

Board of Health Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, August 10, 2022  
Virtual Meeting

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT**

Marianne Hartmann, Emily Cilley, Dr. Peter Sheckman

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Jeffrey Vaughan, Director of Public Health; Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse; Danielle Strauss, Recreation Director; Gino Cresta, DPW Director

**REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS**

- On MOTION by Cilley and SECONDED by Sheckman, the Board of Health voted to approve prior meeting minutes from July 12, 2022. Roll call: Cilley (yes), Sheckman (yes), Hartmann (yes).

**WELCOME SWAMPSCOTT SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Discuss Permitting Process for Events Regarding Trash/Recycling**

- Recreation Director Danielle Strauss and DPW Director Gino Cresta joined the meeting.
- Wayne Spritz of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) announced that all municipal waste must be reduced by 30% by 2030.
- Spritz asked what the permitting process is for Town events and to discuss waste disposal. Danielle stated that due to the pandemic, many events from the last two years until very recently have not involved patrons eating. She stated that she always has waste receptacles at the Farmer's Market but that that event does not result in a lot of waste.
- Danielle stated that for future events, she plans to put out multiple stations of recycle barrels and trash barrels as well as signage and an announcement made via stage mic. She also noted that most returning vendors have made the switch to recyclable materials and that she will be discussing converting from plastic cups, wax coated plates, and etc. Danielle also stated that she would like the receptacles to be clear/see through so that people can see the contents and know what should go in the barrels.

Emily agreed that some people may just assume a solid colored barrel was trash and not think of recycling, so clear containers are a good idea. SWAC member Johnny Gold suggested getting see through barrels with covers with cutouts that only allow for cans and bottles to be inserted.

- SWAC member Alix Smullin asked if the cans recycled at events are recyclable and suggested giving them to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to return. The group discussed cleanliness concerns.
- Spritz asked if vendors are informed of the Town Bylaw forbidding plastic straws at the time of their application/permit issuance as vendors not based in town may not know. Jeff stated that it is not written on their paperwork but that the majority of vendors are selling bottled drinks.

### **Phillips Beach**

- Spritz stated that the current waste policy at the beach is to have trash barrels available for visitors, but in the past the policy has been “carry in, carry out” with visitors responsible for their own trash. He stated that he wanted to evaluate whether or not the barrels are in the most optimal locations. He said that he has noticed that the barrels closest to the entrance are often overfilled while others are almost empty. Danielle stated that she has noticed the same issue, though it has improved as of late as the barrels were recently moved and the DPW is emptying them multiple times a week. Spritz asked about cameras in the area and Gino stated that he had recently discussed installation with Facilities Director Max Kasper.
- Spritz gave a shoutout to the Girl Scouts, who recently created a campaign to reduce waste on another town beach.
- Emily stated that some other beaches have bag dispensers available for visitors to take a bag to collect their waste in.

### **Humphrey St. Litter**

- Jeff stated that clean up is done via a power washer once a week now and that there has been an improvement since last year.
- Spritz stated that some issues with trash being blown into the street/near the beaches/other areas is due to people not using containers with closed lids and that it could be helpful to remind residents that they do not need a blue recycling bin, recycling will be picked up in any container that has a Town recycling sticker on it. He suggested a sticker be included in an upcoming mailing. Jeff stated that a mailing would be very expensive.
- SWAC member Kathy Mikk suggested making stickers and literature available at the Farmers Market, and/or purchasing closed barrels for re-sale in bulk if it resulted in lower pricing. The group also discussed maybe enclosing stickers in a future mailing that is already scheduled.
- Sheckman asked if this issue is centralized to a particular area of Town and suggested that if so, maybe a sticker mailer just be sent to those most impacted. Spritz suggested mailing a letter with more info regarding closed barrels.

- Spritz stated that an option would be to approach the Select Board to vote on a bylaw mandating that trash be covered.
- Jeff stated that there are some large properties in the area that the Town does not do trash pickup for due to the size of them. Wayne asked if these were business properties. Jeff stated that they were residential properties such as condos.
- Spritz asked about the results of the last metal and styrofoam drop offs. Gino stated that at the last metal drop off, a 30-yard dumpster was filled as well as a ten wheeler and a six wheeler. One 40-yard dumpster was filled at the last styrafoam drop off. Marianne asked where the money from the metal drop off goes. Gino stated that as of July 1, 2022, the money goes into an enterprise fund.
- SB member Mary Ellen Fletcher reminded the SWAC and Health Department to submit events and programs to Jody in the Town Administrator's office for the newsletter. She suggested that such announcements may be contributing to the increasing popularity of metal drop off days.

## **COVID-19 AND MONKEYPOX UPDATES**

### **Covid-19**

- As of today, Swampscott has had 3746 lab-confirmed cases, 104 of which have been in the last four weeks. This number does NOT include any "probable" cases or any individuals that test positive on a home-test.
- The current 7-day average positivity rate is 7.97%. The 14-day average daily incidence rate is 23.8 per 100,000 residents.
- Essex County is currently of "high" transmission level as a community for percent positivity.
- BA.5 is currently the dominant variant in the United States.
- Vaccine updates:
  - On July 19, 2022, the CDC signed off on Novavax's Covid-19 vaccine for adults.
  - Second booster shots for people under 50 are currently on hold amid drive to speed up a new vaccine. Updated Covid-19 booster shots could be available in September.
- Swampscott vaccination rates:
  - Individuals with at least one dose: 93%
  - Fully vaccinated individuals: 83%
  - Eligible individuals with first booster dose: 56%
  - Eligible individuals with second booster dose: 15%
- Covid-19 testing:
  - As of July 28, 2022, the Stop the Spread program has been extended through March 31, 2023.
  - Rapid antigen (at-home) tests are now covered by insurance (including Medicare) as required by the federal government and may be found at a pharmacy, retail store, or online.
  - Covidtests.gov: every home in the US is eligible to order two sets of 4 free at-home tests and is now eligible to order a third round of free-at home tests.

- MA is to end their Covid-19 school testing program in the fall of 2022.

## **Monkeypox**

- Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus, a part of the same family of viruses as variola virus- the virus that causes smallpox.
- Symptoms of monkeypox can include a rash, fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, muscle aches and backache, headache, and respiratory symptoms (ie. sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough). A rash follows the initial symptoms. Painful lesions can appear anywhere and will scab over and resolve within 2-3 weeks, following which the person is no longer contagious. Monkeypox can be spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed. Those positive for monkeypox should isolate at home.
- Monkeypox can spread:
  - To anyone through close personal skin-to-skin contact, including:
    - Direct contact with the monkeypox rash, scabs, or bodily fluids from a person with monkeypox.
    - Touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.
    - Contact with respiratory secretions.
  - A pregnant person can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.
  - It's also possible for people to get monkeypox from infected animals, either by being scratched or bitten by the animal or by preparing or eating meat or using products from an infected animal.
- Scientists are still researching if the virus can be spread when someone has no symptoms, when a person with symptoms might be more likely to spread the virus through respiratory secretions, how often the virus is spread through respiratory secretions, and whether monkeypox can be spread through semen, vaginal fluids, urine, or feces.
- As of August 9, 2022, the total number of confirmed monkeypox cases is 174 in Massachusetts, 9492 in the United States, and 31800 worldwide.
- Contacts of animals or people confirmed to have monkeypox should monitor for symptoms for 21 days after their last exposure and monitor their temperature twice daily.
- Vaccines:
  - When properly administered before or soon after exposure, vaccines can help protect against monkeypox illness.
  - The vaccine most commonly used for preventing monkeypox infection is JYNNEOS. In the United States, a severely limited supply of JUNNEOS is available and being distributed by the CDC. The vaccine requires two shots, 28 days apart for maximum effectiveness. People are considered fully vaccinated about two weeks after their second shot.
  - Beginning August 8, 2022, the MDPH and their vaccine partners are prioritizing first doses for as many people as possible.

- Vaccination will be available to individuals who live or work in Massachusetts and meet the CDC's current eligibility criteria, prioritizing those who are most at risk of an exposure to an individual with monkeypox. This includes:
  - Known contacts identified by public health via case investigation, contact tracing, and risk exposure assessments (this may include sexual partners, household contacts, and healthcare workers); as well as
  - Presumed contacts who meet the following criteria:
    - Know that a sexual partner in the past 14 days was diagnosed with monkeypox
    - Had multiple sexual partners in the past 14 days in a jurisdiction with known monkeypox
- Administration of the JYNNEOS vaccine will be available by appointment only at one of the 14 designated health care locations across the state. The closest location to Swampscott is the location in Boston. Patients must be referred by healthcare providers and then can make their own appointment.

## **BEACH WATER SAMPLING RESULTS – CURRENT CONDITIONS**

- Emily stated that she is hearing questions from people about beach testing. Notably, that the Town's neighboring city of Lynn has been conducting testing and flagging certain areas and that residents do not know if they should avoid the beach because of that. Jeff stated that some of the public feels if one section of a shared body of water is flagged, the whole cove is thought to be contaminated, but there are other factors involved.
- Beach sampling of the swimming area of the beach is conducted weekly on Wednesdays. Results can vary based on factors such as heavy rain, boats, animal waste, etc. Jeff also explained that this testing is done in depths for swimming as ingestion of elevated bacteria sea water is the concern in which we post no-swimming advisories. The numbers have been ranging from fine to really good based on the beach and no results have warranted the close of a beach this year. Results over 104 warrant concern. The highest result Swampscott has received has been in the 60s, but that might change this week with the heavy rains we just had. He stated that results are available on the Mass Department of Public Health's website as well as the Town Health Department webpage on the Town website.
- Attendee Liz Smith stated that MA regulations state that in addition to testing centers where swimmers tend to congregate, if there is an area where there is outflow, it is suggested that municipalities test there. She stated that she reached out to the MA Department of Public Health and they stated that it is not required to test at the areas of outflow because swimming does not occur there. She asked if we could improve our signage to remind people of that and make sure they understand, suggesting signage at both ends and both entrances and exits/facing the road and facing the water. Jeff stated that they are not currently testing there as numbers have been good. Jeff stated that he spoke to DPW about this and that the Town has the possible option to chlorinate at the beginning of the outfall and de-chlorinate near the end but that it is quite costly and possibly needs state approval.

- The Board discussed signage restricting proximity to the outflows. Hartmann stated that she would email Gino tomorrow regarding sign installation.
- Cilley asked how it is okay for Swampscott to only test once a week if Lynn tests every day. Jeff stated that because our results do not indicate issues, there is no need to. Cilley asked how Lynn is getting bad results and we are not if each community has one end of the same beach. Jeff stated that 2 of the 3 swimming area sample locations at King's-Lynn have been relatively good this year, but there is one that is very close to their outfall that has been a problem and will probably cause the Lynn end to be closed for the remainder of the swimming season. He also stated that the signs in Lynn following bad results are just advisories to not swim, not signage stating that the beach is closed.
- Cilley asked how many samples a day Jeff is taking. Jeff stated that it is one sample per beach. Emily voiced concern about varying factors/scenarios, such as if Jeff takes a sample that contains animal feces but that another section would not contain that or vice versa.
- SB member Mary Ellen Fletcher stated that the Select Board sent a letter to DCR inquiring about them conducting Swampscott's testing.

## **HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT**

- Jeff stated that he and Neia were planning to schedule with the school Superintendent to discuss communicable diseases.
- Jeff stated that as discussed, sun screen dispensers have been installed at Phillip's Beach and Eisman's/New Ocean Beach. He stated that it appears they are popular and that the Health Department is planning to do public notification soon to remind people they are available and that the Health Department is also planning install more a couple more at the beaches next year.
- Cilley mentioned that she had seen public water stations for dogs and asked how the Town would get some to install as well. Jeff stated that she should reach out to the DPW for that. Mary Ellen stated that shared bowls may not be the best idea, but that perhaps they could get a spigot.
- Jeff stated that through a regional grant, the Health Department has begun to use a regional inspector for a couple of food inspections per month.
- During the September metal and styrafoam drop off, the Town will also be doing a free tire drop off for tires without rims. Mary Ellen asked Jeff to send more info to Jody for the newsletter.
- Jeff stated that he would like for the Board to consider adding the garden behind the high school to the dog ban list. Mary Ellen asked how dogs, who are accompanied by owners who can pick up and throw out their waste, can be banned but wild animals can access the areas. The Board discussed how they have unfortunately seen a lot of waste not picked up or a lot of waste picked up but the bags left.
- Cilley stated that perhaps dogs could be allowed on certain beaches between certain hours in the early morning.

**OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOH**

- None.

**SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE**

- The next meeting has been scheduled for September 13, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

**ADJOURN**

- On MOTION by Cilley and SECONDED by Hartmann, it was VOTED by roll call to adjourn the meeting. Roll call: Cilley (yes), Hartmann (yes).
- The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

True Attest,

Brittney Jones