

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH
BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
April 12, 2016**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Health of the Township of Mahwah, held at the Municipal Offices, 475 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, New Jersey, was called to order at 7:35 PM by President, Sydney Harris.

The Opening Statement was read according to the Sunshine Law and was followed by Roll Call:

PRESENT: Mr. Harris
 Mrs. Mertz
 Mr. O'Brien
 Dr. DeMaria
 Mrs. DeSilva

ABSENT: Mr. LaMontagne
 Mr. Wasson

PROFESSIONALS: Mrs. Musella, Health Officer
 Mr. Mason, Attorney
 Mrs. Campbell, Secretary
 Mrs. Homler, REHS
 Mr. Maas, REHS

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. Mertz and, seconded by Mr. O'Brien to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 8, 2016.

Mrs. DeSilva inquired about the disposition of a bat colony discovered in a resident's home. Mrs. Homler did not follow up to determine if the bats had actually been removed; she had not issued the owner a notice to do so. Mr. Harris asked how the colony would be removed as extermination was probably not an option. Mrs. Homler stated a professional pest exterminator would have to be hired. Mrs. DeSilva shared her own experience: one-way screens can be installed over existing entrance and exit points. Once the bats leave the roost they cannot reenter. After the entire colony has been vacated, the entrance is sealed.

Mrs. Mertz asked for an update to the situation at 17 North Hillside Avenue. Mrs. Homler had followed up with the Code Official, Daniel Mairella, the day after the March meeting. Mr. Mairella issued official notice that week to the owner ordering the abatement of specific violations. He also posted the home unsafe for habitation. Tyco Animal Control had set traps and caught three raccoons and an opossum which were released. Tyco suspects that the cat that has been seen on the property is actually owned by another neighbor as it is well fed and groomed.

As of today, Mr. Mairella reported that the fence around the pool has been secured and efforts are underway to drain the water. Electric, water and gas service have all been disconnected and some of the fallen trees have been removed as well.

Mrs. Homler has been in contact twice with those neighbors who attended our last meeting so as to keep them apprised of the progress. Mrs. DeSilva asked where the owner was. Mrs. Homler responded the owner's mailing address is in Fair Lawn, but she is not sure of her exact whereabouts or circumstances. Mr. Harris asked if the taxes were in arrears; no. Mr. Mason asked if the neighbors attended a Council Meeting as we had suggested; Mrs. Homler did not know.

Mrs. DeSilva remembered visiting the site with our former inspector, Stu Ostrow, over ten years ago and it was horrendous then. Mr. O'Brien inquired if the pool had been drained at this point. Mr. Maas responded no. Mrs. Homler noted that a contractor will need to punch holes in the bottom of the structure to prevent rain water from collecting, but the Code Official must get quotes first. In the interim, Bergen County Mosquito Control will continue treating to prevent mosquito larvae.

Mr. O'Brien then asked if we could condemn the property. Mr. Mason responded that the Township has the authority to maintain the property and recoup its expenses upon the sale or transfer of the lot. Mrs. Homler added that in addition to local requirements, there exists an International Property Maintenance Code, the 2009 version of which our Council adopted by resolution. This will also be used to effect the abatement of all nuisances here.

There being no further questions or discussion, the Minutes of the March meeting were unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF HEALTH ACTIVITIES REPORT

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, seconded by Dr. DeMaria to approve the Health Activities Report for March.

Mrs. Mertz asked if the number of LeadTrax reports were up as a consequence of the publicity regarding the Flint, Michigan, water crisis. Mrs. Homler did not perceive an uptick and explained that the number listed in our report includes notifications to the entire state. Several reports are posted daily on the LeadTrax website, and we [and all other jurisdictions] must view each report to see who it 'belongs' to. No reports this month were Mahwah cases.

Mrs. Musella said that many schools are requesting water tests due to the publicity about Flint and the Newark, New Jersey, schools with high lead results. Old pipes and fixtures in the aging structures of many schools may leach some lead, but it is not being found in the water supply. Public water supplies are highly regulated and monitored, and results of those tests must be published and distributed by law.

Mr. Harris agreed stating that Mahwah's water supply consistently tests below action levels in all contaminants, and we should be assuring our residents of this fact. Mrs. Musella said that most lead exceedance levels in individual outlets could be avoided by running the water for 30 seconds or more before use. In this way the system is flushed of water that has been sitting in contact with metal pipes and fixtures for extended periods.

Mr. O'Brien noted that Newark residents were flooding local ER's due to the recently discovered high lead levels there. A clinic within one Newark hospital devoted to lead testing had actually been closed within the last 18 months because the [blood lead] tests were all coming back negative. Mrs. Campbell asked how much publicly supplied water children were actually consuming in school. In Mrs. DeSilva's experience it wasn't a significant amount. Discussion ensued regarding bottled and prepackaged beverages that are widely consumed in schools as well as their health and environmental impacts.

Mr. O'Brien requested details on the meeting between the staff and Mayor on March 16th. Mrs. Homler responded that the Mayor brought several copies of the new Mahwah Municipal Alliance brochure on drug addiction to the Health Department. They discussed ways that we might help the MMA get the word out about heroin addiction. The Mayor is willing to redact Mahwah identifiers on the brochure so that other municipalities and groups can customize it for their use it as well.

One of the key points discussed was the "911 [Good Samaritan] Rule" - that a person encountering or being party to an overdose situation may call 911 for help without fear of reprisal or legal repercussions. Mrs. Homler does not believe this law is well known or understood in the community.

Mrs. Musella said that she attended a Northwest Mayor's Association meeting the prior month at Northern Highlands High School. Mayors,

the Bergen County Prosecutor and Sheriff, Northwest Bergen Mental Healthcare, The Mahwah Municipal Alliance, police chiefs and detectives all gathered to discuss community response to the growing heroin epidemic. They reviewed different initiatives presented by the schools to students, and compared those which seemed to be working to those with null effect. A significant issue is just getting everyone to agree how bad the problem actually is.

Mayor LaForet made a presentation to the assembly stressing that a cooperative effort toward education and awareness is key, and schools, individuals, the medical community and government agencies need to partner if we are going to make any headway. He later advised Mrs. Musella that at some point he would like to attend a Board of Health meeting and discuss ways in which we might work in tandem with the MMA to educate parents and the community.

Mr. O'Brien stated that St. Joseph's Regional in Paterson was launching an opiate free ER and they may be a good resource for a program on the dangers of prescription pain medication as it translates to heroin addiction. He also thinks we need to educate parents to periodically review medicine cabinets and dispose of those medications they are no longer using. Increasing the availability of sites that accept unused medications should be a priority.

Dr. DeMaria noted that all doctors, including veterinarians, must now give signed, hard copy prescriptions for narcotics directly to their patients and are no longer permitted to prescribe them electronically to a pharmacy. Beginning approximately six months ago, pharmacies dispensing narcotics to a client/patient are also required to provide them a listing of pharmacies or institutions where leftover medication can be safely returned. Mr. Maas advised that the Mahwah Police Department now has a 24/7 repository at police headquarters.

Additional discussion ensued regarding deaths resulting from patients who have been administered Narcan and then leave the hospital against medical advice. Mr. O'Brien stated it can take hours for Narcan to completely flush from the body. Many patients leaving the hospital before this occurs go right out and use again, often overdosing because the Narcan still in their system counteracts the effect of the heroin. Efforts are in progress to have counselors or social workers on site in Emergency Rooms to convince these patients to stay.

Mrs. Mertz wished to discuss the number of abatement notices issued regarding food safety certifications. Diane reiterated the circumstances regarding those abatements and noted that many of the establishments were in the process of obtaining their required certifications. Additionally, she has learned that there is limited class availability for the food handler's course, especially in Chinese dialects.

Mrs. Musella said that the staff has struggled to find course availability online for these groups. For perspective, Mrs. Campbell stated that the Department has over one hundred licensed food establishments; the number of those that have already complied far outweigh those that have not.

Mrs. Homler wished to clarify the number of Food Managers required at Acme. She stated we are currently looking for ten Food Managers to cover five departments (Seafood, Deli, Produce, Meat and Bakery) over two shifts. Mrs. DeSilva asked if all the employees were taking the same course; yes. Mr. Harris countered that Acme is open seven days; if we do not permit Departments to cover for each other, additional staff would have to be certified to cover employees' days off.

Mrs. DeSilva opined that if all the Food Managers are taking the same course perhaps they should be able to cover for each other. Mrs. Musella agreed this seems logical, but we are trying to enforce a standard. That standard was formulated using the potential for risk associated with different retail food operations.

Mrs. Musella assured the Members that we always work with our establishments, and they are given a minimum thirty day grace period to comply. The reality is that too many food handlers do not even know basic food safety principles, and the preventable illnesses they cause is the impetus for regulation.

Mr. Harris would like to know the statistics on how many cases of food-borne illness present each year that are related to the mis-handling of food. Mrs. Musella said that most people don't go to the doctor - even those that call us to complain they got sick in a specific establishment. So, while statistics are available from the CDC, they probably don't accurately represent the full number of illnesses caused by improper food handling.

Mrs. Homler explained that when we do have confirmed cases of food-borne illness, disregard for one of five core tenets of safe food handling is inevitably implicated, i.e holding temperatures, cooling of product, personal hygiene, etc. Our Local Code aside, the State Code requires that the Food Manager have a plan in place to train and educate subordinate employees as well, passing along the knowledge they obtained with their own certification.

Mrs. Musella said that Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission is willing to present food handler courses on site for groups of ten or more if that will help an establishment earn compliance. Mr. Harris is committed to working with establishments that demonstrate cooperation and efforts toward compliance. He endorsed discretion on the part of the inspectors in this regard and commended the availability of on-site courses provided by NWBRHC.

Mr. Mason asked for the cause of voluntary food destruction at two establishments which were listed in the report. Mrs. Homler answered that Mr. Grotheer performed these inspections; the items listed exceeded allowable temperature ranges. Destroyed food is always documented.

There being no further questions or discussion, the Health Activities Report for March was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT

Moved by Mr. O'Brien and, seconded by Mrs. DeSilva to accept the Health Officer's Report for March.

Mrs. Musella was happy to report that we had finally obtained a shared view of the Clerk's animal licensing program. The Department had campaigned for this for years; the accomplishment could not be over-emphasized.

Mrs. Musella noted that Mahwah's annual Local Health Evaluation Report (LHER) to the State Department of Health has been submitted.

The Health Educator planned several programs at Norfolk Village including "*Laughter as The Best Medicine*" and "*Eating Better on a Budget.*" The babysitting class at the library was well received; twenty-six attendees participated and more were on a waiting list.

Dr. DeMaria inquired as to the welfare of a horse running at large on Ramapo College property. Mrs. Musella responded that he was corralled and returned safely to the owner. She then asked if there have been changes to Fowl licensing. Mrs. Musella responded that there had been no changes, only discussion and clarification about owners who may be grandfathered from Zoning requirements.

There being no further questions or discussion, the Health Officer's Report for March was unanimously approved.

BILLS

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, seconded by Dr. DeMaria and, unanimously approved by all present to pay the Bills for March.

REPORT OF LIAISON TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

No report; Mr. LaMontagne absent.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

No activity.

REPORT OF ATTORNEY

No activity.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 8:40pm was made by Mrs. Mertz and, seconded by Dr. DeMaria and, approved by all present.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2016 at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Campbell
Secretary