



Town of Oak Bluffs  
Board of Health  
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William White  
Chairman

James Butterick  
Thomas Zinno  
Board Members

Meegan Lancaster  
Health Agent

**BOARD OF HEALTH  
March 23, 2021 – MINUTES**

**Members Present:** William White, James Butterick, Thomas Zinno

**Others Present:** Meegan Lancaster, Garrett Albiston, Lorna Welch, Cody Coutinho, Rich Saltzberg, Amy Billings

Chairman White called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

- VLSE on behalf of Stanley Johnson – 165 Circuit Ave., Map 11 Parcel 201
  - Variance Request:
    - 1) Septic tank to foundation separation; 10' required – 2' proposed.
    - 2) Leaching facility to property line separation; 10' required – 2' proposed.
    - 3) Leaching facility to foundation separation; 20' required – 8' proposed.
    - 4) Leaching facility to Slab foundation separation; 10' required – 6' proposed.
    - 5) Leaching area size 440 G.P.D. required; 392 G.P.D. proposed (11% Reduction).

Mr. Zinno made a motion to approve. All in favor. Mr. Zinno added that if they are going to be utilizing the basement he would like to see it sealed. Mr. Coutinho replied that they proposed a PVC liner around the whole leaching field and they could have them put something around the foundation as well. Ms. Lancaster stated that when we review the building permit application we can notate this on the approval.

**BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION:**

- East Chop Lighthouse – soil testing update / discussion

Ms. Lancaster stated that she requested an update from the contact person for the previous study. Ms. Billings stated that she wasn't sure who to go to regarding getting our own testing done. Mr. Zinno stated that the Coast Guard has the draft report and will hopefully be releasing it. He feels the issue is what happens on the outside area of where they tested which the Town would have control over. Mr. Zinno stated that the area has been secured and should stay closed until it gets remediated.

Mr. Butterick stated that he was very unhappy with the MV Times treatment of us with their op-ed piece and that they particularly hammered Ms. Lancaster and himself. He stated that he will be responding directly to the newspaper and has been in touch with Mr. Brennan and he is aware that we will be sending in a letter.

Mr. Butterick continued stating that he does not remember this being brought to our attention previously and has questions as to why because these reports are from 2008. He also questions who is responsible for this situation. He is shocked that this many years have gone by and there is still lead up there when many people have visited that site. He asked how this did not come to our attention before? Mr. White stated that he has been on the Board for a very long time and this is the first time hearing about these reports.

Ms. Billings stated that if there is any lead paint in the soil the Coast Guard should get it out of there but we should be the ones to get it tested so that we can make sure they don't drop the ball. The Coast Guard could let it go another five years or they are going to immediately send somebody to remediate around the lighthouse and we could miss the opportunity to get the area owned by the town taken care of. She suggested sending letters stating that we need to do this testing. There was further discussion regarding testing done in the past and potential future testing.

Mr. Zinno apologized for the storm that his humor (which the Board is familiar with) has brought up. He feels this is a serious issue and it needs to be resolved. He stated the Town may be in the position to get the coast Guard to de-lead the area beyond the lighthouse. Mr. Butterick stated that he does not have a lot of confidence that our little town is going to have an awful lot of impact on the US Coast Guard. If this not going to get resolved that quickly. Our responsibility is to not let people go into the area. Even if the town does the testing the Coast Guard is going to be reluctant to come in and do the remediation and then will the town be able to do the remediation?

Ms. Lancaster stated lead remediation in soils is very different from remediation of lead paint on a dwelling. Depending on the concentration in the soil even just the planting of grass can sometimes be sufficient. Sometimes you would bring external soils in and dilute the soil by the addition of fresh soil cutting down on the concentrations. There can be easy remediation tactics that can be embarked upon.

Ms. Billings asked how long we should wait for the report and should they get started writing a letter to the Selectmen. Ms. Lancaster stated that she spoke with Kelly Giles from Renova, the company that was doing the work up there, and she said the Coast Guard has to review and approve the final report and then their public affairs division would release it to the town. She expected that to be in early April. Ms. Billing suggested waiting a couple weeks to see if we get the report but she thinks we should be prepared to draft a letter to anyone it needs to go to (Selectmen, State Reps and or Town Administrator).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- February 9, 2021 – Approved with one suggested correction.

**AGENTS UPDATE:**

- Request for letter of support for reclassification of Health Personnel to Group 2 Retirement

There is a proposal to reclassify health inspectors from Class 1 to Class 2 under the State Retirement System which would change the retirement eligibility rate from 60 to 55 and also changes the amortization table for payout. Post 9/11 there was a federal bill that put public health workers as emergency first responders which is essentially acknowledging the risk aspects of the job. The Board approved sending the letter of support for this change.

- COVID Management Update

Barnstable had 57 new cases yesterday and they back in the red. They had the first incident of the P1 Brazilian variant in the State show up in a 30 year old female from the Cape. The State is going to be deploying extra testing resources for the Cape. The Cape is had been a leading indicator of what is going to happen on the islands. Nantucket has calmed down significantly and we have as well.

We are going to weekly reporting. From the week of 3/14 to 3/20 we had total of 12 cases (9 from the hospital of which 7 were symptomatic and 2 were asymptomatic) and an additional 3 probable cases.

The hospital is coming along on vaccines. They have had just of 6500 people with their first dose and 3224 (as of yesterday) people with their second dose. 9733 on the island have had some form of vaccine. Yesterday they did over 300 vaccines (high 40's for first dose and about 240 for second dose). They are a well-oiled machine and we are very grateful for the work they have put into this.

3/23/2021

Mr. Butterick wanted to discuss what the Board is going to do about the article in the MV Times. He stated that he has spoken to Mr. Brennan and has said that he is not only hurt but disappointed and what was said about Meegan comes very close to a character assassination and libel and he is just incensed that they would do that and Mr. Brennan is aware of that. He also stated that he needs to personally respond to the newspaper about the things that were said about him. He is particularly annoyed at the demeaning and belittling that Meegan got from that article and would propose that they, as a Board, submit a letter to the editor in her support and for all of the Board of Health people for all of the work that's been done. He feels strongly that we need to defend Meegan and the job that she does because she's a phenomenal resource for the Town. Mr. White and Mr. Zinno agreed with that and felt that Mr. Butterick's draft letter expressed their feelings regarding the article and op-ed. Mr. Zinno stated that he would like to see an article about all the work (hundreds of hours) that all the BOH agents have put in this past year trying to keep everyone safe.

Everyone agreed that that would be nice.

Mr. Zinno made a motion to adjourn. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Lorna Welch, Administrative Assistant