

Town of Concord
Board of Health

Minutes of the Meeting
Tuesday, March 17, 2020

PRESENT: Dr. Deborah Greene, Chairman
Mark Haddad, Esq.
Jill Block
Raymond Considine
Alma Healey, RN

Susan G. Rask, Public Health Director

1. OPEN MEETING¹

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

2. PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Center and Main (1440 Main Street) PCL: 2407; 2408 portions 2409 & 2423

The Board reviewed and discussed the proposed 16-lot Preliminary Subdivision plan submitted by Symes Permitting and Development, LLC on behalf of their client and owner Faye Erhard Hayes on 8.935 acres at 1440-1450 Main Street, Concord.

Public Health Director Rask outlined the proposal for the Board. Extensive soil testing for onsite sewage disposal systems has been conducted on the property (witnessed by AHPD Stan Sosnicki) and it is favorable for design. Following a brief discussion, Ray Considine moved to APPROVE the Preliminary Subdivision Plan for 1440 Main Street as submitted with the following conditions and that such approval be forwarded to the Planning Board: Mark Haddad seconded the motion. ALL voted in favor.

1. Individual onsite sewage disposal systems shall be designed, permitted and constructed in accordance with:
 - a. Title 5 of the State Environmental Code, 310 CMR 15.000, Standard Requirements for the Siting, Construction, Inspection, Upgrade and Expansion of Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems and for the Transport and Disposal of Septage, and
 - b. Concord Board of Health Regulation, Chapter 3.00, Wastewater Management
2. Town water shall be available.
3. Any wells for domestic water, irrigation purposes, or health pump use, shall be designed, permitted and constructed in accordance with Concord Board of Health Regulation, Minimum Sanitation Standard for Private and Semi-Public Water Supply.

¹ The BOH has 45 days to respond to a subdivision application from date of submittal therefore Agenda Item #2 was discussed at this abbreviated emergency meeting.

4. No underground fuel storage systems shall be installed without a variance granted by the Board of Health in accordance with Section 4 of the Underground Storage Tank Bylaw adopted by the April 1993 Town Meeting.
5. Tree stumps and wood wastes generated by land-clearing operations shall not be buried on site. (DEP's solid waste regulations 310 CMR 16.05(3) (d) and 310 CMR 19.013(1) (h) prohibit stump dumps on lots being developed for sale.

2. DISCUSSION - COVID-19 CRISIS

Public Health Director Susan Rask advised the Board that effective Friday, March 13, 2020, based upon the Department of Public Health and Governor Baker's declaration of a State of Emergency, Town Manager Stephen Crane had ordered all town buildings closed to the public until further notice. All non-essential services have been suspended and effectively all town staff (other than public safety) had been put on administrative leave. Ms. Rask said that all Departments were working on plans for staggered staff coverage (physically in building), however, Town Management was primarily working towards creatively setting up staff as best it could with VPN access to their computers and urging them to work from home encouraging safe distancing protocols.

PHD Rask stated that the COVID-19 situation was literally changing by the minute and was looking to be a very difficult and challenging public health emergency on all fronts (local, state and national). Ms. Rask said that MDPH had a conference call earlier in the afternoon updating its partners on the number of positive cases in the state and the number was 197 - as of right before the meeting, she said it had increased to 218. She advised that data now indicated community-wide transmission (based on information from MDPH) in several counties in Massachusetts. Jill Block asked if the Public Health Director knew where the positive cases were in each county. Ms. Rask expressed frustration with how MDPH was sharing information with local communities and that it had not been forthcoming with that type of information. MDPH had cited HIPPA violations for not doing so according to Mr. Considine.

PHD Rask advised that she was aware of at least ten (10) residents who notified School Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter that they were self-isolating due to possible exposure to COVID-19 and who had self-reported that information because they had children in the school system. Ms. Hunter would not release that information to the Health Department but had sent an email to them on its behalf to reach out so that they could be followed by a Public Health Nurse. Four families had replied to the email.

The Public Health Director briefed the Board on correspondence she had received from the COVID-19 Task Force indicating that additional funding would be made available to local communities for reimbursement for public health nursing and other related tasks associated with infectious disease follow up or costs associated with dealing with the pandemic. She also noted that once FEMA was activated, funds for the state would likely be forthcoming. Ms. Rask said that one of her top priorities would be to purchase additional personal protection equipment (PPE) for first responders.

Dr. Greene briefed the Board on steps that Emerson Hospital had put in place relative to isolating potential COVID-19 cases from infecting staff or other patients. Visitation had

essentially been eliminated at the hospital and/or strictly limited to one visitor for a pediatric, labor and delivery or end of life situation. The Hospital was also diligently working on a testing area outside of the Emergency Department to isolate potentially infected parties from others in the hospital - this was currently on hold until more testing capabilities became readily available.

The Board had a spirited debate on what it perceived as the best way to activate the Town's Emergency Preparedness Plan to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic from a local standpoint. Members brainstormed on how to coordinate all of the support avenues available to those in need (elders, those with illness or unable to drive, etc.) such as Open Table (food), Council on Aging (support), medical assistance, etc.

Ray Considine and Jill Block felt strongly that administrative staff/town employees could be called upon to carry out the task of coordinating these efforts even it was done remotely. Mr. Considine felt it important for the record to reflect the urgency of taking proactive steps and suggested the Board contact the Town Manager to convey its position as a public health board.

PHD Rask reminded the Board that most local preparedness plans were designed to deal with catastrophic weather events and/or staffing and coordinating immunization clinics (as in the case of H1N1), or dispensing medicine - nothing to the scale of what needs to be dealt with for this public health pandemic . She stated that the Town Manager and HR Department would have to be included in any decision relative to Town employees being tasked with any of the items being discussed by the Board of Health.

Ms. Rask stated simply that it would be nearly impossible for her, the Health Division Staff or the Town's contracted Public Health Nurses to take the lead on this coordination effort but they would assist as best they could although they were already stretched to their collective limit.

Dr. Greene agreed and suggested that she reach out to the Town Manager and discuss the best way to ensure that the Town's most vulnerable residents have access to the services discussed as well as ensure that front line Town staff receive the necessary funds and support it needs to accomplish its respective tasks at hand.

Board members thanked Ms. Rask and the Health Division staff for all of their efforts.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted by,

Karen M. O’Keefe-Byrne, Administrative Assistant
Concord Board of Health

Dr. Deborah Greene, Chairman Alma Healey, RN

Raymond Considine Jill Block

Mark Haddad, Esq.