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Board of Health Minutes 11/02/2011

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Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 2, 2011
Ground Floor Conference Room
Arlington Senior Center
5:30pm

Board Members in Attendance: Dr. Marie Walsh Condon, Mr. Gregory Leonardos and Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick (Chair)

Staff in Attendance: Christine Connolly, Director of Health and Human Services Natasha Waden and James Feeney, Health Compliance Officers.

Other: Bill Eykamp, Member of Arlington's Vision 2020 Group

The meeting minutes for September 7, 2011 were accepted.

Discussion: Biotech Regulations:

Inspector Waden reviewed DRAFT regulations for the use of Biological Agents and rDNA within the Town of Arlington. A copy of said regulations was presented to the Board prior to the meeting. Board Members commented on the regulations and requested that additional language be put into the regulations to include the following: the adoption of NIH guidelines, the definition of "BL 4", additional enforcement language in the "penalties" section, additional language about confidentiality, and additional requirements for institutions to submit a copy of the facility's floor plan to emergency officials as well as provide them with an onsite orientation of facility. The Board also requested that the Department staff provide additional information about the surrounding communities in regards to setting a maximum cap on the amount of rDNA and/or Biological Agent culture permitted in an institution at one time.

Discussion: Microcystis algae at Spy Pond

Director Connolly reported that this office was in receipt of a letter from Arlington's Vision 2020 Group requesting that the Board of Health remove an advisory statement about high levels of Microcystis (Blue Green Algae) at Spy Pond. Connolly presented an overview of the risks associated with an algae bloom as well as an overview of the history and trends of test results taken at the Pond by the Department of Public Health and the Mystic Watershed Association in 2010 and 2011. Connolly explained that upon notification from MDPH of high levels of Microcystis found in the pond, this office posted advisory notices on 6/27/11 along the Linwood circle and Pond Lane access points at Spy Pond. Although lower levels were reported by MDPH for two consecutive weeks, a decision to keep the advisory in place throughout the summer was made to be most protective of public health. Connolly explained that this decision was based on multiple factors. One factor that was taken under advisement was the impression that may be perceived by the public. By removing the advisory, it gives the public a false sense of security, who may believe that the water is safe, swimmable and free from cyanobacteria. Connolly explained that cyanobacteria have the ability to multiply rapidly, especially under certain weather conditions, which the current frequency of testing may not capture. Additionally, Connolly pointed out that DPH and Mystic Watershed had different sampling points, to which results were indicated at times to be very high in one area, but low in the other. Mr. Eykamp spoke on behalf of Arlington's Vision 2020 Group and as a frequent user of the pond. He indicated that he was in agreement with the health associated risks for the public, but that the way the advisory was worded indicated that it would be lifted after two consecutive weeks of low levels. He expressed concern that either the language should be removed from the sign or that the Health Department should follow through with what is stated on it. Mr. Eykamp further stated that he and the Vision 2020 Group are interested in promoting recreational use of spy pond such as boating, kayaking, and water polo, but not swimming. A recommendation was made to change the language of the sign for next season and that results should be posted to the town's website. The Board agreed that additional research and collaboration should be investigated between DPH and the BOH office before a decision should be made to implement any changes. The Board requested to revisit this issue at a spring meeting in 2012.

Tobacco Control Grant

Inspector Waden reported that Arlington, as part of a five community collaboration, received a grant from the Mass Department of Public Health to help with tobacco control efforts. Waden reported that a part time tobacco control coordinator, Wesley Chin, has been hired to help assist the five communities (Brookline, Arlington, Newton, Watertown and Belmont) with creating uniform tobacco control efforts. Waden reported that Wesley would be based



out of Brookline and be working 22.5 hrs per week. Part of his position will be to conduct retail inspections in all communities to verify that establishments are in compliance with state required signage and proper display of tobacco products. In addition, he will be working with each community on smoke-free housing initiatives in public housing and banning tobacco products in pharmacies.

Correspondence received

Inspector Waden provided the Board with a letter addressed to the Board from a concerned Arlington resident in regards to banning the sale of cigar wraps in Arlington. The letter informed the Board that a ruling on banning these products in the city of Boston was upheld in Massachusetts Appeals Court and that these products are sold in Arlington. Waden explained that this office also received a question in regards to electronic cigarettes and whether or not they would fall under the "smoke-free" work place law. Waden explained that electronic cigarettes are not regulated at all, but that local cities and towns have started to change their regulations to include them. Waden advocated that Arlington's Tobacco regulations should be reviewed and amended to include such items as electronic cigarettes and the sale of cigar wraps. The Board unanimously agreed to review and amend the tobacco regulations in 2012.

Update: 2011 Flu Clinics

Director Connolly reported that to date this office has conducted 12 flu clinics and have vaccinated over 1800 residents. Connolly informed the Board that there are 3 additional clinics scheduled, the last one for the year will be on December 1st.

Restaurant Updates:

Waden reported that the following new establishments have opened: Golden Taste located at 14 Medford Street, Nana's Mart located at 456A Mass Ave, Loukoumaki located at 916 Mass Ave, and Angelina's Bakery located at 1193 Mass Ave. Waden reported that the Meat House will be expanding their menu to include pre-made meals. Lastly, Waden reported that the office is in receipt of a plan review for the change of ownership at Sabatino's Italian Kitchen located at 242 Mass Ave.

There was no public comment.

Meeting Adjourn at 7:00PM