

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2021
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, Diane Mortensen, Jay Byrnes and Bernadette Lunkuse

Members Not Present

Barbra Sekesogundu Simon

Others Present:

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant
Sergeant Ed Burman, Ashland P.D.
Eric Dickinson, Civilized Solutions

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

Ms. Mortensen called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. and noted the meeting was being recorded, and that the Chair, Ron Etskovitz, would be joining the meeting soon.

Citizens' Participation

None.

COVID-19 Update

Sergeant Burman noted that they are seeing an uptick in the number of cases, particularly in grades 1 & 2. There are 43 open cases; 9 cases that should be coming off, and one additional case has been confirmed today. The testing site is getting busier. A vaccine clinic was held last week for 5-11 year olds; a total of 594 kids were vaccinated. Sgt. Burman said he is thankful for all the volunteers as well as the five comfort dogs. Sgt. Burman had reached out to Mass Bay and Regis prior to the clinic, both sent instructors and nursing students who got to see public health firsthand. Ms. Mortensen, who was at the clinic, noted that the residents were appreciative, she thanked Sgt. Burman for putting it together. The second dose clinic will be held in the front of the School, as it is the same night as Town Meeting, December 1, 2021.

Septic Variance Request, 70 Roberts Road

Eric Dickinson, Engineer for the project, explained that the existing septic system was installed in 2007, consisting of a septic tank and two rows of Cultic chambers. The septic was replaced at the time the current owners bought the house. There has been breakout on the lawn and backup of the tank. Two separate companies have both determined it is in failure due to the Cultec chambers. Mr. Dickinson noted they have seen a number of these that have failed. They were replaced with two rows of Elgin, which have good longevity, and they kept the same footprint. It was not designed for a garbage grinder and is keeping with the same variances that were granted in 2007. Ms. Mortensen

inquired, and Mr. Dickinson responded, that there are no warranties with the system or components; he has seen one fail in as few as five years.

(Ron Etskovitz joined the meeting at 6:19 PM)

Ms. Mortensen suggested that the Board revoke the variances, as they did for another home on Roberts Road. Ms. Mortensen reviewed the variances.

Motion: Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from the Ashland Board of Health Regulation Section 303-11, to waive the 50% increase in size of the Soil Absorption System to accommodate a garbage grinder with the condition that no garbage grinder be installed in the house. A deed restriction is currently in place for this variance. Mr. Etskovitz seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. The motion was approved.

Motion: Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from 310 CMR 15.211 to allow for a 10-foot distance to the house foundation rather than the 20-foot distance required by Title 5. Mr. Etskovitz seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. The motion was approved.

Ms. Mortensen noted that the Deed Restriction does not need to be re-recorded, but we just needed to affirm the votes.

Ashland Board of Health Keeping of Animals Regulation, Update/Discussion

Ms. Mortensen noted that the draft Animal Regulations have been reviewed by Town Counsel, and the Board has received a copy of the suggested edits, most are just clarifications of the definitions. These Regulations do not affect current Permit Holders, only if changes are made to their situation. Ms. Mortensen noted that she would prefer to adopt Regulations when there is a full Board; Ms. Mortensen suggested waiting for the next meeting to vote and make them effective January 1st, 2022.

Consent Agenda:

Review Year-to-Date Budget Report, FY2022

Motion: Ms. Mortensen made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. The motion was approved.

Health Director's Agenda:

Mindess School Construction, Update

Mr. Gupta noted there was a pre-construction meeting on November 10th, during which he raised some issues that were brought up by KG Narayana, as well as Standard Operating Procedures. A rodent control plan was discussed based on rodent activity observed at Rt. 126, near the restaurants; Mr. Gupta believes it could be due to the construction. They will be submitting their plans to us for the kitchen at the new School.

FDA Grant for Retail Program Standards, Update

Mr. Gupta explained that he and Mr. Curran have applied for a grant around the retail food standards from the FDA; it could be up to \$5,000, but there are many variables as to how the grant can be spent. This will be a continuous grant, 5-6 years, if we are approved.

Arbovirus Report, Update

Mr. Gupta reported that the West Nile Virus case number is at 9, we anticipate having no additional cases this year, as we have had a couple nights of frost.

Virtual Food Code / Safety Refresher Training, 5:30 PM, November 17, 2021

There will be a Food Safety Refresher Training, this will occur every 3-4 months so they remain on par.

Restaurant Updates

Mr. Gupta noted that on November 9, 2021, Tom Curran went in to Los Cabos for a surprise check, they did see a number of issues again and were put on a 72-hour notice. There were no critical violations. During a reinspection on November 13, 2021, all items had been corrected. Mr. Gupta noted that they will be keeping an eye on them. Mr. Gupta discussed BigFoot, 119 Pond Street; he noted that there are some challenges going on there, he will keep the Board updated.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings:

The Board will next meet on December 14, 2021.

Ashland Board of Health Keeping of Animals Regulation, Vote.

Spreadsheet for the Grants Applied for and Received.

Adjournment

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

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 11/16/2021 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. COVID-19 Confirmed and Probable Cases – Charts
2. Septic Design Plan, 70 Roberts Road
3. Draft Keeping of Animal Regulations with Town Counsel edits
4. YTD Budget FY2022
5. A recording of the meeting is available at WACATV.com