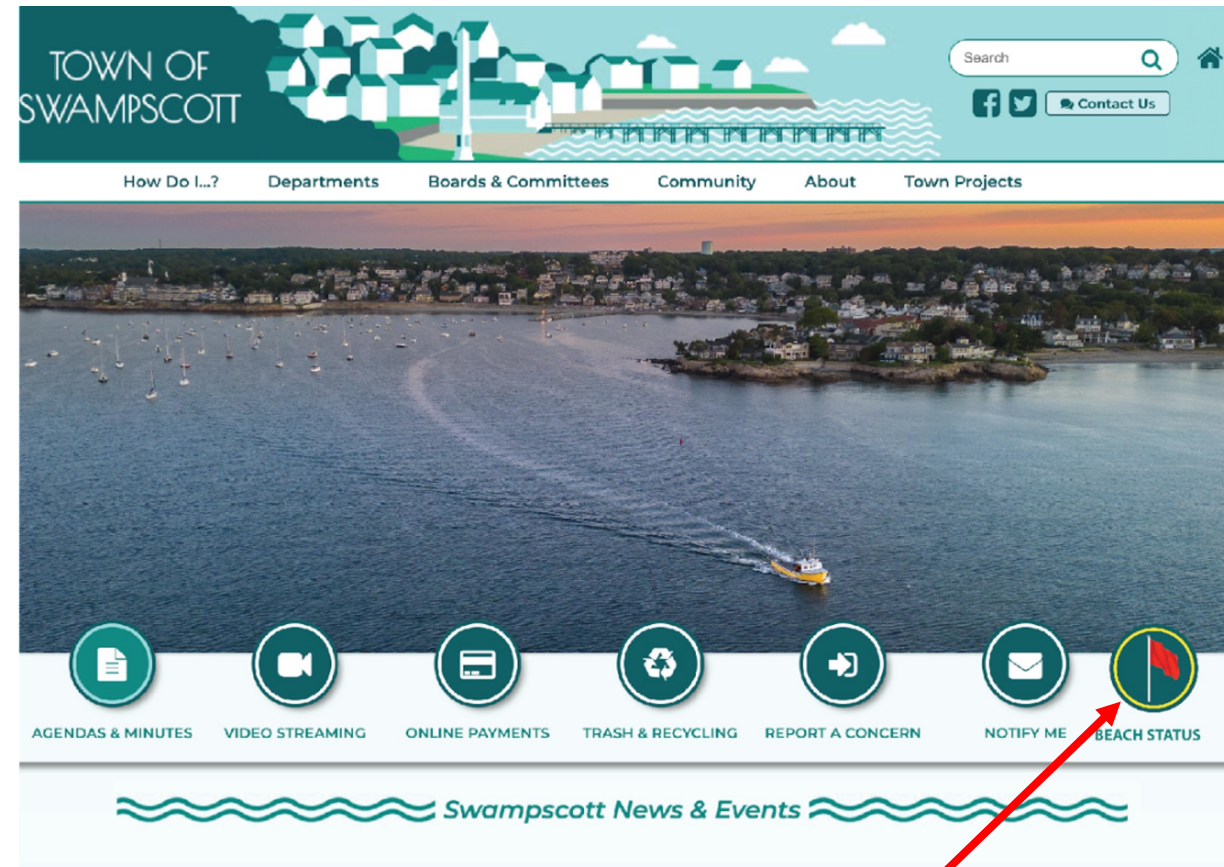
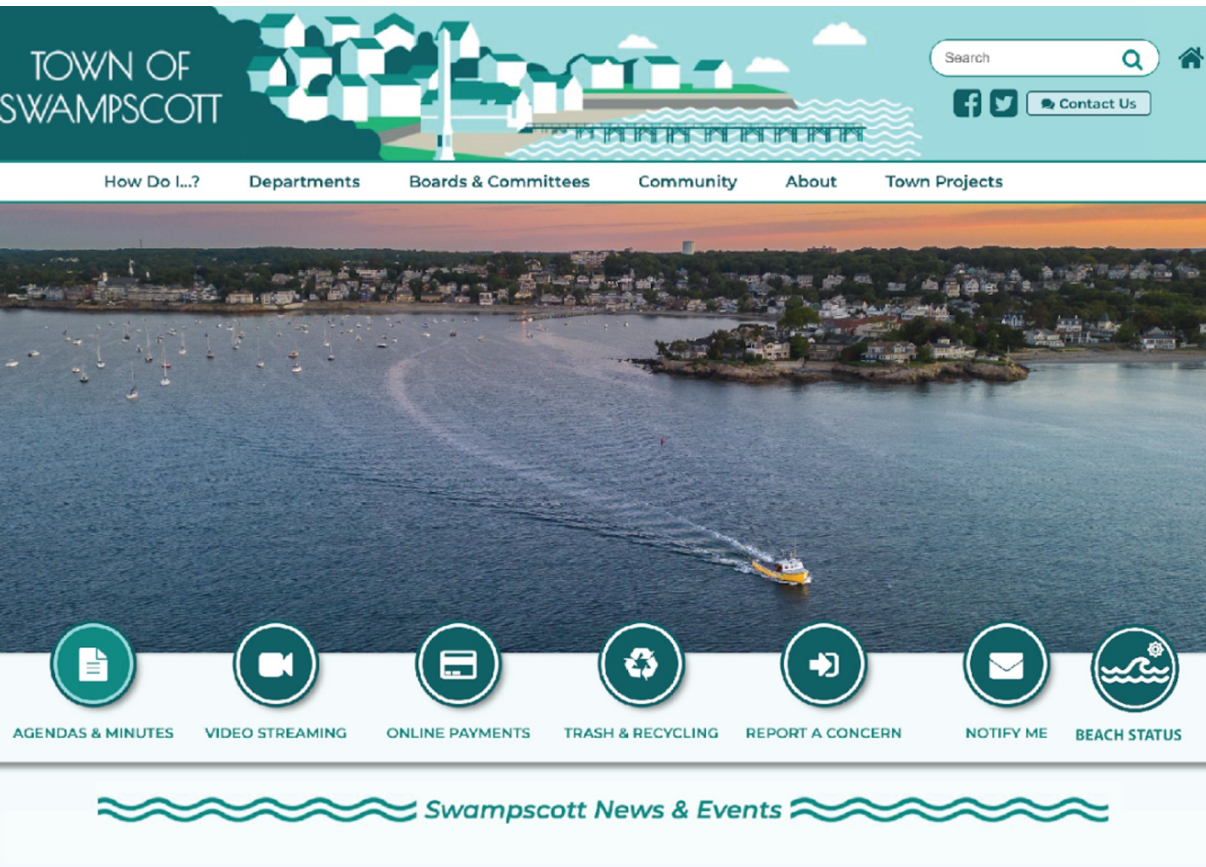


Information Sharing

Current town website:



Information Sharing



Link to page with information, links, current testing results, and swim advisory.

Information Sharing

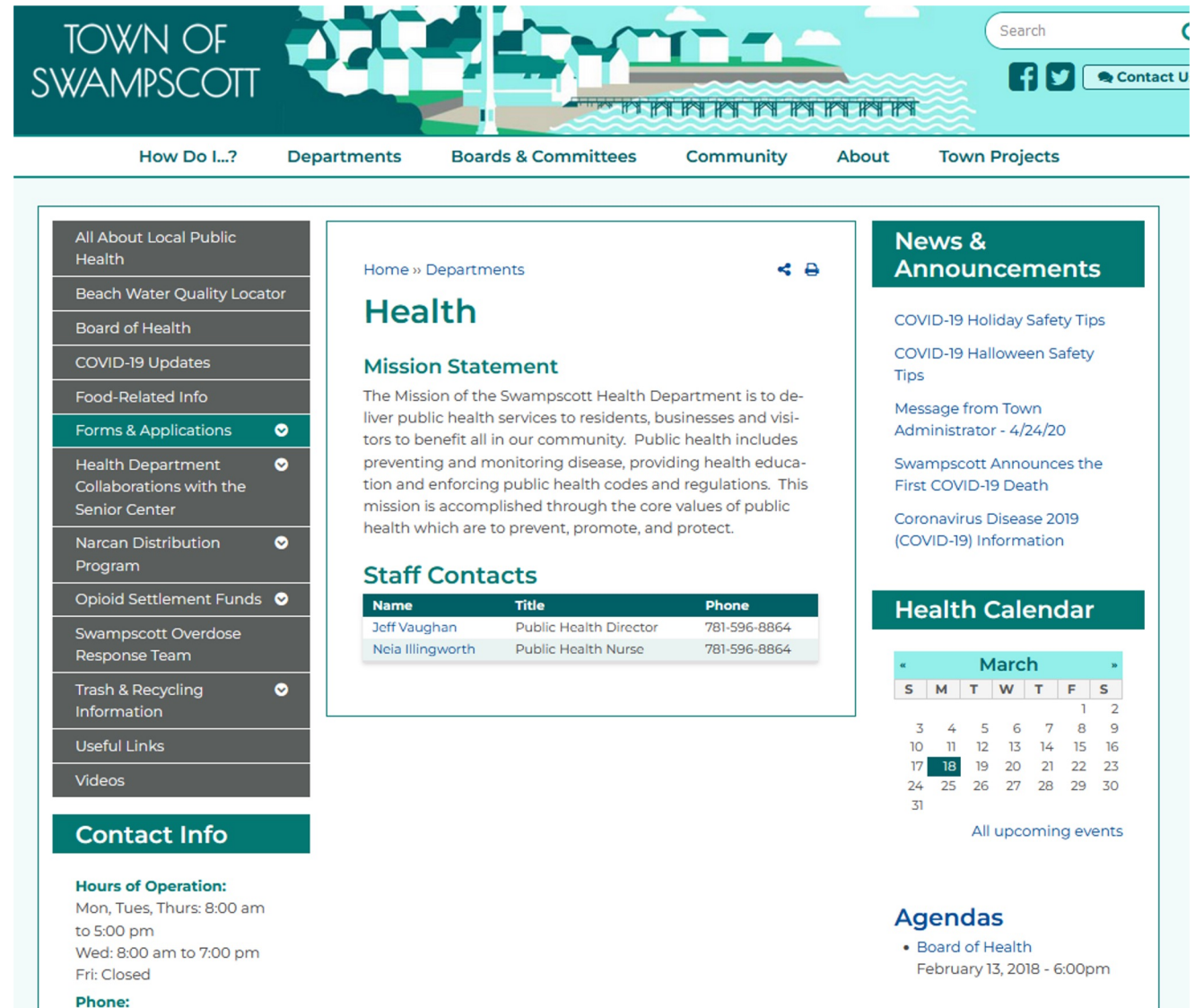
- Text alerts via Red Alert system?
- Town Beach Status Facebook page
- Enhanced signage in multiple languages at beach entrances.
- Flags that are uniform with those used by the DCR at King's.

Information Sharing on Town Website

Department of Health Website

- Many communities across the North Shore, South Shore, and Cape Cod include information about beach water quality on their Department of Health websites
 - Two great examples: [Barnstable county](#), [City of Beverly](#)
- Swampscott's Department of Health website does not contain any information about beach water quality
 - Only links to Mass.gov Beach Water Quality Locator dashboard

Current website



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Health

Home » Departments

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Swampscott Health Department is to deliver public health services to residents, businesses and visitors to benefit all in our community. Public health includes preventing and monitoring disease, providing health education and enforcing public health codes and regulations. This mission is accomplished through the core values of public health which are to prevent, promote, and protect.

Staff Contacts

Name	Title	Phone
Jeff Vaughan	Public Health Director	781-596-8864
Neia Illingworth	Public Health Nurse	781-596-8864

News & Announcements

- COVID-19 Holiday Safety Tips
- COVID-19 Halloween Safety Tips
- Message from Town Administrator - 4/24/20
- Swampscott Announces the First COVID-19 Death
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Information

Health Calendar

« March »

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					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

All upcoming events

Agendas

- Board of Health
February 13, 2018 - 6:00pm

Contact Info

Hours of Operation:
Mon, Tues, Thurs: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Wed: 8:00 am to 7:00 pm
Fri: Closed

Phone:



Left Sidebar Links:
All About Local Public Health
Beach Water Quality Locator
Board of Health
COVID-19 Updates
Food-Related Info
Forms & Applications
Health Department Collaborations with the Senior Center
Narcen Distribution Program
Opioid Settlement Funds
Swampscott Overdose Response Team
Trash & Recycling Information
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Goals for New Beach Quality Content

- Provide general information about the minimum standards for bathing beaches law (105 CMR 445.000)
- Include a designated, highlighted section showing current beach closures for all beaches in Swampscott
 - Post beach test results
- FAQs section to explain more about specific topics related to beach closures and safe swimming
- Examples of signs and flags people can expect to see at closed beaches
- Multilingual information for all beachgoers







Department of Health Landing Page



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Health

Mission Statement
The health of our community is our top priority. We live, work, and play in a beautiful town with a rich history. Our mission is to provide the best possible health care to our residents, to prevent, promote, and protect the health of our community.

Staff Contacts

Name	Title	Phone
Jeff Vaughan	Public Health Director	781-596-8864
Neia Illingworth	Public Health Nurse	781-596-8864

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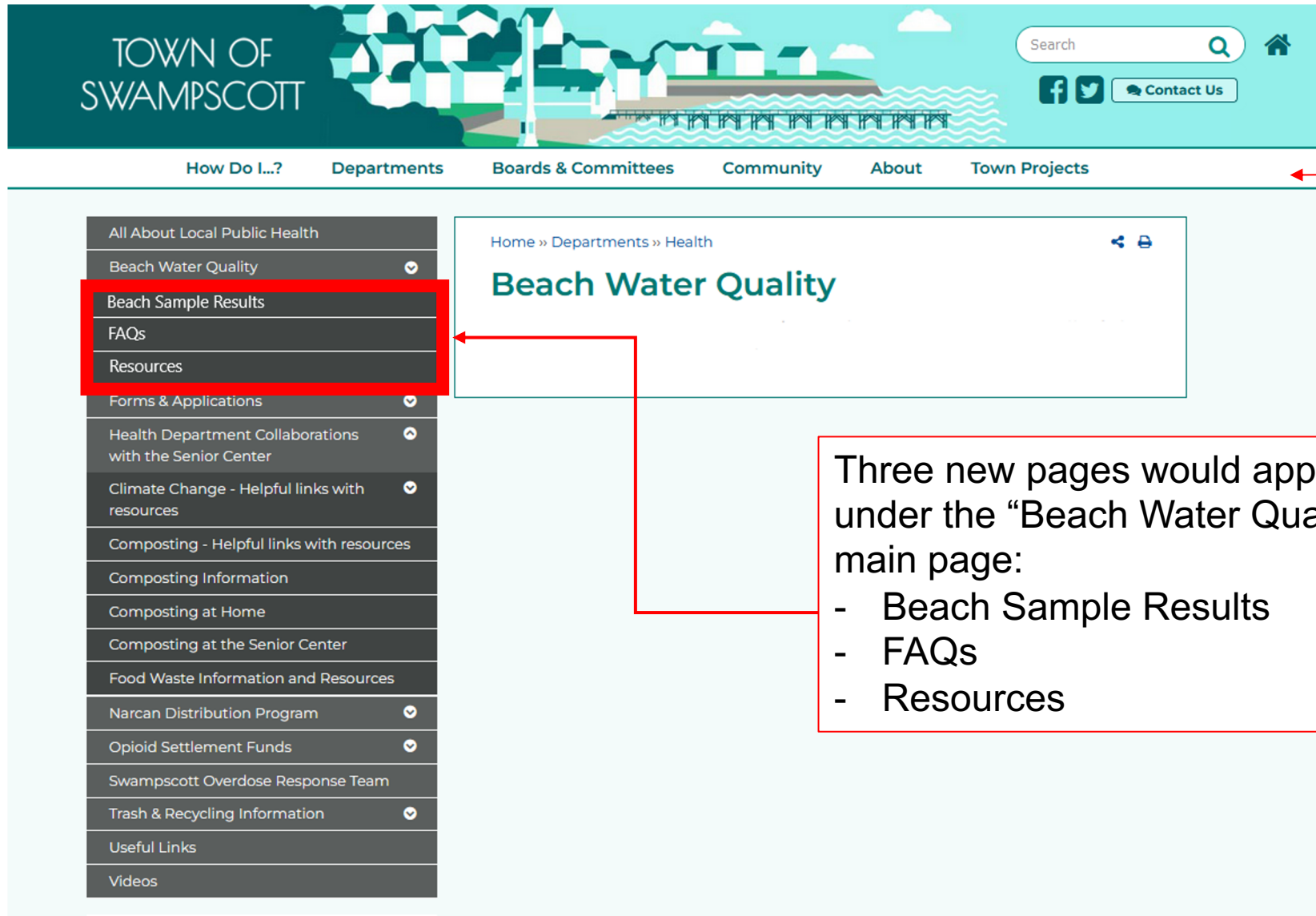
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Proposed new pages



“Beach Sample Results” would be up here, too.

Three new pages would appear under the “Beach Water Quality” main page:

- Beach Sample Results
- FAQs
- Resources

Beach Water Quality Page Content

[How Do I...?](#)[Departments](#)[Boards & Committees](#)[Community](#)[About](#)[Town Projects](#)[All About Local Public Health](#)[Beach Water Quality](#)[Beach Sample Results](#)[FAQs](#)[Resources](#)[Forms & Applications](#)[Health Department Collaborations
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Beach Water Quality

Why are beaches tested?

Why is there bacteria in the beach water?

What can happen if I swim in beach water that has bacteria?

How is beach water tested?

Why do beaches close?

When will the beach reopen?

How do I know if it is safe to swim?

Can I still go to the beach if there are signs that say “no swimming?”

There would be paragraphs of information, along with example photos of signs and flags, beneath each header shown here. Please see the document entitled “Beach Water Quality Website Content” for what would live on this page.

Beach Sample Results Page Content

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Beach Sample Results

Current beach closures in Swampscott as of mm/dd/yy:

Eisman's Beach/New Ocean House Beach - *test results*

Fisherman's Beach - *test results*

King's Beach - *test results*

Philip's Beach - *test results*

Preston Beach - *test results*

Whale's Beach - *test results*

Note: if a beach is NOT listed here, it is safe for swimming.

Please visit the [Beach Water Quality](#) page or [FAQs](#) page for more information about beach closures and safe beach activities during closures.

FAQs Page Content

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why are Swampscott beaches tested?



Why is there bacteria in beach water?



Why do beaches close?



What can happen if I swim in beach water that has bacteria?



When will the beach reopen?



Can I still go to the beach if there are signs that say “no swimming?”



We got a lot of rain recently. Should I avoid swimming
at the beach?



How can I help keep our beaches clean?



FAQs Page Content, cont.

[How Do I...?](#)[Departments](#)[Boards & Committees](#)[Community](#)[About](#)[Town Projects](#)[All About Local Public Health](#)[Beach Water Quality](#)[Beach Sample Results](#)[FAQs](#)[Resources](#)[Forms & Applications](#)[Health Department Collaborations
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Frequently Asked Questions

Why are Swampscott beaches tested?

Beaches in Swampscott are tested because the Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires municipalities to monitor marine beaches for certain bacteria (Enterococci). This is so that local health officials can decide when to close a beach due to unsafe conditions.

Most swim-related illnesses are due to disease-causing organisms (pathogens) that are linked to fecal contamination.

Why is there bacteria in the water?



Why do beaches close?



What can happen if I swim in beach water that has bacteria?



When will the beach reopen?



Can I still go to the beach if there are signs that say "no swimming?"



Resources Page Content

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Resources

Mass.gov State Sanitary Code Chapter VII: Minimum standards for bathing beaches

<https://www.mass.gov/regulations/105-CMR-44500-state-sanitary-code-chapter-vii-minimum-standards-for-bathing-beaches>

Mass.gov FAQs About Monitoring Water Quality at Beaches

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/frequently-asked-questions-about-monitoring-water-quality-at-beaches#why-are-beaches-tested?>

Mass.gov Current Public Beach Postings

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/current-public-beach-postings>

Mass.gov Beach Water Quality Dashboard

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/interactive-beach-water-quality-dashboard>

Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act

<https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>