



**Acton Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2020
7:30 P.M.
VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS VIA ZOOM**

Present:

Virtual Members Present: William McInnis -Chairman, Mark Conoby, Michael Kreuze, Dr. William Taylor and Joanne Bissetta.

Virtual Associate Members Present: Dr. Thomas Jacoby and Dr. Rekha Singh

Virtual Staff Present: Sheryl Ball-Health Director

Virtual Present: David Armstrong, Diann Oster, Linsey Hurley, Ruth Kohls, Kim Kastens, Peg Mikkola, Priscilla B, Marion Maxwell, Call in User #1 and Lori Cooney.

1. Opening

Chair - William McInnis opened the meeting at 7:33 P.M. A script was read that was provided by the Town stating why the meetings are virtual during this crisis.

2. Regular Business

Director Operational Updates –

There was an open discussion with the Board about their status.

Ms. Ball stated that as of yesterday, December 13, 2020, all communities in Massachusetts will return to Step 1 of Phase 3. This is being done to respond to an increase in COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations since the Thanksgiving holiday that is currently straining the health care system. The return to Step 1 will cause closure of certain businesses which includes indoor performance venues, certain high contact recreational and will reduce capacity in a lot of industries from 50% to 40% capacity. Ms. Ball also mentioned that gathering limits have also been reduced from 100 to 50 persons. In addition, any gatherings over 25 must provide advance notice to the Board of Health. Some businesses that are affected by the reduction of percentage capacity include, arcades, driving flight schools, gyms, libraries, museums, retail, offices, places of worship, lodging, golf and movie theaters. The guidelines for restaurants and other venues now require face coverings to be worn at all times, except when eating and face coverings are required at all times gyms and health clubs.



Ms. Ball mentioned that the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccine is currently being distributed to hospitals and also outlined the time line for when vaccines will be given to non-health care workers.

Ms. Ball also stated a mailing to all residents regarding important COVID information has been delivered to the Post Office and should be in mailboxes soon. Dr. Singh asked if there was vaccine information in the letter, but unfortunately the letter was finalized before the schedule came out. Ms. Ball indicated that staff will utilize other methods to get this information out to our residents.

Nursing Service Director Updates-

Ms. York stated that Acton currently has 423 positive cases and 56 in active isolation, 342 recovered and unfortunately 25 deaths. Ms. York also stated that the positive cases of residents at Life Care have seemed to have stabilized and she is waiting to get an update but so far she is aware of 3 positive cases of staff at Robbins Brook senior living.

Ms. York stated that for the most part our positive cases are recovering at home and our biggest issue is household transmission, family contacts or close friend gatherings.

Ms. York also stated that ABRHS returned to class last week after a two week remote only and there have been 2 staff and 2 students identified as positive since then. Ms. York stated that she is concerned with the gatherings and the upcoming holiday season.

The Board asked Ms. York if there has been an uptick in Flu cases. Ms. York stated that she is aware that the flu is present but she has not seen a lot of cases.

Linsey Hurley – 5 G Discussion

The Board thanked Ms. Hurley for attending. Ms. Hurley was present to discuss the health effects of 5G technology.

Ms. Hurley stated that she is a 25 year resident of Acton and had children graduate from the school system. Ms. Hurley also stated that her goal is ensure safe technology in Acton. Ms. Hurley stated that 5G is used for faster entertainment and it uses both 3 and 4G wavelengths. Ms. Hurley identified the potential health risks to users that utilize this technology and even pointed out some studies that have been conducted. Ms. Hurley stated that radiation can permeate the brain while a device is held to someone's head and the younger you are the greater risk. She further indicated that Iphone's contain a warning to not place it against your head. Ms. Hurley also mentioned some Massachusetts towns that have developed protocols to help protect against cell towers including Burlington that approves the cell towers but requires them to reapply each year so they remain regulated year after year. Ms. Hurley stated that one solution would be to not use wireless technology and go back to hard wire. Ms. Hurley promised the Board that she would send additional information. The Board discussed this and



stated that there is conflicting information and they would like to see scientific evidence as to whether or not there is a clear danger. The Board also suggested that this regulation should be a statewide national standard to determine what is safe. The Board further suggested that they should look into any cell tower regulations through the Planning Department.

Emergency Beaver Trapping Permit – USGS Gage Station

Ms. Ball stated that there is a request from the USGS for an emergency beaver trapping permit for the Gage Station located on Nashoba Brook. The Health Division has determined that a threat to human health exists and recommends approval of this request. The applicant David Armstrong from USGS stated this has been an issue since last summer and the Board previously approved a request from 4 years ago. Prior to submitting the application, Mr. Armstrong stated that they have tried some other measures to no success. The Board asked if a beaver deceiver would help and Mr. Armstrong stated that it still would affect the flow of the stream so it would not be a solution. On a motion made by Mr. Conoby, seconded by Mr. Kreuze, the Board unanimously voted to grant an emergency 10 day beaver trapping permit to USGS to allow for trapping and breaching of the dam at this site. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

4 West Road – Variance Request

The Health Division is in receipt of a request for a variance from 310 CMR 15.211 for a reduction in the 20 foot setback from soil absorption system to cellar wall to 5.7' for the property located at 4 West Road. The Health Division has reviewed this plan and stated that this is a tight lot with wetlands and after review believes this variance request is recommended as this request achieves maximum feasible compliance.

On a motion made by Ms. Bissetta, seconded by Mr. Conoby, the Board unanimously voted to grant a variance from 310 CMR 15.211 for a reduction in the required setback from 20' to 5.7' for the property located at 4 West Road with the following conditions:

- The system shall, at all times, be maintained in compliance with the most recent Remedial Use Approval issued by MADEP for the MicroFast 0.5 System.
- An impervious barrier shall be installed in between the leach field and the cellar wall.
- The septic tank shall be pumped a minimum of once every two years.
- The system shall be constructed in accordance with the above listed conditions and approved by the Health Division for the plan stamped by Sanjay Kaul, dated November 27,2020.



Minutes

On a motion made by Mr. Kreuze, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes dated November 30, 2020 with corrections. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Next Meeting

The BOH schedule a meeting for December 28, 2020 if needed.

4. Adjournment

On a motion made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Bissetta, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:45 PM. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting;

- Town of Acton script for boards and committees opening meeting
- Board of Health agenda
- 4 West Road – recommendation from staff, variance request letter and septic plan
- Beaver trapping permit requests– application from USGS, letter from BOH and letter from USGS
- Minutes from November 30, 2020

Respectfully Submitted,



Sheryl Ball
Acton Board of Health



William McInnis- Chairman,
Acton Board of Health