

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2022
ZOOM Meeting

Ronald Etskovitz, Chair
Diane Mortensen, Vice Chair
Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director

Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Clerk
John Byrnes, Member
Bernadette Lunkuse, Member

Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:

Ron Etskovitz, Jay Byrnes, and Bernadette Lunkuse

Members Absent

Diane Mortensen and Barbra Sekesogundu Simon

Others Present:

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant
Mark Dassoni, Resident
Aleks Keka, Owner, Sunnyside Café
Bill Gath, Realty Executives

Call Meeting to Order, 6:00 P.M.

Mr. Etskovitz called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

Citizens' Participation

Mark Dassoni, resident, is glad that things are going well for him, and wishes the same for the Town of Ashland.

Sunnyside Café, Unsanitary Conditions

Mr. Gupta noted that issues have been ongoing at Sunnyside for some time; he noted that he has found evidence of rodent activity inside the restaurant and on the outside, near the dumpster, which he stated looked like a landfill. Mr. Gupta stated that he found burrows and what appeared to be a large infestation in the area. Mr. Gupta noted there was also cigarette smoking inside the basement of the restaurant; Mr. Gupta discussed other critical issues that had occurred in the past. Mr. Gupta noted that the owner needs to take this very seriously; if this continues, we need to consider whether there should be a suspension of the Permit.

Aleks Keka, owner of Sunnyside, said he has corrected every issue; that he hired a pest control company. Mr. Keka said that his chef was smoking outside, and that he was smoking in the basement. Mr. Etskovitz noted that no one is trying to shut down the business, he stated that Mr. Gupta knows the laws and is doing his job. Mr. Etskovitz explained to Mr. Keka that If the dumpster area looks like a landfill, he should take the initiative to clean it up and shouldn't wait to be told by the Health Department to clean it up; he should keep in communication as to work/improvements made.

Mr. Gupta noted that the Pest Control Reports are incomplete, and does not address measures taken, or follow up measures. Mr. Keka stated he will do whatever needs to be done.

Bill Gath, of Realty Executives Boston West, asked to speak as representative of the owners of the property. Mr. Gath stated he has seen before and after pictures of the areas of concern, including today. Mr. Gath has seen great improvements; he noted that there is a dumpster in disarray that

belongs to the adjacent property. Mr. Gath discussed the rodent issue, and whether it pertains to ongoing construction in town. Mr. Gath is certain that Mr. Keka will make comply with every health request that is made, and that F&W Pest Control will make more solutions for him, and will treat the area on a more regular basis. Mr. Gupta noted there were also problems in 2019 related to rodents. Mr. Gupta stated that he needs to see more detailed pest control reports, including what they are seeing and what recommendations they are making. Mr. Gupta said that Mr. Keka should be put on notice regarding smoking in the establishment. Mr. Etskovitz reviewed measures that Mr. Keka will take, and reminded Mr. Keka that he needs to take this very seriously.

Mary Mortensen Annual Public Health Award, Discuss Nominees

Mr. Etskovitz said this item will be tabled as Ms. Mortensen was not available for tonight's meeting.

Consent Agenda:

Review Year-to-Date Budget Reports, FY2022

Motion: Ms. Lunkuse made a motion to approve the FY2022 Budget Report. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0. Motion was approved.

Member, John Byrnes' agenda:

Remote Area Medical (RAM) Clinic

Mr. Byrnes noted that Lynn, MA is still working to secure a site for their August 2022 RAM Clinic. The contract has been signed for the Ashland/Keefe Tech Clinic, and is scheduled for August 2023; a lead person will be assigned to us, and will eventually schedule a visit to tour the site (Keefe Tech). Mr. Etskovitz appreciates Mr. Byrnes' work, and looks forward to participating.

Health Director's Agenda:

COVID-19, Update

Mr. Gupta noted the cases have been steady over the past few weeks; with a total of 33 positive cases over the last few weeks. Positive cases are still being tracked. Test kits are available for community members at the Town Hall and the Community Center. The results are not required to be reported, only PCR positive cases are in the MAVEN system and are tracked.

Childhood Vaccine Program, Update

Mr. Gupta is very glad to have the Childhood Vaccine Program up and running; so far nine Ashland school children have been vaccinated. The Clinic will now be opened up to all seven communities that are under the Shared Services Program.

Blood Pressure Clinic, Ashland Community Center, Update

The BP Clinic is running well; it was cancelled last week because the exercise class was cancelled, but is back on tomorrow.

Poultry Exhibition Ban, Department of Agricultural Resources

Mr. Gupta explained that the Poultry Exhibition Ban was put in place by MDAR after the outbreak of HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza). There have not been any local cases. The ban is in place through July 1, 2022.

Boston Marathon, Monday, April 18, 2022

Mr. Gupta noted that two emergency shelters were put in place during the Boston Marathon; he thanked Mr. Byrnes for attending. The shelter at the Middle School was activated when there was an injured runner who was assisted and then transported by the Ashland Fire Department.

Mental Health Workshop/Fair, May 11, 2022, Ashland Community Center

Mr. Gupta noted the Board of Health will have a table at the Mental Health Fair; Mr. Byrnes noted that the presentation looks great, he inquired as to how the event was being advertised. Mr. Gupta noted that Ashley Place will push it through the social media outlets, and from the Board of Health webpage.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings:

Mary Mortensen Public Health Award Presentation

Extreme Heat, will resend information for discussion

The Board discussed meeting dates, possibly meeting on a Thursday

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Byrnes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lunkuse seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 4/19/2022 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Food Inspection Report, Sunnyside Cafe
2. YTD Budget Report, YTD Revolving Fund Budget Report
3. A recording of the meeting is available at WACATV.com