



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**  
**April 6, 2021 – MINUTES**

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

**Others Present:** Meegan Lancaster, Garrett Albiston, Lorna Welch, Wendy Brough, Gail Barmakian, Brian Packish, Mike Hugo, Mark Leonard, Ryan Ruley

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

**APPOINTMENTS:**

- **Chris Alley – Credit land potential in Coastal District**
  - potential transfer of two approved bedrooms on Assessor Parcel 13-22 (Rich) to Assessor Parcel 13-27 (Danielson)

Mr. Alley stated that we had spoken about transferring bedrooms (credit land) within the lagoon pond district, similar to what has been done previously in Zone 2. In kind of using that same model that title five sets up for using credit land in the situation that we're looking at we're not actually using credit land we'd actually be transferring approved bedrooms which, in one respect, is, I think a little bit more advanced than just transferring the use of land. He provided the Board with a map of the properties and gave them more specific details of what the transfer would entail. He also stated that the homeowner that wants to increase their bedroom count would agree to put in an enhanced system. Mr. Alley and the board discussed the potential project further and Mr. Zinno stated that he would like to consult town counsel. Mr. Alley stated that he does not see any downside to the proposal only an upside but he is not sure it would clear with town counsel.

Ms. Barmakian stated that she is talking on behalf of the CWMP (Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan), and this is pretty complicated. She stated that it's kind of a creative idea which is attractive and may be more doable depending on the final draft of the CWMP.

Mr. Packish stated "During my time on the planning board, we had a number of applications come through I personally have used it for 10 houses so with that said, I think that this is a really good proposal, I think it's a strong proposal and will move things in the right direction. As an individual citizen, I would encourage you to try to find as many creative ways to make this happen within the confines of the law, thank you."

Ms. Lancaster stated that we've been talking about this in terms of formulating nitrogen regulations for the DCPC and the watershed and there is that possibility for land credit in Zone 2 and there's no possibility for land credit and other areas and I think it's definitely something that is not an unwise thing to include, especially when denitrification comes into play. She stated that she will work with Mr. Alley and town counsel on this and once we are confident that this will work Mr. Alley will submit all the proper paperwork.

**BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION:**

- **Special Permit – Island Elderly Housing**
  - Lower nitrogen systems for affordable housing

We received an email from the planning board that they're applying for a special permit for Adylberg to build out one more unit that has the equivalent flow to five bedrooms. they already have an approved septic system with a micro fast system for 550, this is the one where originally they had credit land that they'd purchased off of County Rd. because originally there was assignment of 150 gallons per day for elderly housing and Title V was revised to reduce that to 110 gallons per day the same as a standard bedroom so that that credit land was no longer needed. So they revised the permit and it's signed off so it is more of a note that it was going to the planning board for subsequent approval.

Mr. Barmakian stated that the planning board sent this out to wastewater and when she saw that it was a micro fast system she alerted the planning board that when this project started, which was maybe a year or two ago, it was going to be the Smith system which is a larger system with lower nitrogen numbers.

Mr. White asked Mr. Alley why the system to be used changed. Mr. Alley replied that he wasn't sure who went to Gayle's board to represent what was being proposed but as far as he knew when this project first started over two years ago the two systems that we had considered were either the Fast or Bioclear system. The reason being is the other two buildings in Aidyberg have had Bioclear systems for the past 20 years. He is not sure he had ever heard of the Smith system when this project started.

Ms. Barmakian thought that maybe this was discussed before they got an engineer involved. She stated that they incorporated those numbers into the CWMP, and if this is for Farm Pond she is not as concerned, but if it's in the Sengekontacket watershed she is just a little more concerned because those numbers are critical.

Ms. Lancaster replied that it is in the Farm Pond watershed. There was further discussion regarding the efficiency of the different systems.

- **Re-opening Town Hall**

Ms. Brough stated that she redoing the control plan for the town, following the state safety guidelines and will send that to Ms. Lancaster directly. She understands that there is a spike in cases and is looking for guidance from the board for re-opening since schools and the library are going to be opening up. She would like to move the barrier away from the front entrance and allow people to go to each individual department so the front office doesn't have to be liaison for the entire building.

Ms. Lancaster shared a document of our current case counts which shows we are having a second spike in cases. She is also concerned about the variants and stated that the other towns are not open to the public and some are not allowing anyone in the building at all, they are meeting people outside. We are the only town that has this much accessibility for the public right now.

Mr. Butterick asked if there is anything so pressing about town business that we need to open up town hall right now and stated that it just doesn't seem like the right time to do it.

Mr. Hugo stated that a lot of other towns across the Commonwealth are doing it by appointment only to avoid that that gathering in the foyer. He strongly suspects and is afraid that we are going to see that we have as much of a P-one variant problem as Barnstable does even though we're a tiny fraction of the size we might have the same numbers. He has been in touch with Dr. Brown, who is the state epidemiologist and has asked Dr. Brown if there's something she can do to expedite her sampling and sequencing of the tests that are coming off of the island because we may have a real a real issue down there with you guys that we need to know about sooner than later. This isn't just casual surveillance testing, this is trying to isolate and identify a potential issue that you may have. He also stated that with the Governor loosening up the restrictions we can make more stringent regulations, especially when you're an island and we have an extreme risk of a very fast spread if something happens with the incoming workforce.

Mr. Packish stated that he just want to make sure, for the record he state that he fundamentally disagrees with everything that he heard here today. That he looks forward to the town hall being open and business being done is not a supporter of additional levels of local regulations. He would like to keep safety protocols in place on some level but is not interested in these draconian measures and he now agrees with the governor's direction and feels he should have done it a long time ago.

Ms. Brough asked that the Board keep her posted on the number of cases and when it would be a good time to get the town hall fully open.

#### **AGENTS UPDATE:**

- **MAHB planning and operational grant**

Mr. Hugo (Director of Government Affairs for the Mass Association of Health Boards) spoke about the potential \$300,000 grant which would extend to the six towns in Dukes County and Nantucket. We put in for three workers. One would be a "virgin" inspector which would concentrate on the beaches and assist with other things as well. They want someone who would be trainable by the health agents and come with no bad habits learned from prior jobs. The second would be someone to assist in the high season with a focus on community health. This person would come in and work with all of the groups (substance abuse, hoarding, etc.) and report back to the BOH's. The third person would be a true biologist so Dick Johnson can retire. He thinks we will get the \$300,000 operational grant and wanted to present it to everyone. There is also a planning grant for an additional \$50,000. They want to make their first hire before August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Barmakian expressed her concern that we are potentially creating positions with the grant that we may have to fund in the future when the grant runs out. Mr. Hugo replied that this will be sustainable. It's a commitment of three years, renewable three times so it's at least nine years. He thinks we will find that this will be become a permanent forever thing since we are considered the most rural county in the State.

- **COVID Management**

Ms. Lancaster stated that this was mostly covered in our earlier discussion about re-opening Town hall. She added that the list of contacts that we're generating out of these positive cases is is pretty large. One positive person last week had 40 contacts and we are seeing a much younger population of cases. Garrett is helping with the contact tracing this week. She advised that it is not the time to let your guard down.

- **Signage for East Chop Lighthouse**

Ms. Lancaster stated the signage has been ordered and should be here next week. There was further discussion about lead paint. Mr. Butterick asked about he reports from the Coast Guard and Ms. Lancaster stated that we are still waiting for those reports.

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

Respectfully submitted by Lorna Welch, Administrative Assistant